Why We’re Changing Our Minds on GLP-1s

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When Ozempic and the related GLP-1 drugs first came out, I was deeply skeptical.

The data on muscle wasting, gastrointestinal issues, and the sharp rebound in weight gain once the drugs were stopped gave me pause. For diabetics and those who are severely overweight, the trade-offs seemed justifiable—these medications were life-changing, even life-saving. But overall, GLP-1s looked to me like the next Fen-Phen: a massive class action lawsuit waiting to happen.

Since then, my view has shifted. As Malcolm Gladwell says, one of the advantages of having a brain is that we can change our minds.

Over the past several months, I've been in conversation with several medical professionals who've been sending me emerging data, and what I'm seeing is unexpected. Early studies suggest GLP-1 drugs may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, osteoarthritis, certain cancers, and even addictive behaviors. The anti-inflammatory effects, it turns out, could be a key part of this story.

Some clinicians are even beginning to theorize that these benefits might be achievable at much lower doses than currently prescribed—micro-dosing is on the table. That said, we're still in uncharted waters: dosing strategies, long-term effects, and what happens when someone discontinues the medication are all still unclear. More research is absolutely needed.

I'm not a doctor, and I'm not recommending anyone rush to try these drugs. What I am saying is this: when new information arises, it's worth paying attention—even if it challenges what we think we know.

Pharma has a well-earned reputation for unintended consequences, and off-target effects are often to the downside. But sometimes, science surprises us in good ways.

Understanding The Science of GPL-1 Drugs

About 1 in 8 U.S. adults has tried or currently uses a GLP-1 medication (like Ozempic and Wegovy), with 25% of users over the age of 60**.** A major study in *Nature Medicine* revealed **these drugs may reduce risks of Alzheimer's**, cardiovascular disease, substance abuse, infectious illnesses, and several respiratory conditions.

A second study on more than 2 million people with diabetes found that GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy not only lower the risk of heart disease, kidney disease, and stroke, but may also reduce risks for certain cancers, including breast cancer. The study also flagged potential risks, such as an increased likelihood of gastrointestinal issues, including bowel obstructions and pancreatitis. The promise is compelling—but careful management is essential**?**

How They Work

- **Mimic Hormones:** GLP-1 medications mimic a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1, which influences both the brain and body. They regulate appetite by targeting brain receptors in areas controlling hunger, promoting a feeling of fullness and slowing gastric emptying, which leads to weight loss.
- **Reduce Inflammation:** Simultaneously, they reduce inflammation, enhance neuroplasticity, and improve metabolic health, protecting against Alzheimer's, cardiovascular disease, infections, and respiratory conditions.

What You Should Know

1. **Muscle Loss:** While effective for weight loss, these medications **can result in rapid muscle loss**—accounting for as much as 40% of total weight lost without intervention. Strength training and high-protein meals are non-negotiables to support muscle retention.
2. **Dehydration:** Because these medications suppress thirst, there is an increased risk of dehydration.
3. **Rebound Weight Gain:** Research shows that many people who stop taking GLP-1 drugs experience **significant weight regain,** often reversing much of the initial weight loss unless paired with lasting lifestyle and behavioral changes.
4. **Other risks:** GLP-1s can increase the risk of gastrointestinal disorders, arthritic disorders, low blood pressure, and kidney dysfunction.

The Big Picture:?

GLP-1 medications are powerful tools for managing weight and improving overall health, but they're not magic bullets. They work best as part of a comprehensive approach that prioritizes long-term wellness, intentional habits, and a proactive partnership with your doctor.

Have you considered taking GLP-1s? Are you taking them? Write and tell us your story.

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