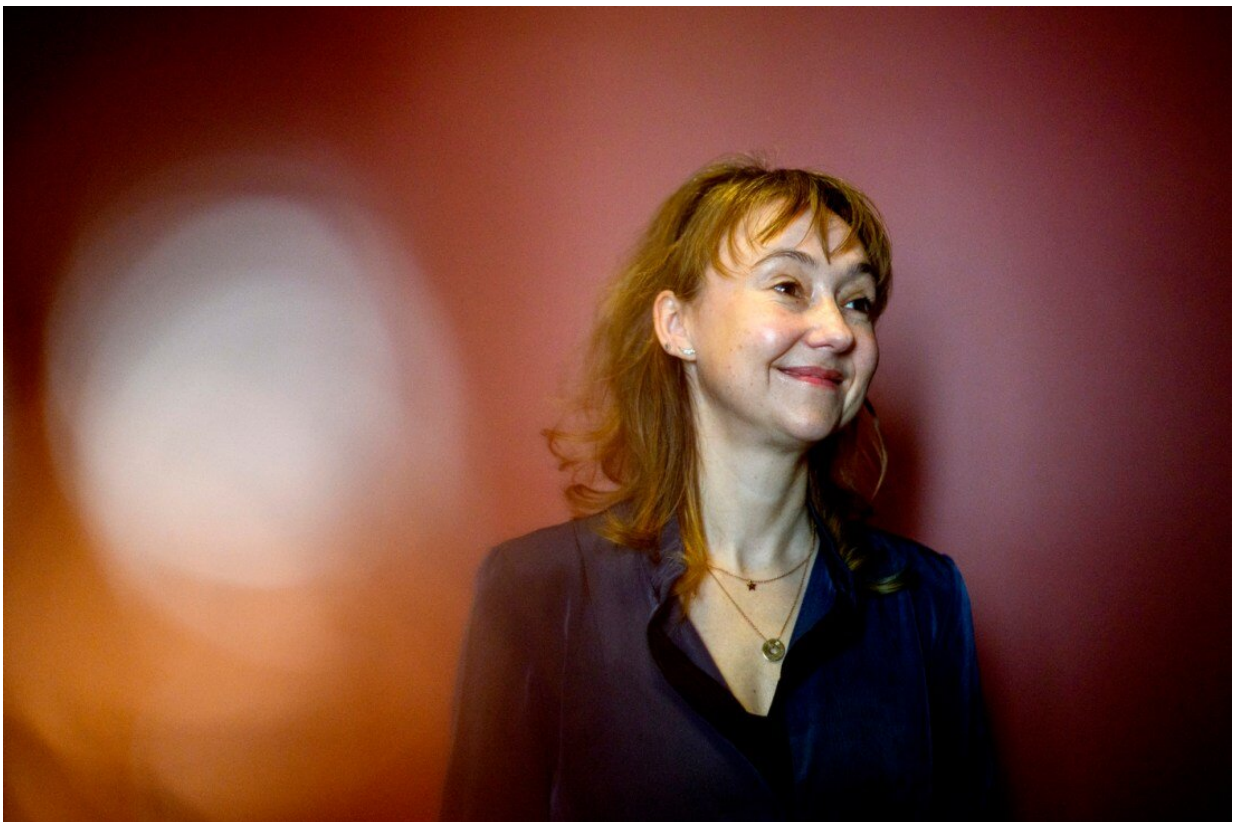


# Ozempic will give way to another quick-fix diet drug, then another and another, expert predicts

March 22 2023, by Cynthia McCormick Hibbert

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Rachel Rodgers associate professor, department of applied psychology, poses for a portrait. Credit: Matthew MODOONO/Northeastern University

It may be impossible to avoid the current hype around Ozempic, a new

weight-loss promoting drug that's so ubiquitous it ended up mentioned in Jimmy Kimmel's Oscar monolog.

