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## Semaglutide improves outcomes for obese patients with common skin condition, new study shows

**(Wednesday, 25 September 2024, Amsterdam, Netherlands) A pioneering study, presented today at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2024, demonstrates the significant potential of semaglutide in treating hidradenitis suppurative (HS), a common and chronic skin condition, in people with obesity.<sup>1</sup>**

This is the first study to explore the use of semaglutide for HS, marking a critical milestone in the search for effective treatments for this painful and debilitating condition.

HS is currently estimated to affect approximately 1 in 100 people, with obesity being a significant risk factor. The condition is characterised by painful abscesses and scarring, which can severely impact patients' quality of life.<sup>2</sup> Despite advancements in managing HS, effective treatments remain limited and can cause serious side effects, highlighting a need for alternative and better-tolerated treatment options.<sup>3</sup>

The study, which examined data from June 2020 to March 2023, assessed health outcomes for 30 obese patients (27 females, 3 males, average age 42) with varying stages of HS. Patients received semaglutide – a glucagon-like peptide (GLP)-1RA – at a once-weekly mean dose of 0.8mg for an average of 8.2 months.

Researchers monitored changes in body mass index (BMI), weight, flare frequency, Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) value\*, and pain levels before and after starting semaglutide, as well as biochemical markers, including C-reactive protein (CRP), glucose and haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels.

The results showed marked improvements in patient outcomes across several key measures.

Patients experienced fewer HS flare-ups, with the frequency of these episodes reducing from an average of once every 8.5 weeks to once every 12 weeks. Quality of life also improved significantly, reflected in a reduction of the DLQI score from an average of 13/30 to 9/30. Notably, one-third of patients achieved a DLQI score reduction of four points or more, equalling or surpassing the minimally important differences for this index.

The average BMI of patients decreased from 43.1 to 41.5 and their mean weight dropped significantly from 117.7kg to 111.6kg, with one-third of patients losing 10kg or more during the treatment period.

Further positive changes were observed in the biochemical markers assessed. HbA1c levels decreased from 39.3 to 36.6, indicating better glycaemic control, while average CRP levels fell from 7.8 to 6.9, signifying reduced inflammation.



Dr Daniel Lyons, lead researcher from St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, explains, "Our findings suggest that semaglutide, even at modest doses, can offer substantial benefits in managing HS. While the drug's role in promoting weight loss is well-established, what's particularly exciting is its potential to also reduce the frequency of HS flare-ups, contributing to the notable improvements observed in patients' quality of life."

Dr Lyons adds, "The results are highly encouraging and could represent a major breakthrough in HS treatment. To build on this progress, larger randomised controlled trials are necessary to validate these findings. Additionally, future research should explore the impact of higher doses of semaglutide and its effects independently of concomitant medications to fully understand its potential."

He concludes, "Ultimately, we hope our preliminary data will encourage dermatologists to consider weight loss medication as an adjunct to existing HS treatments and inspire further research in this area aimed at improving outcomes for people living with this challenging condition."

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#### Note to editors:

A reference to the EADV Congress 2024 must be included in all coverage and/or articles associated with this study.

For more information or to arrange an expert interview, please contact [press@eadv.org](mailto:press@eadv.org).

#### Key terms defined:

**Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI):** a self-administered validated questionnaire designed to measure the health-related quality of life of adults suffering from a skin disease. The DLQI value is calculated by adding the score of each question, resulting in a maximum of 30 and a minimum of 0. The higher the score, the more quality of life is impaired. A score higher than 10 indicates that the patient's life is being severely affected by their skin disease.<sup>4</sup>

#### About the study author:

Dr. Daniel Lyons is part of the Department of Dermatology at St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland.

#### About EADV:

Founded in 1987, EADV is a non-profit organisation with a vision to form a premier European Dermatology-Venereology Society. The Academy counts over 11,000 members from all around the globe, providing a valuable service for every type of dermatologist-venereologist professional. The EADV is dedicated to advancing patient care, education and research by providing a unique platform to bring people together and share ideas.



This year, the EADV Congress will take place in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and online from 25-28 September 2024. Find out more: <https://eadv.org/congress/>

#### References:

1. Lyons, D., Nathan, A., Pender, E., Murray, G., Smith, C., Kirby, B., & Hughes, R. (2024). Semaglutide for weight loss in obese patients as an adjunctive treatment for hidradenitis suppurative: Its impact on disease control and quality of life. Presented at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2024.
2. NHS. (2023). Hidradenitis suppurativa (HS). Retrieved from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hidradenitis-suppurativa/#:~:text=The%20exact%20cause%20of%20hidradenitis,about%201%20in%20100%20people>
3. The Health Policy Partnership. (2024). Call to action: improving the lives of people with hidradenitis suppurative (HS) in the United Kingdom. Retrieved from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hidradenitis-suppurativa/#:~:text=The%20exact%20cause%20of%20hidradenitis,about%201%20in%20100%20people>
4. Cardiff University. (2019). Dermatology Life Quality Index. Retrieved from: <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/medicine/resources/quality-of-life-questionnaires/dermatology-life-quality-index>