

Scientists Just Uncovered Another Potential Perk of GLP-1s

At this point, you can probably list in your sleep all the health conditions that GLP-1s like Ozempic and Zepbound may help treat, ranging from on-label treatments for obesity and type 2 diabetes to emerging research suggesting they may lessen [migraine severity](#) and prevent [Alzheimer's](#).

But now, scientists have uncovered that these medications may help with [psoriasis](#), a skin condition and chronic autoimmune-related disorder that occurs when your immune system mistakenly attacks healthy skin cells.

"GLP-1 medications appear to have benefits beyond weight loss and diabetes control, including anti-inflammatory effects," says [Samip Sheth, MD](#), lead study author and a resident in the Departments of Dermatology and Internal Medicine at the University of Minnesota. "Since psoriasis is an inflammatory disease linked to obesity and type 2 diabetes, we wanted to see whether these drugs might also improve psoriasis outcomes."

Here's what the study uncovered, plus why these medications may help people with psoriasis.

Meet the experts: [Gary Goldenberg, MD](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital; [Ife J. Rodney, MD](#), founding director of Eternal Dermatology + Aesthetics; [Cindy Wassef, MD](#), a dermatologist at Premier Health Associates in Randolph, New Jersey; [Samip Sheth, MD](#), lead study author and a resident in the Department of Dermatology and Internal Medicine at the University of Minnesota.

What did the study find?

The scientific review, published in [JAMA Dermatology](#), analyzed data on the impact of GLP-1 medications on people with psoriasis. Researchers found that GLP-1 medications were associated with reductions in psoriasis symptom severity and affected skin area, with some reporting improvements ranging from 40 percent to 80 percent. Patients who had obesity or type 2 diabetes appeared to experience the greatest improvements.

That said, the analysis isn't perfect: Most of the studies were small, short-term, and didn't have a control group. Ultimately, the researchers point out that larger clinical trials are needed to see if GLP-1s could be a future treatment for psoriasis.

Why might GLP-1s help with psoriasis?

Experts have a few theories as to what might be behind this association.

These medications seem to tamp down inflammation in the body, says [Ife J. Rodney, MD](#), founding director of Eternal Dermatology + Aesthetics. "Psoriasis is considered a systemic disease because it's related to inflammation," she explains.

GLP-1s can also specifically help lower levels of IL-17, a group of pro-inflammatory proteins in the body that are also targeted by some psoriasis treatments, says [Cindy Wassef, MD](#), a dermatologist at Premier Health Associates in Randolph, NJ.

Finally, psoriasis is also linked to metabolic conditions like obesity and type 2 diabetes—and GLP-1s are designed to treat those, points out [Gary Goldenberg, MD](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital.

"GLP-1 agonists can cause significant weight loss, leading to reduced inflammatory signals produced by excess fat, especially around internal organs," Goldenberg says. This can lower levels of inflammatory proteins in the body that drive psoriasis, he says. That might also explain why people with obesity and type 2 diabetes saw the greatest improvement, Sheth adds.

What's the takeaway?

We're not quite at the point of saying that people with psoriasis should take a GLP-1 medication to treat the condition. But the findings do suggest that this could be another use for these medications in the future. "GLP-1 medications may have a role beyond their approved uses and could become an important adjunctive option for psoriasis, especially in patients with obesity or type 2 diabetes," says Sheth.

Wassef agrees. "We have just started to scratch the surface when it comes to GLP-1s and their use in dermatology and for skin disease," she says.

Ultimately, more research is needed, and future data may help psoriasis patients with additional treatment options.

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