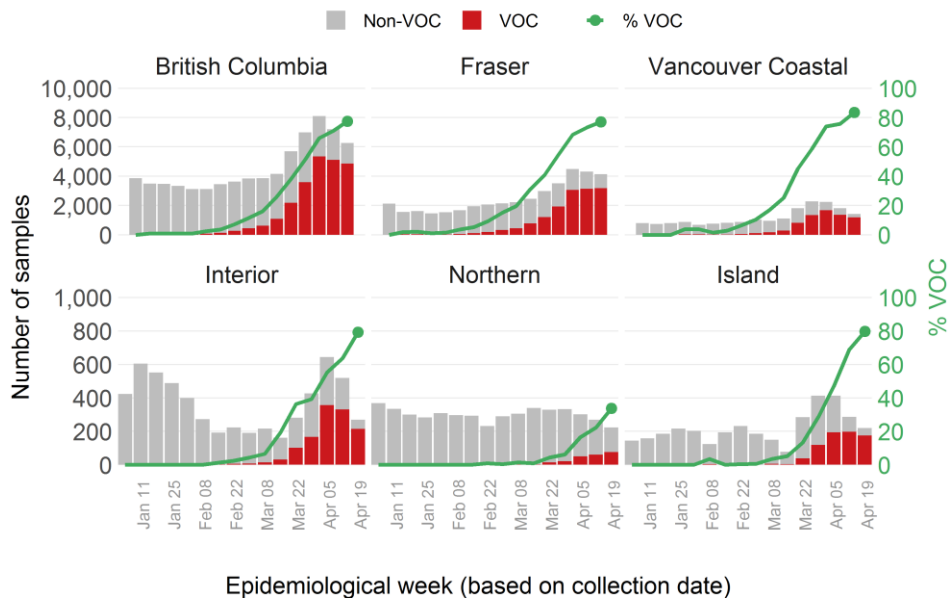


Weekly update on Variants of Concern (VOC) 30 April 2021

Of all positive samples in epi week 16 (April 18-24) in BC, ~78% were presumptive VOCs (Figure 1). VOC prevalence was similar across Health Authorities, except in Northern Health, where it was lower, at ~34%. However, please note that not all screening results are back for the Health Authorities and these estimates could change.

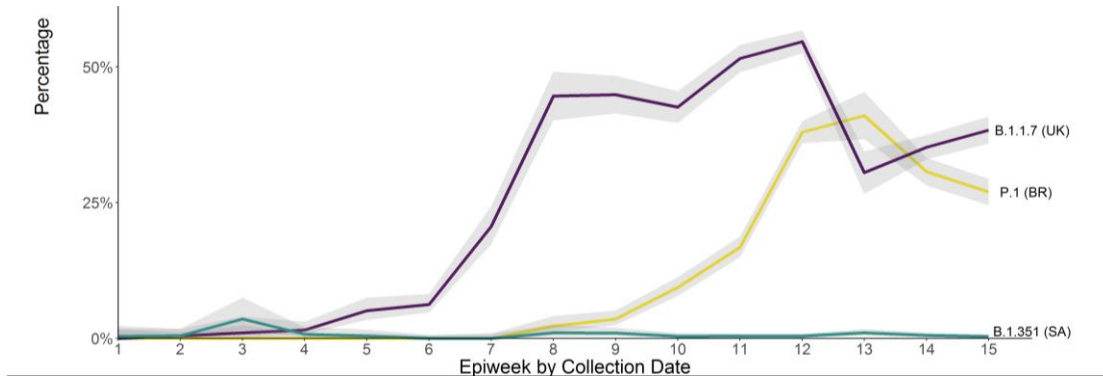
Figure 1. Presumptive VOC prevalence in BC by epi week in BC and by Health Authority, Jan – April 2021



Data from the PLOVER system at the BCCDC Public Health Lab. Estimated based on % presumptive VOC among screened samples for epi weeks 9 onwards. Estimates for weeks 5-8 are based on expected growth rate from international trajectories and BC point prevalence study.

The main circulating variants are B.1.1.7 and P.1, with B.1.1.7 accounting for ~60% and P.1 ~40% of the three main VOCs (Figure 2). Please note that the estimate of distribution of VOC lineages in BC for latest epi week (15, April 11-17) may change as more sequencing results are analyzed.

