

## BOOK REVIEW

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### Review of: *Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault: A Forensic Handbook*

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**REFERENCE:** LeBeau MA, Mozyani A, editors. Drug facilitated sexual assault: a forensic handbook. First edition, Academic Press, San Diego, CA, 2001. 326 pp \$69.95

A handbook should be portable, comprehensive and accessible to people on many levels, and in all respects this book succeeds. The topic of drug facilitated sexual assault (DFSA) has risen in our consciousness in the last few years, initially because of the scare propagated in the popular media about flunitrazepam (Rohypnol®). While that drug turned out to account for only a handful of such cases, it brought attention to the larger problem of the use of alcohol and drugs to incapacitate a victim prior to sexual assault.

The book is an excellent primer on this topic. It will educate the forensic scientist or toxicologist about DFSA applications of drugs they are already familiar with, and will provide background on drug pharmacology and effects for sexual assault nurses, other medical professionals, and law enforcement officers. It begins with an overview of the criminology of rape—the victim's perspective, issues of reporting a rape, how the criminal justice system treats victims, and the place of DFSA within this broader and widespread crime. Next, the book explores the psychopathology of the perpetrators, examining motivation, modus operandi, and the serial nature of this crime.

There follows individual chapters on drugs with properties which might make them drugs of choice for the would-be assailant. While the book does discuss windows for detection for all the drug classes it considers, and limitations of testing batteries, this is not intended to be a book of analytical methodology. The overview of factors influencing the analysis, however, would be accessible to a lay person, and give an appreciation of the importance of collecting the appropriate samples, and requesting the appropriate tests.

Compounds are dealt with in order of their approximate prevalence in DFSA cases. Starting with ethanol, the book provides a thorough, basic introduction to the toxicology and clinical effects of alcohol, and then considers the effects of combining alcohol with other CNS active drugs—a common finding in many cases of

alleged DFSA. Ethanol is often overlooked in this context, and its placement up front emphasizes its importance.

Subsequent chapters review benzodiazepines and gamma hydroxybutyrate, and discuss the features of these drugs including low dose, incapacitation, amnesia and short half-life that make them very particularly effective for this type of crime.

Hallucinogens including MDMA, Ketamine, PCP and LSD are covered, and while their properties would seem to be favorable as DFSA agents, the chapter does not document any specific examples. Opiates are considered too, and that chapter does include some examples of specific cases. Lastly in this section, there is a chapter that covers other drugs with CNS depressant properties, both over-the-counter and prescription, which does a good job of illustrating the need for comprehensive toxicological testing in any case of DFSA.

The treatment of topics in each drug specific chapter is uneven in places, and reflects the background and area of specialization of the chapters' authors. This should be addressed in editing of future editions. For example, the opioids chapter gives extraction, GCMS and HPLC conditions for different drugs, while the hallucinogens and benzodiazepines chapter give none, but do include a detailed discussion of the receptor chemistry for these classes. Stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamine are not discussed, in spite of their reputation as "sex drugs."

Following the drug specific sections, the book closes with chapters on evidence collection, the role of the sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE), and guidance for police officers and prosecutors investigating or prosecuting these cases. Finally, there are three appendices including sample forms, search warrants, and victim questionnaires which will be a good resource for investigators faced with investigating this crime for the first time.

The book is well produced, and nicely formatted and organized. The writing in the chapters is clear and concise, and the book contains both subject and author indexes making it easy to find information quickly. This is a very useful addition to a forensic library, and should find a broad readership throughout the criminal justice community. Hopefully, it will be kept up to date as our knowledge about this disturbing crime increases.

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