



B46 Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault: The New Jersey Experience

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have gained an understanding of the prevalence of the types of drugs detected in victims of drug-facilitated sexual assault. The attendees will also gain a better understanding of sociological trends and relationships such as victim and suspect age, gender, and racial origin, and other toxicological information such as the type, prevalence, and amount of biological specimens collected.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by providing essential toxicological and sociological statistical information from a New Jersey population of drug-facilitated sexual assault cases.

Drug-facilitated sexual assault involves the administration of an anesthesia-type drug to render a victim physically incapacitated or helpless and thus incapable of giving or withholding consent. Victims may be unconscious during all or parts of the sexual assault and, upon regaining consciousness, may experience anterograde amnesia—the inability to recall events that occurred while under the influence of the drug.

Currently, there are no conclusive estimates as to the number of drug-facilitated sexual assaults that occur each year; however, nationwide law enforcement reporting indicates that the number of such assaults appears to be increasing. The data from 168 drug-facilitated sexual assault cases submitted to the New Jersey State Police Central Laboratory between July 1, 2004 and January 5, 2006 were reviewed. The data was compiled to ascertain any trends in the type of drug detected, victim sociological factors such as age, gender, and racial origin and the relationships between the victims and the reported suspects. Toxicological information of interest was also compiled such as the type, prevalence, and amount of biological specimens as well as the time between the incident and specimen collection.

Females were predominately the major victim (91.7%) with an average age of 24.2 (Range = 13 – 55 years of age). The five (5) male victims in this population ranged from age 17 to 23, with an average age of 20.2. The racial origin of victims varied with Caucasian (65%) being the majority of the victim racial types reporting this crime. Likewise, Caucasian was the major racial type identified when the victim identified the racial origin of the suspect. When the racial type was reported for the suspect, 76.7% of the time the suspect's race was the same as the victim.

The State of New Jersey requests both blood and urine samples be collected from the victim of a drug-facilitated sexual assault. Blood and urine were both collected in 78.6% (132 of 168) of the cases reviewed. Urine was submitted in 92.3% (155 of 168) of the cases, and blood was submitted in 80.4% (135 of 168) of the cases. The following were the most prevalent substances identified in victim blood samples from the 168 cases reviewed: Ethanol (68.2%), Δ^9 -Tetrahydrocannabinol (14.8%), Nordiazepam (8.1%), Alprazolam (7.4%), Cocaine (7.4%), Ibuprofen (6.7%), Δ^9 -Tetrahydrocannabinol carboxylic acid (6.7%), Diazepam (5.9%), and thirty-six other drugs were detected in less than 5% of the blood samples, including one case of Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate (GHB). Rohypnol was not identified in any of the blood samples submitted. More detailed toxicological and epidemiological data will be offered in the presentation.

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the contributing factors involved in drug-facilitated sexual assaults.

Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault, Sexual Assault, Forensic Toxicology