

New diabetes drug may help people with obesity lose weight

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A compound that mimics a naturally occurring hormone that regulates appetite may help people who have obesity but not diabetes to lose weight, a new study suggests. The research will be presented Sunday, March 18, at ENDO 2018, the Endocrine Society's 100th annual meeting in Chicago, Ill.

The compound, semaglutide, has a chemical structure that is very similar to the hormone glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1), which regulates both insulin secretion and appetite. In December, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the semaglutide injection Ozempic as a once-weekly adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycemic control in adults with type 2 [diabetes](#).

"This randomized study of [weight](#) loss induced with semaglutide in people with obesity but without diabetes has shown the highest weight reductions yet seen for any pharmaceutical intervention," said lead author Patrick M. O'Neil, Ph.D., Director of the Weight Management Center and Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C.

The new study included 957 participants, 35 percent of whom were male. All participants had a [body mass index](#) (BMI) of at least 30, but did not have diabetes. They were randomly assigned to seven different groups. Five groups received different doses of semaglutide (between 0.05 mg and 0.4 mg) via injection once daily; a sixth group received a placebo, and a seventh group received 3 mg of the diabetes drug

liraglutide. All participants received monthly diet and exercise counseling.

After one year, all participants receiving semaglutide had lost significantly more weight than those receiving placebo. The higher the dose participants received, the greater their average weight loss. Participants who received 0.05 mg of semaglutide daily lost an average of 6.0 percent of their body weight; the 0.1 mg group lost an average of 8.6 percent; the 0.3 mg group lost an average of 11.2 percent; and those receiving a daily dose of 0.4 mg lost an average of 13.8 percent. Those receiving liraglutide lost an average of 7.8 percent of their body weight, while those in the placebo group lost only 2.3 percent on average.

Sixty five percent of participants who received 0.4 mg of semaglutide per day lost at least 10 percent of their [body weight](#), compared with 10 percent of those in the placebo group and 34 percent of the liraglutide group.

The most common adverse events in those taking semaglutide were mild/moderate nausea, as seen previously with GLP-1 receptor agonists.

O'Neil noted that further studies of semaglutide for obesity are underway.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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