

Drugging in Copenhagen – a new trend

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Drugging, the administration of drugs to a person without their consent, has gained increased attention in Denmark. Victims report being unknowingly drugged for fun and to increase the party atmosphere, or perhaps it hasn't fully progressed into drug-facilitated crimes. Cases of drugging are being investigated as qualified violence with a penalty of up to six years. Due to the absence of other offenses, clinical examinations are typically not conducted, and the Police establish a quick collection of blood and urine samples after the incident. The Police question relevant individuals, review surveillance footage and request toxicological analysis of the samples.

In this retrospective study, we examined toxicological findings in cases involving 172 suspected victims of drugging from the Copenhagen Police district. The earliest identified case dates to April 2022, and the incidences have been steadily increasing since then. Women accounted for 74% of the cases, while the ages ranged from 13 to 80 years with a median of 23. The time between suspected drugging and sample collection was reported for 53 cases, ranging from 1.5 hours to 3½ days with a median of 16 hours. In 109 cases, relevant findings of drugging were detected with ethanol being the most prevalent drug in 71% of these cases. Blood alcohol concentrations ranged from 0.05 to 2.2 per mille, with a median of 0.74 before any back calculations. Illegal drugs such as cocaine (16%), THC (13%), and MDMA (7%) or their metabolites were prominent. Additionally, other relevant pharmaceuticals such as anxiolytics, antipsychotics, opioids, and antihistamines were frequently observed. In most cases, ethanol and only one or two different drugs were involved. Finally, if relevant positive toxicology occurred in the biological samples, a suggested probable impairment at the time of the incidence was included in the case report, along with the analytical results.

In conclusion, positive relevant findings were observed in 63% of the 172 drugging victims, with ethanol being the most common finding. Furthermore, typical illegal drugs and various pharmaceuticals were implicated in drugging cases, often in simple mixtures of a few drugs.