



## While 'date rape drug' is not common in B-CS, police warn students to exercise caution in any social situations

By STEPHEN WELLS  
Staff writer

4 hours in a day, 24 beers in a case." It is no coincidence so many college students are familiar with this turn of phrase, especially students of Texas A&M, who reportedly consume more beer per capita than any other school in the nation. After many binges, though, good-old alcohol begins to lose some of its luster. More and more, students are turning to more dangerous practices to get that buzz.

One of the notorious drugs of the '90s is rohypnol, an illegal drug in the United States that was at one time a prescription used to treat sleep disorders. The drug has been in the media for its use as a date rape drug, and its use with alcohol, rohypnol is a depressant. The case with other depressants is that rohypnol should never be combined with alcohol.

Dan Jones of the Brazos Valley Narcotics Trafficking Task Force described the molecular shape of rohypnol as similar to a "key." Jones said, "From what people are saying, it's supposed to be stronger than alcohol. When mixed with alcohol, there is a numbing effect. Say, instead of two beers being four, two times two is twenty."

Law enforcement officers are increasingly taking towards drugs like rohypnol, which is sharply defined.

From a legal standpoint, it is any prescription drug taken without a doctor's prescription is dangerous," Jones said. "Rohypnol is not available as a prescription drug anymore. And any time

you're mixing drugs with alcohol you're risking death."

The abuse of rohypnol is so widespread its manufacturer, Roche Laboratories, began to issue warning pamphlets and posters to community centers. Among the warnings was a description of an amnesia effect experienced by users for several hours after the drug is ingested.

This amnesia effect has made the drug popular with rapists. Rodney Sigler, patrol sergeant with the College Station Police Department, said the environment students put themselves in may put them at risk.

**“When you hear of its use as a date rape drug, it is introduced into the victim's drink without their knowledge. They become intoxicated to the point where they cannot resist an attack.”**

Dan Jones

Brazos Valley Narcotics Trafficking Task Force

"I think college is the prime target for it (rape assisted by rohypnol) because that is the dating age," Sigler said.

Jones said almost all accounts of the use of rohypnol in rape follow the same sequence of events.

"When you hear of its use as a 'date rape drug' it is introduced into the victim's drink without their knowledge," Jones said. "They become intoxicated to the

point that they cannot resist an attack."

Making rohypnol abuse harder to identify is the drug's alcohol-like effects. The user will appear drunk but will pass a breathalyzer test.

Adding to the problem is the apparent ease with which the drug is bought. While rohypnol is a controlled substance according to Schedule IV of the Federal Controlled Substances Act, it is readily available as a prescription drug in Mexico.

"It's relatively easy for a person to go across the border and get some," Jones said. "It's not hard to get a prescription for it in Mexico, then transport it back into Texas with you."

Rohypnol may be making its way into College Station night life.

"I personally don't know of any confirmed cases," Sigler said. "You do hear stories and rumors about it, but I don't know of any arrests made."

Jones said students at A&M should not be afraid to contact the police if they see something suspicious. Students can call Crime Stoppers (775-8477) or any police agency to leave anonymous tips about use of the drug.

"We get bogged down in some of these major conspiracy cases involving crack and heroin," Jones said. "We'd like to get more information about rohypnol, and we'd like to encourage people to come forward with information."

Safeguarding against the negative effects of rohypnol is not impossible but does demand some concessions be made. Students should not go to the club or bar alone or accept open drinks from a stranger.

PLEASE SEE DRUG ON PAGE 5.

## Self-defense classes raise crime awareness

By MARIUM MOHIUDDIN  
Staff writer

Tomorrow is the big Organic Chemistry test. That means an all-nighter for the typical student who probably procrastinated. After pouring hours and hours into the six chapters for the test, the clock strikes midnight and the student may decide, "I am tired, and I want to sleep."

So the long trek begins back to their car, which is parked quite a distance from the library. The path to the parking area is deserted and through a dimly-lit area. Faintly, footsteps can be heard from behind. The footsteps become louder and they seem to become more intense and determined to get closer. However, the student, not trusting their instincts, decides, "It is just another student walking to their car."

Connie Lavergne, author of *Self Defense From the Beginning*, said overcrowded prisons, personnel shortages and liberal probation and parole standards contribute to violent crime.

"The U.S. Department of Justice indicates in their annual statistical report that five out of six people will be victims of violent crimes (rape, robbery and assault), either completed or attempted, at least once in their lives," Lavergne said in her book. "About half the population will

be victimized by violent crime more than once. Approximately one out of every 133 Americans will become a murder victim."

Many universities and colleges are facing an increase in violent crimes.

Texas A&M University has various programs such as Dial-a-Ride and the Corps Escort Service to ensure safety of students. These programs may help, but the best defense for a student is to realize potential risks, assess dangerous situations and be prepared for a possible attack.

A&M provides self-defense classes to teach students techniques for protecting themselves. These classes focus on physical as well as mental techniques in defending themselves against an attack.

Classes are not only offered through the kinesiology department but also through University Plus.

Maryum Shaheed, a senior psychology major, said the classes have helped her to realize situations and how to handle problems.

"It (the self-defense class) teaches you how to be alert and how to carry yourself," Shaheed said. "You have to walk with confidence and pay attention to what is going on. People are not aware of their surroundings; they become engrossed in themselves or their conversations. They do not look around and pay attention."

PLEASE SEE CLASSES ON PAGE 5.



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