Figure 2. Estimated prevalence^A of VOCs by lineage and by epi week of collection date, Jan –April 2021

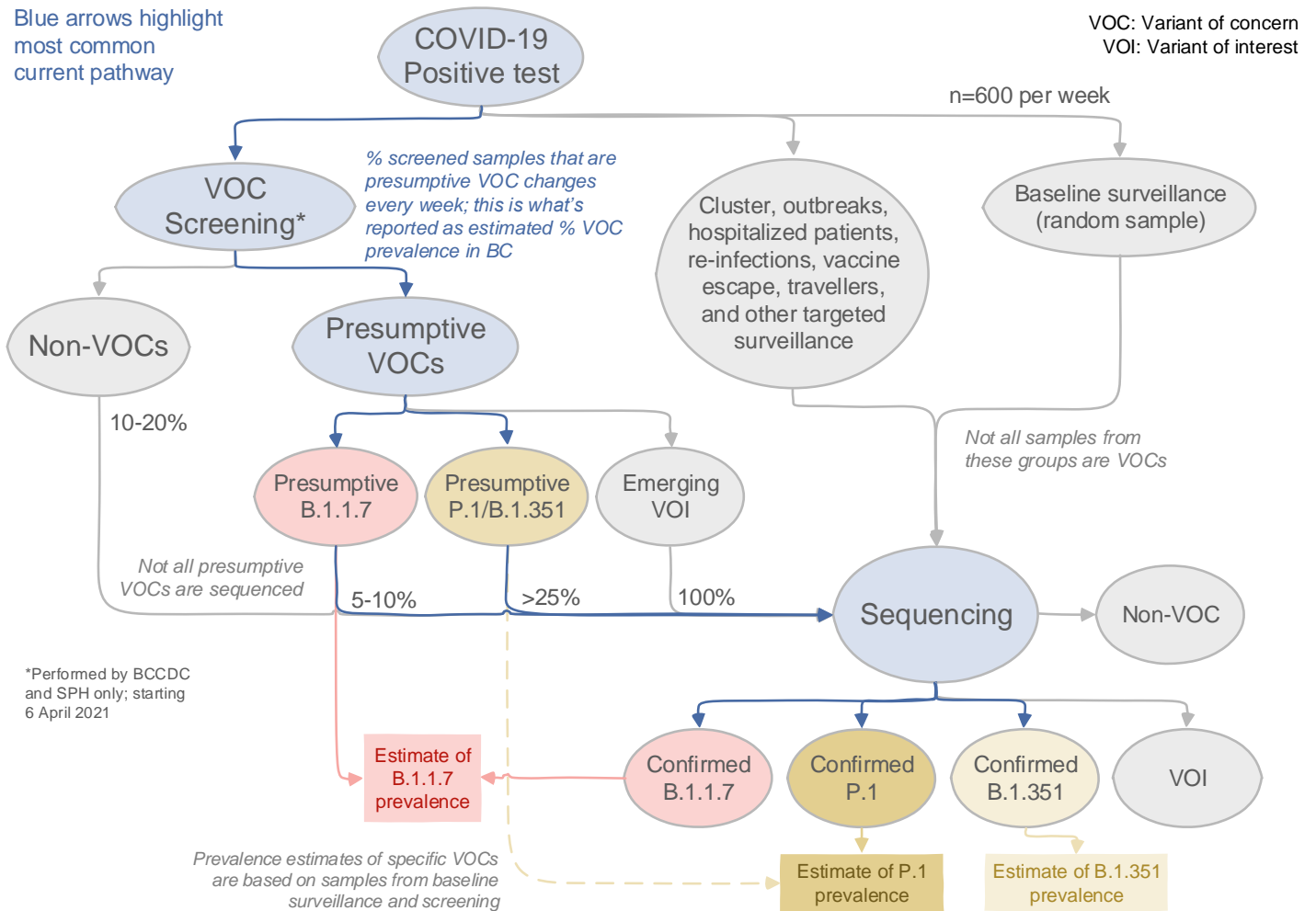


^A Sample percentage estimated from the proportion of presumptive VOC from screening and the proportion of confirmed VOC via sequencing (excluding outbreak and targeted surveillance). As of week 13 (March 28, 2021), based on current prevalence, VOC screening results with both E484K and N501Y mutations are assumed to be P.1.

Variants of Interest (VOI)

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, BCCDC Public Health Lab is continuously monitoring for both VOCs and VOIs. There are numerous VOIs, and they may not necessarily become VOCs. Once a VOI becomes a VOC, it will be added to our VOC reporting.

Figure 3. Overview of the screening and sequencing process applied to positive COVID-19 tests in BC, April 2021.



Please note the differences in turnaround time for screening and sequencing: screening results usually come back within 1-2 days, while sequencing results come back after approximately one week, but it could also take longer if there are lab backlogs.