

Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault
SART Listserv
September 2007

Background: Growing concern over date-rape drugs has caused private companies to offer kits that allow women to test their drinks. One of the first companies was a British company that debuted Dip-It-In.

Several United States companies followed, including Guardian Angel, which offers GHB testing strips as a toothpick. Recently, a company has entered the market that sells coasters that contain testing strips for multiple date-rape drugs. How effective are these products and are many communities using them?

Responses Supporting DFSA Detection Kits

- We ordered thousands of them for the bars in our area. You can go to <http://drinksafetech.com/> for more info.
- You can go to www.drugalcoholtestkits.com.

Responses Not in Favor of DFSA Detection Kits

- It strikes me as an enormously bad idea - relying on the chemical reaction of a product from a vendor about whom little is known;
- The products belie the fact that alcohol is still the rapist's drug of choice;
- NSVRC has done some preliminary research on products designed to detect drugs to facilitate sexual assault. An FBI Chemist that tested products has found:
 - Products do not test for all drugs that are used to facilitate sexual assaults - Drink Safe Technology Coasters and Testing Strips do not test for Gamma Butyrolactone (GBL) 1.4 butanediol and some types of benzodiazepines.
 - Most tests for Ketamine take ten minutes for results and are often unclear
 - Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate (GHB) is often made in home laboratories, which causes batches to vary and requires complex testing process that these products do not provide.
- The use of these devices focuses on stranger assaults and ignores use of alcohol as #1 drug used to facilitate sexual assaults.
- For an overview of drug facilitated sexual assault prevention and risk reduction, see: <http://www.calcasa.org/55.0.html>
- They do not work well at all. Dark room, tinted drink, amount of drug in the drink undermine the reliability of these products
- It may give individuals a false sense of security.

- We have to be careful to focus on primary prevention and not place so much responsibility on potential victims to prevent a sexual assault.
- We developed coasters with the wording: "Think! Is s/he sober enough to say yes?" (in a circle around the border and a catchy picture in the middle) plus the relevant penal code on the back referring to having sex with anyone unable to consent due to too much alcohol. They were not very expensive to have printed on sturdy stock with multiple colors.
- Universal precautions and creating change in how society views rape is the real fix for drug facilitated sexual assault. Teaching our young men to respect women and teaching our young women to respect themselves and watch out for each other goes further and lasts longer than a tooth pick in a drink or a coaster under your gin and tonic.
- The number one drug is alcohol or the use of OTC medications such as Benadryl, Cough/ Cold remedies.