

# Semaglutide in the spotlight: weighing benefits against rising concerns

Patrick Ashinze, Toufik Abdul-Rahman  and Andrew Awuah Wireko

**Keywords:** diabetes, metabolism, obesity, semaglutide

Received: 8 November 2023; revised manuscript accepted: 4 December 2023.

Dear editor,

The recent surge in popularity of the antidiabetic drug, Semaglutide, marketed under the names Wegovy (which has the highest concentration of the active drug), Rybelsus, and Ozempic,<sup>1</sup> for its notable efficacy in weight loss has raised pertinent considerations. Semaglutide is a glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonist (GLP-1 RA) that is administered once weekly. It is effective in reducing hemoglobin A1C levels and promoting weight loss in patients with type 2 diabetes.<sup>2</sup>

Further studies demonstrated significant weight loss and improvements in cardiometabolic risk factors with evidence showing good toleration, although gastrointestinal adverse effects were common.<sup>2,3</sup>

While it is commendable to find a drug that offers promising results beyond its primary intended purpose, the skyrocketing demand in developed nations necessitates vigilance.

First and foremost, there is potential for off-label abuse. With societal pressure to attain perceived ideal body weights, it is conceivable that individuals may seek this medication outside of its primary indication, potentially exposing themselves to unforeseen risks. Long-term side effects, especially when taken by non-diabetics, are not yet well documented and require continued monitoring.

Furthermore, the surge in demand can invariably drive up costs. This inflation could inadvertently limit access for diabetic patients who genuinely require Semaglutide for glycemic control. Price escalation also means increased out-of-pocket expenses, further burdening the healthcare systems of many developed countries and by

extension, stifling the likelihood of patronage and usage in low- and middle-income countries.

It is imperative that endocrinologists and by extension other medical professionals, policy-makers, strategic stakeholders, and regulatory bodies remain vigilant. Best still, it is most convenient to note that Semaglutide is a prescription medication and should be used under the guidance of a physician. It is not intended for recreational or non-medical use. Ongoing research, public awareness campaigns about potential risks, a vetting system for usage, and a structured pricing mechanism are vital to ensuring that Semaglutide remains both accessible and safe.

## Declarations

### *Ethics approval and consent to participate*

Not applicable.

### *Consent for publication*

Not applicable.

### *Author contributions*

**Patrick Ashinze:** Conceptualization; Writing – original draft.

**Toufik Abdul-Rahman:** Supervision; Writing – review & editing.

**Andrew Awuah Wireko:** Writing – review & editing.

### *Acknowledgements*

The authors would like to acknowledge Toufik's World Medical Association for providing the invaluable resources to kick start, culminate, and leverage this research project.

*Ther Adv Endocrinol  
Metab*

2024, Vol. 15: 1–2

DOI: 10.1177/

20420188231222394

© The Author(s), 2024.  
Article reuse guidelines:  
sagepub.com/journals-  
permissions

Correspondence to:

**Toufik Abdul-Rahman**  
Department of Research,  
Toufik's World Medical  
Association, Sumy,  
Ukraine; Medical Institute,  
Sumy State University,  
2, Rymkogo-Korsakova,  
Sumy 40007, Ukraine  
[drakelin24@gmail.com](mailto:drakelin24@gmail.com)

**Patrick Ashinze**  
Saint Francis Catholic  
Hospital, Okpara Inland,  
Delta State, Nigeria  
Faculty of Clinical  
Sciences, University of  
Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Department of Research,  
Toufik's World Medical  
Association, Sumy,  
Ukraine

**Andrew Awuah Wireko**  
Department of Research,  
Toufik's World Medical  
Association, Sumy,  
Ukraine

Medical Institute, Sumy  
State University, Sumy,  
Ukraine

#### *Funding*

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.


#### *Competing interests*

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

#### *Availability of data and materials*

Not applicable.

#### **ORCID iD**

Toufik Abdul-Rahman  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0153-287X>

#### **References**

1. Drugs.com. What is Semaglutide, <https://www.drugs.com/semaglutide.html> (accessed 13 October 2023).
2. Collins L and Costello RA. Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists. In: *StatPearls* [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing, 2023.
3. Chao AM, Tronieri JS, Amaro A, *et al.* Clinical insight on semaglutide for chronic weight management in adults: patient selection and special considerations. *Drug Design Dev Ther* 2022; 16: 4449–4461.

Visit Sage journals online  
[journals.sagepub.com/  
home/tae](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/tae)

 Sage journals