Drink-spiking
Counselling Service Tip Sheet

Roofies – Once in, you’re out!

‘Roofies’ – What are they?

‘Roofy’ is a common term used to describe any drug that will produce the effect of a ‘black-out’. Also known as Ruffies, Ropes, Easy-lays, Party Drugs or Date Rape Drugs, these are terms that now commonly refer to the pharmaceutical drug Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam). GHB and Burundanga are other Roofy drugs which act similarly to Rohypnol.

Flunitrazepam

In its medical use, Flunitrazepam has a legitimate world wide distribution and is sold in over 70 countries as a short term treatment of insomnia and less commonly as a pre-operative anaesthesia for surgery. Flunitrazepam is a central nervous system depressant, which can become lethal when
ingested with other depressants or alcohol.

Why has it come to such attention recently?
Flunitrazepam when diluted is colourless, odourless, tasteless and can be dissolved easily and quickly into drinks, putting an individual ‘out’ totally or subduing them for 12-14 hours at a time. In the worst cases it can even cause death. In recent years illegal use of these drugs has been increasing in university-aged settings and bars/nightclubs/raves to make women vulnerable to rape, since it can render a person into a trance-like state, leaving them without memory or the capacity to defend themself.

So how do I know I have taken a Roofy?
Women are most commonly the targets for sexual crimes with the illegal use of Flunitrazepam, most frequently in nightclubs and bars. While you may think that it will “never happen to me”, it is important to note that IT IS indeed happening right now in some popular nightclubs and bars around Perth. Some typical reactions to watch out for include:

- A drunk like effect in a matter of minutes, lasting for hours – enhanced further by drinking alcohol
- Visual disturbances
- Memory loss/amnesia
- Urinary retention and gastrointestinal distress
- Extreme sleepiness/sedation (up to 7-10 times more potent than Valium!)
- Loss of inhibition
- Dizziness and confusion
- Impaired reaction time and driving skills

In one US case, a survivor actually commenced her stopwatch after taking just half a pill handed to her. She never saw the 3 minute mark… it can be just that fast! And notably, as numerous reports confirm, only a small amount of Flunitrazepam can put you into a black-out.

How to protect yourself
Stay aware and alert to protect yourself while still having a good time.

- Use the ‘buddy’ system – have someone you trust hold or watch your drink closely while you use the rest room or have a dance, while in a club situation. In other words never leave your drink unattended.
- Watch who pours your drink.
- Be wary about accepting drinks from anyone you don’t know well or long enough to trust.
- If you are accepting a drink, make sure it’s from an UNOPENED container and that you open it yourself.
- Set an example for your friends by taking the above measures.

If it happens to me… then what?
- Seek immediate medical assistance.
- Report the spiking to the police and to the bar/club’s proprietor. Spiking is not good for a club/pub’s business and most proprietors are keen to prevent future occurrences for concern they may lose their clientele. Your actions will also protect other would-be victims.
- Seek counselling for debriefing of the incident if required, especially if an assault/attack has occurred as a result of being incapacitated by the drug.

For more information, contact a Counsellor on any ECU Campus.

References
More information is available from:


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Please note that this tip-sheet provides information and guidance only - it is not a substitute for professional counselling and support.