

Anti-obesity drugs with a modified lifestyle helps weight loss -- new study

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A study led by the University of Leicester has found that anti-obesity drugs coupled with lifestyle advice are effective in reducing weight and BMI.

Dr Laura Gray and colleagues from the Department of [Health Sciences](#) at the University of Leicester have published a paper in the journal *Obesity Review* which looks at the effectiveness of anti-obesity drugs and a modified lifestyle on [weight loss](#) and body mass index. The research was funded by an National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment (NIHR HTA) programme.

The review was based on 94 studies including over 24,000 individuals and assessed how effective the drugs were in terms of weight loss and body mass index at 3, 6 and 12 months. Two of the included drugs (sibutramine and rimonabant) were withdrawn from use during the review due to possible side effects.

The research also looked at the effect of [lifestyle advice](#) on weight loss. Lifestyle advice alone led to weight loss at 6 and 12 months but had less effective results in comparison to the anti-obesity drugs.

Laura Gray, lead author of the report said: "This is the first review to combine all available evidence for anti-obesity drugs in a single analysis. In clinical practice, orlistat should be considered to aid [weight reduction](#) with lifestyle interventions in those individuals who have not been successful in reducing their weight with lifestyle alone. The

effectiveness of the withdrawn interventions – sibutramine and rimonabant – suggests that more effective drugs may be available in the future if the side effect risk can be alleviated."

Researchers recognize that although drugs are effective, all drugs can lead to several side effects and it is advised that a modified lifestyle is a beneficial way to prevent weight gain and to reduce body weight.

Professor Kamlesh Khunti from the University of Leicester added: "Our study shows that some of the medications that we were using for weight management were beneficial, however, they have had to be withdrawn because of side effects. We are therefore limited in terms of [drug](#) treatment for weight reduction. Nevertheless, it is reassuring to note that lifestyle interventions (diet and exercise) were also effective, especially in people with diabetes at reducing weight in our study. [Lifestyle](#) interventions should therefore be promoted for weight reduction as they also have many other benefits as well."

Provided by University of Leicester

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