

TRACK I PROPOSAL

Slimming Down Society: The Impact of Anti-Obesity Medications on Lifestyle and Consumer Behavior

Statement of Research Focus

In recent years, rising obesity rates have become a significant public health concern, affecting 42% of the population and prompting the development of new treatments to combat this epidemic. Among these, glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) medications, such as Ozempic and Wegovy, have emerged as highly effective in promoting weight loss (Liu *et al.*, 2023). Originally developed to manage type 2 diabetes by improving blood sugar control, GLP-1 drugs are now recognized for their significant potential to reduce body weight (e.g., Moore *et al.*, 2023; Popoviciu *et al.*, 2023; Wadden *et al.*, 2023). These medications are transforming individual eating habits and reshaping broader consumer behavior, societal expectations, and market trends, as highlighted by recent news coverage (e.g., Eisinger, 2024; Cerullo, 2023). This session aims to explore the impact of GLP-1 medications on lifestyle changes, particularly within the context of weight loss regimens, while examining their wider economic and societal implications. The discussion will focus on current approaches and future research directions, aiming to build consensus on policy implications for this inherently complex topic.

Goal of Proposed Track

Our proposed track aims to explore the lifestyle changes induced by the use of GLP-1 anti-obesity medications. Specifically, it will investigate how these medications, known for their appetite-suppressing effects, influence dietary habits, physical activity levels, overall lifestyle choices, and consumption and buyer behavior among users. Additionally, the research will delve into the psychological and social impacts of significant weight loss, examining shifts in self-perception, risk proneness, social interactions, and mental health. Beyond individual experiences, the study will assess the broader impact on consumer behavior, focusing on changes in purchasing patterns related to food, clothing, and health-related products. The research will also consider the potential ripple effects on various sectors of the economy, including food and beverage, retail, and healthcare. Finally, the study will evaluate the societal and economic implications of widespread adoption of these medications, exploring their influence on public health outcomes, healthcare costs, and societal attitudes towards obesity and weight management. While we explore the relevant concepts, we will do so within the theoretical and problem-based contexts the participants of our session bring to the table.

Methodology

The research will begin with a comprehensive literature review to understand the existing body of knowledge on GLP-1 medications, obesity management, and consumer behavior. This will help identify gaps that the current study can address. Following this, data will be collected through surveys and in-depth interviews. The survey will target individuals using GLP-1 medications, gathering quantitative data on their lifestyle changes, purchasing habits, and perceptions of the drugs' impact on their lives. Interviews with healthcare providers, nutritionists, and industry experts will provide qualitative insights into the broader implications of these medications. The collected data from consumers and providers will then be analyzed using quantitative methods to identify patterns and correlations, while qualitative analysis will be employed to explore the nuances of individual experiences and industry responses. This mixed-methods approach will provide a holistic understanding of the impact of GLP-1 medications on lifestyle changes and consumer behavior.

Expected Outcomes

The research is expected to provide a detailed understanding of how GLP-1 anti-obesity medications are reshaping lifestyles and consumer behavior. It will offer insights into the broader societal and economic implications of these changes, helping to inform healthcare policies, industry strategies, and public health initiatives. The findings could also contribute to the development of targeted interventions that support individuals in making sustainable lifestyle changes while navigating the evolving landscape of weight management. We expect to attract participants who are interested in the topic, such as behavioral scientists, healthcare professionals, public health experts, economists, consumer well-being researchers, and industry executives from the food and retail sectors, along with patient advocates and ethicists to explore the medical, economic, behavioral, and ethical impacts of GLP-1 anti-obesity medications. Before the conference, we invite both junior and senior researchers with an interest or expertise in the

subject matter to join us. We welcome scholars from a variety of disciplines. To encourage textured, impactful discussion, submissions of any methodology will be considered equally.

Desired outcomes from this conference include the development of a conceptual paper based on findings from case analysis, recommendations for policy makers, creation of cases for the TCR list-serve, and future research projects that may emerge from discussion as a result of the conference.

References

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