

Alcohol/Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault

Introduction

Many or even most sexual assaults involve alcohol/drug use by the perpetrator and/or survivor, but myths and misconceptions exist about what role substance use plays in incidents of sexual violence. The use of drugs and alcohol before or during an incident of sexual violence is commonly used as a reason to blame survivors and/or to excuse offenders for their actions.

- Victims of drug-facilitated or incapacitated rape were less likely than victims of forcible rape to report to the authorities.

Kilpatrick, D. et al., "Drug-facilitated, Incapacitated, and Forcible Rape: A National Study," 2007.

- Drug- and alcohol- facilitated rape was defined as an incident in which the perpetrator deliberately gives the survivor drugs without her/his permission or tries to get her/him drunk, and then commits an unwanted sexual act involving oral, anal, or vaginal penetration. The survivor is unconscious, or awake but too intoxicated to give consent.

Kilpatrick, D. et al., "Drug-facilitated, Incapacitated, and Forcible Rape: A National Study," 2007.

- Incapacitated rape was defined as an unwanted sexual act involving oral, anal or vaginal penetration that occurs after the survivor voluntarily uses drugs or alcohol. Like in drug- and alcohol-facilitated rape, the survivor is unconscious, or awake but too intoxicated to give consent.

Kilpatrick, D. et al., "Drug-facilitated, Incapacitated, and Forcible Rape: A National Study," 2007.

- Alcohol is the best-known incapacitating drug found in sexual assaults.

Johnson TJ, & Stahl C., "Sexual Experiences Associated with Participation in Drinking Games", Journal of General Psychology, 2004.

- In a 2005 study, 61.8% of sexual assault survivors tested positive for drugs with 4.9% positive for the classic "date-rape" drugs. Classic "date-rape" drugs include Flunitrazepam or Rohyprol, GHB, and Ketamine, Clonazepam, and Scopolamine.

Negrusz, Adam et al., "Estimate of the Incidence of Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, 2005.

- Although alcohol consumption and sexual assault frequently co-occur, this phenomenon does not prove that alcohol use causes sexual assault. In some cases, the desire to commit a sexual assault may actually cause alcohol consumption (ex. when someone drinks alcohol before committing a sexual assault to justify their behavior.)

Abbey, A. et al., "Alcohol and Sexual Assault," National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2001.

- Many perpetrators falsely believe that alcohol increases sexual arousal and legitimates nonconsensual sexual aggression. Perpetrators perceive drinking women as more sexually available, for example, believing that women who have two or more drinks are more interested than other women in having sex.

Abbey, A., "Alcohol-Related Sexual Assault: A Common Problem among College Students", Journal of Studies on Alcohol. 2002.