

Research finds semaglutide treatment is associated with remarkable reductions in alcohol use disorder symptoms

November 28 2023



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The first published evidence from humans that semaglutide specifically reduces the symptoms of alcohol use disorder (AUD) has been [published](#)

in *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* and details a recent collaboration between clinicians and scientists at the University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine and Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences.

The paper outlines the outcomes of six patients who received semaglutide during treatment for [weight loss](#), demonstrating a significant and noteworthy decrease in their Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) scores.

The paper is titled "Significant Decrease in Alcohol Use Disorder Symptoms Secondary to Semaglutide Therapy for Weight Loss: A Case Series." This collaboration has the potential to impact the lives of individuals struggling with AUD.

Semaglutide has made headlines recently as an FDA-approved drug for the treatment of diabetes under the name Ozempic, and weight loss under the name Wegovy. Recently, attention has turned to the possibility that semaglutide may have broader applications, including its potential impact on addictive behaviors such as reducing drug craving and alcohol consumption.

Pre-[clinical research](#) in rodents and monkeys has demonstrated that semaglutide is associated with marked decreases in drug and alcohol consumption, and many patients taking the drug for diabetes and weight loss report significant reductions in the urge to drink alcohol.

"This research marks a significant step forward in our understanding of the potential therapeutic applications of semaglutide in the field of addiction medicine," said the lead author, Dr. Jesse Richards, director of Obesity Medicine and assistant professor of Medicine at OU-TU School of Community Medicine.

Dr. Kyle Simmons, the paper's senior author and professor of Pharmacology & Physiology at OSU-Center for Health Sciences noted that this case series evidence paves the way for gold-standard placebo-controlled clinical trials such as the one he is currently conducting in Tulsa at the OSU Hardesty Center for Clinical Research and Neuroscience.

The trial is called [STAR](#) (Semaglutide Therapy for Alcohol Reduction). A [sister study](#) is also currently underway in Baltimore.

"This is an example of what can happen when our two R-1 research institutions in Oklahoma collaborate," said Simmons. "With the publication of this case series in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, the stage is set for future clinical trials, such as the STAR studies, which can definitively tell us whether semaglutide is safe and effective for treatment of alcohol use disorder."

The researchers emphasized the need for further investigation through larger, controlled studies to validate and expand upon these initial findings. Until the results of future placebo-controlled [clinical trials](#) are available, the authors believe that health care providers should point patients toward established behavioral treatments and medications that have been validated by the FDA for [alcohol](#) use disorder.

More information: Jesse R. Richards et al, Significant Decrease in Alcohol Use Disorder Symptoms Secondary to Semaglutide Therapy for Weight Loss, *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* (2023). [DOI: 10.4088/JCP.23m15068](#)

Provided by University of Oklahoma

Citation: Research finds semaglutide treatment is associated with remarkable reductions in alcohol use disorder symptoms (2023, November 28) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-11-semaglutide-treatment-remarkable-reductions-alcohol.html>

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