

Ozempic shows some promise for alcohol use disorder

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By Nancy Lapid

Bengaluru: Novo Nordisk's blockbuster GLP-1 diabetes drug Ozempic led to improvements in some measures of alcohol use disorder in a small trial, researchers reported on

Wednesday.

The 48 participants in the nine-week trial all had moderately severe alcohol use disorder and were given either once-weekly Ozempic or a placebo.

Ahead of the trial, they were invited to drink their preferred alcoholic beverages over a two-hour period in a comfortable setting.

In a second drinking session at the end of the trial, participants who received treatment with Ozempic consumed significantly less alcohol than at the first session, which was not the case for the placebo group, according to results published in JAMA Psychiatry.

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But when averaging the number of drinks only on the days alcohol was consumed, the reduction was greater in the Ozempic group. And over time, there was a greater reduction in heavy drinking days -- defined as four or more drinks for women and five or more for men -- in the Ozempic group.

The results suggest the potential of semaglutide - the main ingredient in Ozempic and Novo's higher-dose weight-loss drug Wegovy - and similar drugs "to fill an unmet need for the treatment of alcohol use disorder," study leader Klara Klein of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine said in a statement.

The popular newer diabetes and weight loss drugs are being tested for several additional health issues, such as cardiovascular protection and sleep apnea.

"Larger and longer studies in broader populations are needed," Klein said of the alcohol abuse study. "But these initial findings are promising."
(Reporting by Nancy Lapid; Editing by Bill Berkrot)

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