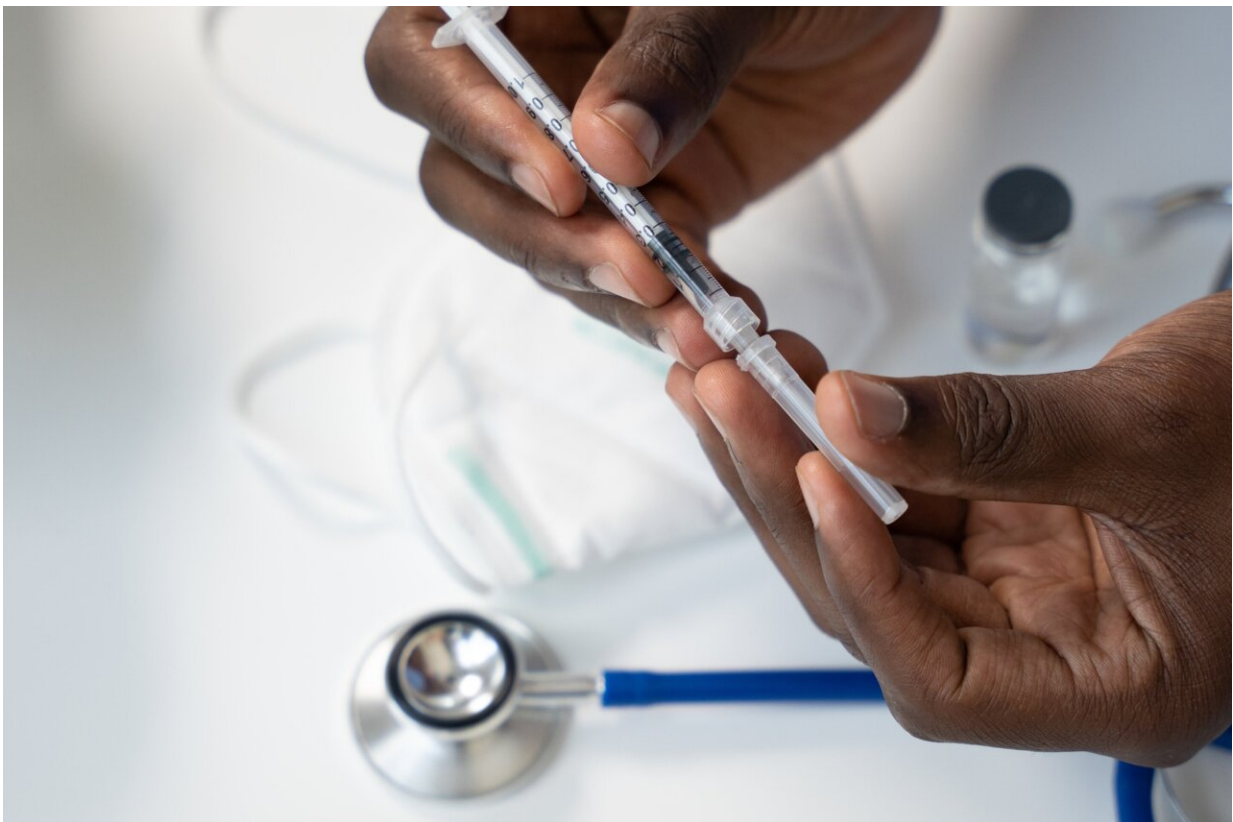


Diabetes and weight-loss drugs—Ozempic and Wegovy—not associated with increased suicidal thoughts, finds study

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A new study by researchers at the Case Western Reserve School of Medicine reveals that a chemical used in the diabetes drug Ozempic and

the weight-management drug Wegovy is not associated with an increased risk for suicidal thoughts.

The findings about the chemical—known as semaglutide—are particularly significant because this summer, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) launched an investigation of its potential dangers.

Semaglutide is a glucagon-like peptide receptor (GLP1R) chemical that helps regulate [blood sugar](#) in type 2 diabetes and reduces appetite.

After examining about 2 million patients with type 2 diabetes or obesity, the research team—led by biomedical informatics professor Rong Xu—found no evidence to support the EMA's concern that semaglutide may cause suicidal ideations.

In fact, the study recently accepted by the journal *Nature Medicine* found that Ozempic and Wegovy actually reduced the risk for suicidal ideations.

Xu, also the medical school's Center for AI in Drug Discovery director, was joined by medical school co-author Nathan Berger, the Hanna-Payne Professor of Experimental Medicine, and Pamela B. Davis, the Arline H., and Curtis F. Garvin Research Professor. Nora D. Volkow, director of the National Institute for Drug Abuse, also was a co-author.

To assess the association between semaglutide and the risk of suicidal ideations, the team began examining the [electronic health records](#) of nearly 101 million patients nationally. They then applied specific inclusion criteria to select 2 million patients further.

"It was similar to how we gathered real-time evidence of COVID-19 infections and outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic," Xu said.

Berger added that a clinical trial will be necessary to understand the side effects of semaglutide fully. In the meantime, the group has been able to analyze national data to help patients make educated decisions about the risks of using semaglutide.

In this study, two distinct patient populations were analyzed: Those with type 2 diabetes were provided Ozempic, while patients with obesity were prescribed Wegovy. Patients were tracked for six months to evaluate the occurrence of suicidal ideation as well as any recurrent [suicidal thoughts](#), as recorded in their health records.

Men and women; Black, White, and Hispanic patients; adults under 45; middle-aged adults (46–64); and [elderly patients](#) (65 years and older) also underwent separate examinations. Once more, the researchers reported that reductions in the risk of suicidal ideation were consistently found across age, ethnicity, and gender.

When compared to non-GLP1R anti-obesity and anti-diabetes drugs, it showed a lower risk for both the first incidence and recurrence of suicidal ideations in [patients](#) who were prescribed semaglutide (as Ozempic or Wegovy).

"The exploding popularity of this drug makes it imperative to understand all its potential complications," Davis said. "It's important to know that prior suggestions that the [drug](#) might trigger suicidal thoughts is not borne out in this very large and diverse population in the U.S."

More information: Wang W, Volkow ND, Berger NA, Davis PB, Kaelber DC, Xu R etl, Association of semaglutide with risk of suicidal ideations in a real-world cohort. *Nature Medicine* (2024) DOI: 10.1038/s41591-023-02672-2 , www.nature.com/articles/s41591-023-02672-2

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www.nature.com/articles/s41591-023-02691-z

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