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PHARMA

Eli Lilly's Zepbound Beats Novo Nordisk's Wegovy in First Head-to-Head Study

People who took Zepbound lost 17 pounds more on average after 72 weeks of treatment than those who were given Novo Nordisk's drug

By [Peter Loftus](#) [Follow](#)

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The results could give Zepbound an edge over Wegovy in one of the fastest-growing prescription-drug markets. PHOTO: REUTERS

In the first head-to-head test, Eli Lilly's Zepbound obesity drug helped people lose significantly more weight than its main competitor, Novo Nordisk's Wegovy.

The details

People taking Zepbound lost 20.2% of their body weight on average after 72 weeks of treatment in the Lilly-sponsored study, compared with a 13.7% loss for Wegovy patients, Lilly said Wednesday.

That translated into an average 50-pound loss for people who took Zepbound, while Wegovy users lost 33 pounds.

The significance

Lilly's new study is the first randomized clinical trial to demonstrate that Zepbound could induce more weight loss than Wegovy in head-to-head testing.

Previous studies sponsored by Lilly and Novo Nordisk found that each of the drugs helped people who are obese lose significant amounts of weight, but those trials didn't compare Zepbound and Wegovy against each other.

Lilly will probably cite the results from its new study in the company's Zepbound marketing. It could give Lilly an edge with doctors and patients in one of the fastest-growing and most lucrative prescription-drug markets.

Novo Nordisk responded by saying Wegovy is the only anti-obesity medicine proven to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes in people with heart disease and obesity.

The context

The trial enrolled more than 750 people who have obesity or who are overweight with weight-related complications, and who didn't have diabetes. Patients received

weekly injections of either drug, up to the maximum tolerated dose.

The release of the results comes after both Lilly and Novo Nordisk boosted production and said recently that all dose levels are available. Both had struggled to make enough of their drugs to keep up with soaring demand, resulting in shortages.

After resolving the supply issues, the companies have shifted focus to promoting the drugs to patients and doctors. Lilly is now stepping up direct-to-consumer advertising, including new TV spots that compete with Wegovy ads for viewers' attention.

The new data will sharpen the fight between Lilly and Novo as they try to grab a bigger share of the booming market for obesity drugs.

Write to Peter Loftus at Peter.Loftus@wsj.com

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