# Novo Nordisk to Investigate Effects of Semaglutide on Alcohol Consumption in Clinical Trial



Novo Nordisk plans to begin a clinical trial this month to study the effects of semaglutide, the active ingredient in Ozempic, and other medications on alcohol consumption. Ozempic, primarily approved for type 2 diabetes and often used off-label for weight loss, has reportedly reduced cravings for alcohol and vaping among some users. The Danish pharmaceutical company aims to investigate whether these medicines can improve liver health, with changes in alcohol consumption as a secondary endpoint.

The trial will focus on alcohol-related liver disease and will assess the impact on enhanced liver fibrosis over 28 weeks. Approximately 240 participants will be enrolled, starting May 20. Although Novo Nordisk has no plans to explore semaglutide for alcohol addiction, it acknowledged anecdotal reports of reduced addiction cravings among users, a phenomenon aligned with the medication's effect on brain reward centers.

Researchers, such as Christian Hendershot from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, welcomed the trial as a necessary step towards additional treatment options. Studies on animals have indicated that semaglutide can reduce alcohol intake by diminishing its rewarding effects. Novo Nordisk’s CEO previously noted the challenges of studying addiction widely but mentioned opportunities to collect relevant data in large-scale studies.

Meanwhile, competitor Eli Lilly has observed similar anecdotal evidence but has no announced plans to develop its GLP-1-based medications for addiction. The market for addiction medications, particularly for alcohol use, has faced financial challenges, deterring pharmaceutical companies from extensive development in this area.

In the new trial, Novo Nordisk will also evaluate experimental drugs cagrilintide and zalfermin, individually and in combination with semaglutide. Researchers emphasize that these medicines should not be prescribed for alcohol-use disorder until their safety and efficacy are validated through well-controlled clinical trials.