Rachel Rodgers, associate professor of applied psychology at Northeastern, predicts the medication will fall from favor as a [weight loss](#) tool—and likely will be replaced by another "quick fix" that wreaks havoc with people's [body image](#) and, possibly, their bodies.

"There have been [weight loss drugs](#) since the 1930s," Rodgers says. "They inevitably are shown to have dangerous side effects. They are typically popular for a short term and then are revealed to be dangerous and are replaced with something else."

An authority on body image and disordered eating, Rodgers says she is not an expert on the biological underpinnings of Ozempic, an injectable medication developed to treat Type 2 diabetes that has been repurposed as a weight loss drug adopted by celebrities and some on [social media](#).

The [active ingredient](#) in Ozempic, semaglutide, works by inducing a feeling of fullness in users, which cuts down on their appetite.

As a critic of the diet industry who has seen other weight loss come and go, she says one constant is the need to shake things up with new products.

"The weight loss industry loves to make money out of people feeling insecure regarding the way they look," she says. "Novelty is an important part of that because it drives greater profits. You need to introduce novelty into the market to keep it going."

The drug is rumored to be so popular among celebrities that comedian Jimmy Kimmel opened his monolog on Oscar night with the quip, "When I look around at this room, I can't help but wonder, 'Is Ozempic

right for me?"

It's not surprising that a number of celebrities are rumored to be taking Ozempic to drop pounds, Rodgers says, adding there is a synergy between the diet and entertainment industries.

"The [entertainment industry](#), the weight loss industry, the fitness industry, the [food industry](#)—all these things work together. They're all on message about how people should be pursuing unrealistic appearance ideals; that weight is controllable to an extent that we know it's not; and that purchasing products and services will help people to achieve this appearance," she says.

Tech mogul Elon Musk is one of the highest profile people to have admitted to taking Wegovy, which is the same pharmaceutical product, semaglutide, as Ozempic, but in a slightly higher dose specifically prescribed for weight loss.

Among users of Twitter and TikTok, social media is rife with the hashtag #Ozempic.

There are TikTok 30-day Ozempic weight loss vacation challenges, Ozempic chicken soup recipes and even accounts dedicated to the vivid dreams some users say are caused by the medication that has to be injected once a week.

The emphasis on weight loss can cause poor body image, which is often associated with depression and loss of self-esteem, particularly in teenagers and young adults, Rodgers says.

She says it's no wonder people gravitate toward Ozempic, when social media users tout the appeal of immediate gratification with little effort.

"People like things that are a quick fix," Rodgers says. "This drug is marketed as something that would not require a grueling exercise regime. It is something that people would see as being easy."

In fact, Ozempic has been shown in [clinical trials](#) to produce modest weight loss in conjunction with lifestyle changes, Rodgers says.

While high blood sugar levels provoke hunger and food cravings, Ozempic works to keep blood sugar levels low, according to the Ozempic website.

It does this by helping the pancreas produce more insulin when [blood sugar](#) levels are high, preventing the liver from making and releasing too much sugar and slowing digestion, according to the website.

Side effects include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. And many people report regaining their appetite and their weight as soon as they go off the drug.

Rodgers says there is accumulating evidence behind a theory known as set point body weight, which means the body has a certain weight it wants to maintain and will adjust to periods of more or less food to keep it stable.

Keep in mind that thinness is not always synonymous with health and people whose body weight is higher than societal ideals can be fit and healthy, Rodgers says.

She prefers a thoughtful, [sustainable approach](#) to personal nutrition and fitness that encourages people to slow down and listen to their bodies' cues regarding their need for food, rest and movement.

The approach emphasizes taking care of one's body instead of restricting

it or putting it through a punishing routine.

Making decisions based on "how you're feeling, rather than in terms of what you think you'll look like, is a good option," Rodgers says.

Taking Ozempic to whip oneself into red carpet-shape sends "a dangerous message," she says.

"It normalizes taking something that is a medication," Rodgers says.

"The prevailing diet culture suggests that trying to lose or control [weight](#) is the right thing to do. But that is part of disordered eating."

Provided by Northeastern University

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