

Usage and Perception of New Parenteral Medications for Weight Loss in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

The rising prevalence of obesity in Saudi Arabia has driven interest in novel pharmacological treatments, particularly glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs) such as semaglutide and tirzepatide. These parenteral medications have demonstrated significant efficacy in weight reduction and metabolic improvement. However, their adoption, perception, and real-world utilization among patients and healthcare providers in Saudi Arabia remain underexplored. This study assessed the usage patterns, awareness, and perception of semaglutide and tirzepatide for weight loss among healthcare professionals and individuals seeking obesity management. We conducted a cross-sectional survey to assess the perception and usage of the new parenteral weight loss medications in Saudi Arabia. We used an online questionnaire in Google Survey Form to collect data. The data collected was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and IBM's Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Most participants have not been previously diagnosed with obesity: 347 (66.9%), while 138 (26.6%) have been previously diagnosed. Most respondents indicated interest in losing weight 429 (82.8%). Most respondents to the items related to knowledge of these medications have obtained them through prescriptions 70 (62.5%) and are aware of the side effects, how to use them, and the need for expert counseling before usage. We found evidence of an association between interest in losing weight and age [χ^2 (3, N = 518) = 25.3, $p < 0.001$]. We also found a relationship between gender and participants' interest in losing weight ($P < 0.001$). We found that gender is a predictor and that females have 74% lower odds of being previously diagnosed with overweight/obesity (aOR 0.28; 95% [CI], 0.15-0.53; $p < 0.001$). Our study demonstrated that nationality predicts awareness of the new weight loss medications, and non-Saudis have 3% lower odds of knowing or being aware of semaglutide and tirzepatide (aOR 0.89; 95% [CI], 0.618-1294; $p = 0.005$). In conclusion, our study found that respondents have a strong interest and willingness to manage their weight using weight medications (semaglutide or tirzepatide). This will have a significant impact on the future management of obesity in many aspects, such as guiding healthcare policies, pharmaceutical development, healthcare practices, public health campaigns, and research initiatives.

Bahrain Med Bull 2025; 47 (4): 2619 - 2628

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