

Embargoed: 00:01 CEST, Thursday, 18 September 2025

GLP-1RA drugs dramatically reduce death and cardiovascular risk in psoriasis patients

(Paris, France, Thursday, 18 September 2025) Psoriasis patients treated with glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1RAs) face a 78% lower risk of death and a 44% lower risk of major cardiovascular events compared to those taking other diabetes or weight-loss medications, new research has shown.¹

The study – the largest of its kind and presented today at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2025 – also found that GLP-1RAs significantly reduced the risk of alcohol abuse by 65% and substance abuse by nearly 50%.

Psoriasis is a chronic skin condition affecting 2-3% of the population,² linked not only to visible symptoms but also to higher risks of heart attack, stroke and psychiatric issues, including depression, anxiety and increased alcohol or substance use.³⁻⁶ GLP-1RAs, including semaglutide and liraglutide, are widely used to treat type 2 diabetes and obesity.⁷ However, this emerging evidence suggests they may also offer important benefits for psoriasis patients..

The international research team retrieved data from a database of over 110 million patients in the United States. Outcomes were compared for over 6,000 psoriasis patients with diabetes or obesity over a two-year period, including 3,048 who were treated with GLP-1RAs and 3,048 who received other anti-diabetic or anti-obesity drugs.

Patients included in the retrospective cohort analysis were over 18 years old, had a confirmed diagnosis of psoriasis requiring systemic therapy, and had received continuous treatment with either a GLP-1RA or an alternative anti-diabetic or anti-obesity medication for at least 24 months. After matching for age, sex, and comorbidities, the benefits of GLP-1RAs were clear and consistent across all sensitivity analyses, using propensity score matching to control for potential confounders.

Professor Ralf Ludwig, lead author of the study, commented, “Our findings suggest that GLP-1 receptor agonists may offer benefits beyond their effects on weight and glucose control, particularly for cardiovascular and psychiatric outcomes in people with psoriasis. We hypothesise that GLP-1 receptor activation may inhibit proinflammatory mediators, which are elevated in people with psoriasis. Additionally, GLP-1 receptors are expressed in parts of the brain involved in mood and the reward system, which could explain the reductions we observed in alcohol and substance use.”

These benefits appeared especially pronounced in psoriasis patients compared with matched controls, suggesting a possible synergy between systemic inflammation in psoriasis and the mechanisms of GLP-1RAs. Safety outcomes

were consistent with those seen in the general population, with no significant increase in adverse effects such as hypoglycaemia, nausea, or constipation.

“Given their safety profile and the range of benefits observed, GLP-1RAs could become a preferred treatment for people with psoriasis who also require therapy for diabetes or weight management,” Prof. Ludwig furthered.

“Psoriasis management has traditionally focused on controlling skin symptoms, but these findings emphasise the need to consider the wider health risks faced by patients. GLP-1RAs may offer a valuable dual benefit, improving both metabolic control and long-term health outcomes, representing an important step forward in holistic care for people living with psoriasis.”

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Note to editors:

A reference to the EADV Congress 2025 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.

About the study author:

Professor Ralf Ludwig is a trained dermatologist with a strong interest in improving outcomes in patients diagnosed with non-communicable chronic inflammatory skin diseases. In his research he performs in-depth molecular phenotyping, utilises pre-clinical model systems, as well as large real-world-datasets. He is currently serving as Professor and Director at the Lübeck Institute of Experimental Dermatology, University of Lübeck, Germany.

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 12,000 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 Paris, France, and online from 17-20 September 2025. Find out more: <https://eadv.org/congress/>

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