

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

World AIDS Day is Wednesday, December 1st. Over 40 million people worldwide have HIV/AIDS. There is no vaccine or cure. (Source: World Health Organization)

Q. I heard about a new form of date rape in which rapists are mixing progesterex with rohypnol so they will sterilize the girl and won't have to worry about getting her pregnant. I was wondering if there have been any cases like this at the UA. Also, how prominent is date rape at this school?

A. This urban legend has been documented as far back as 1999, and has re-circulated recently on campuses around the country. While it is true that the sedative-hypnotic Rohypnol (flunitrazepam, a.k.a. *roofies*) does exist and has been used as a "date rape" drug, there is no evidence that the drug you call "progesterex" exists. Illegal in the United States but used in other countries to treat insomnia, Rohypnol can cause drowsiness, impaired motor skills and judgment, dizziness, disorientation, loss of inhibition, amnesia, and loss of consciousness. When mixed with alcohol or any other central nervous system depressant, Rohypnol can be lethal.

The tablet form of Rohypnol, when dissolved in a drink, is odorless, colorless and tasteless, making it impossible to detect by looking at or tasting the drink. Effects can begin within 10 to 30 minutes following ingestion. To avoid being victimized:

- Watch your drink from the moment it's poured until you finish it to make sure no one slips a foreign substance into it.
- Don't accept a drink from someone else, or drink from a punch bowl or other common source.

As for our campus, date rape does happen. Victims seldom report it, so we know that more sexual assaults occur than are documented. In most cases, the victim knows the perpetrator and alcohol is almost always involved. To learn more about sexual assault prevention, contact the UA Campus Health Service Oasis Program at 626-2051.

As to the "progesterex" hoax, this fear-inducing idea is quite illogical: 1) If such a drug were available that would easily sterilize women, it would be selling like hotcakes among the many couples seeking permanent contraception – especially since it would be much easier and cheaper than vasectomy or tubal ligation. 2) Potential rapists don't worry about pregnancy. They are motivated by their ability to exert power and control over their victim.

References: Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu



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