



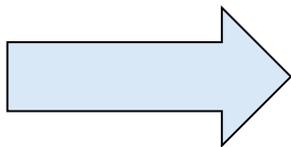
FACT SHEET

DATE RAPE DRUGS

Date rape drugging happens across the world, most commonly reported on university campuses. However, they are not restricted to this single location. In fact, date rape drugging is being increasingly reported in the humanitarian context, with current hot spots in Afghanistan, Iraq, and South Sudan. Knowing what to look for, how to respond, and how to support a colleague could result in the prevention of a drug facilitated act of sexual violence, as well as responses that are sensitive and facilitate healing.

What are date rape drugs?

Date rape drugs are typically used for drug facilitated sexual violence because they prevent an individual from not objecting to sexual activity. They also prevent individuals from being able to resist the act of sexual violence or remember the events fully.



An important thing to remember is that date rape drugging can happen to anyone by anyone, and the perpetrator can be someone you know personally: a date, friend, colleague, or even supervisor.



Another important element is that many survivors blame themselves for what happened. Please remember that it is not your fault, you did not consent, and you are not to blame.

Date rape drugs can consist of a variety of different combinations of drugs:

- Prescription Drugs, such as sleep aids, anxiety medication, muscle relaxers, and tranquilizers; or
- Street drugs, such as GHB, rohypnol, ecstasy, and ketamine.

These are just the main types of drugs however, and different combinations will have a similar effect. With advances in drug research, this often means that such drugs might be hard to detect in an individual's system. It is also possible that they will result in no modification of colour, taste, or smell to drinks or food. While most commonly combined with alcohol, it is also possible to be date rape drugged while consuming non-alcoholic beverages, including water.



In some humanitarian contexts, date rape drugging is being reported. This is often also in contexts where it is easy to obtain a variety of drugs from pharmacies or doctors without prescriptions.

Symptoms of having been drugged

Please note that the effects of these drugs are dependant on the substance, so they can be noticeable very quickly or not at all. Their effectiveness is also dependant on the amount of substance given, the height and body measurements of the individual, amount of food in their body, and other individual factors.

Nonetheless, it is important to identify what the symptoms are so you can get help - for yourself or someone else:

- Difficulty breathing;
- Feeling drunk though one has not consumed any alcohol or very limited amounts;
- Loss of bowel or bladder control;
- Nausea;
- Sudden body temperature change (sweating or chattering teeth);
- Sudden increase in dizziness, disorientation, or blurred vision; or
- Waking up with no memory or missing large portions of memories.

Bystander intervention

If you notice any of the symptoms above on someone, here are a few tips on what to do to help.

Create a distraction

You may want to interrupt the situation to move the person at risk into a safer place:

- Cutting off the conversation with a diversion like: "I'm bored, let's go somewhere else;"
- Changing food and drinks for everyone present; or
- Starting an activity so other people are drawn in and the potential survivor is not left alone.

Ask directly

Ask the person at risk questions, though not in a manner that suggests blame, such as who they come with and whether they would like to be accompanied. Ask them which



organisation they work for, so you can ensure they are safely returned to the appropriate guesthouse or compound.

Refer to an authority

It is always recommended to talk to a neutral party about the situation, such as medical personnel, bartenders, or another colleague. They may be able to intervene to help. In the humanitarian context, this can also include speaking with UNDSS or other security focal points.

Enlist others

You do not need to handle these situations on your own:

- Ask someone to accompany you to approach the person at risk; or
- Approach a personal friend of the concerned individual, to raise your worries and ask that they help intervene.

For more advice on how to help a survivor of sexual violence, should an incident occur:

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/help-someone-you-care-about>

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/how-respond-survivor>

If you suspect you were drugged

If possible, before you blackout or lose consciousness, try to get to a safe place. Ask a friend or colleague to escort you from the location if possible.

If you are unable to get to safe place before blacking out or losing consciousness, know that it is not your fault. In absolutely no way did you ask or deserve to be drugged, and any events that occurred, including both those you do and do not remember, were non-consensual.

In either event, the following actions are recommended, keeping in mind that the collection of evidence might be difficult to impossible in remote field sites:

- Obtain medical care right away. If possible and desired, try to contact a trusted friend or colleague who can take you to receive medical care. While the temptation to clean oneself is completely understandable, try to refrain from doing the following: urinate, douche, bathe, brush your teeth, wash your hands, change clothes, eat or drink before going. Depending on the context, the collection of forensic evidence might be difficult, as might the investigation and legal proceedings. However, trying may leave open avenues otherwise closed.
- Preserve the evidence for an investigation. Since these drugs also have the characteristic of leaving your body within 12 to 72 hours, it is crucial to act



quickly. If you cannot access a hospital right away, save your urine in a clean sealable container and place it in a refrigerator or freezer.

- Contact the security focal points, or have a trusted friend or colleague contact them. If there is a danger that others might also be at risk of a similar act of sexual violence, information about your own experience might stop this from happening to others; however do not place pressure on yourself to speak about the event before you are ready. Any other actions as available through your organisation may also be taken.

Additional Source(s)

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/drug-facilitated-sexual-assault>