

Alcohol/Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault

Introduction

Alcohol/Drug-facilitated sexual assaults occur when a perpetrator uses alcohol or drugs to compromise an individual's ability to consent to sexual activity. The substances used by perpetrators in these assaults inhibit an individual's ability to resist sexual activity and may even disrupt or prevent memory of the assault.

- Survivors of alcohol/drug facilitated sexual assaults are less likely to identify a sexual assault as rape and are less likely to report the incident to authorities if a substance was involved. This may be due to fear of negative judgements about their substance use.

Walsh, K., Et al., "Understanding Disparities in Service Seeking Following Forcible Versus Drug-or Alcohol- Facilitated/Incapacitated Rape," Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2016.

- Alcohol is the most commonly detected substance in drug-facilitated sexual assaults although the detection of more than one substance is common.

Anderson, L.J., Flynn, A., Pilgrim J.L., "A global epidemiological perspective on the toxicology of drug facilitated sexual assault: A systematic review," Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine, 2017.

Drugs Commonly Used in Sexual Assaults

Perpetrators use drugs as a means to sedate an individual, prevent resistance to assault, and impair memory. Typically, perpetrators combine these drugs with alcohol, as alcohol increases the effects of these drugs.

- Rohypnol** is a benzodiazepine, a class of drugs that produces sedative-hypnotic, anti-anxiety, and muscle relaxant effects. This drug is not approved for medical use in the United States. *Rohypnol leaves the body within 36 – 72 hours.*

US Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration, "Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault," 2017.

- Gamma-Hydroxybutyric Acid (GHB) and Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL)** are two different chemicals that perpetrators can use interchangeably due to the chemical reaction of GBL in the digestive system. These drugs suppress the central nervous system and induce a sense of euphoria and intoxication. *GHB leaves the body within 10 – 12 hours while GBL leaves the urinary system in 6 hours and the blood stream in 24 hours.*

US Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration, "Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault," 2017.

- Ketamine** is a short acting anesthetic. This drug causes individuals to feel detached from their bodies and surroundings; this often means a survivor is aware of what is happening during an attack but is unable to move or fight back. *Reports vary between 2 – 4 days in regards to the duration Ketamine stays in the body.*

US Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration, "Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault," 2017.

Heit, H., Gourlay, D., "Urine drug testing in pain medicine," Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, 2004