

Few eligible patients receive prescriptions for weight-loss medications

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(HealthDay)—Few eligible patients receive prescriptions for weight-loss

medications, according to a study published online Oct. 11 in *Obesity*.

David R. Saxon, M.D., from the University of Colorado in Aurora, and colleagues examined the prescribing patterns and use of antiobesity medications in 2,248,407 adults eligible for weight-loss medications. The researchers analyzed pharmacy- and patient-level electronic health record data for these adults.

The researchers found that 1.3 percent of the total cohort filled at least one prescription for weight-loss [medication](#). About three-quarters (76.6 percent) of all [prescriptions](#) were for phentermine. Overall, 51.7 percent of prescriptions were filled for at least 120 days, and 33.8 percent were filled for at least 360 days. Compared with 2009, there was an increase of 32.9 percent in medication days for all medications in 2015. Women, [black patients](#), and patients in higher body mass index classes had higher prescription rates. A total of 863 (23.8 percent) of the 3,919 providers who wrote at least one filled prescription were "frequent prescribers" who wrote 89.6 percent of all filled prescriptions.

"Future studies could use qualitative methods to understand the patient, provider, and care environment factors that may be responsible for the low rates of prescribing observed," the authors write. "In particular, factors that might explain the wide practice variations in prescribing rates and specific medications used between sites could be examined, as well as why women were much more likely to use one of these agents."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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