

# The NMPA approves Novo Nordisk's Wegovy, once-weekly GLP-1 receptor agonist

Market Event Summary

# Wegovy becomes the first once-weekly GLP-1 receptor agonist approved to treat obesity in China.

## Background

- In China, the treatment of obesity is dominated by domestic players Benemae Pharma's Yishengtai (beinaglutide) and Zhongmei Huadong Pharmaceutical's Liluping (liraglutide biosimilar). These products are modestly effective but have poor dosing schedules that often discourage compliance.
- Effective antiobesity therapies that ensure better patient compliance are greatly needed. We anticipate that this unmet need will be largely met with the entry of the once-weekly formulation of semaglutide SC.

## Event

- In June 2024, the NMPA approved Novo Nordisk's Wegovy, based on the positive results from the STEP program. This global program comprises large-scale clinical studies of semaglutide SC in approximately 25,000 obese and overweight participants, including in China.
- Results from the STEP clinical program demonstrated semaglutide SC's efficacy eliciting sustained weight loss, reducing patients' waist circumference, improving patients' blood lipid levels, and delaying the progression of diabetes. Novo Nordisk reported average weight losses of 17% (16.8 kg) after treatment with once-weekly semaglutide SC for 16 months.

## Clarivate's takeaways

### \$ Commercial implications

In 2033, Clarivate Epidemiology estimates, 500 million people in mainland China will be overweight / obese, representing substantial commercial opportunity for semaglutide SC. Considering its promising clinical and dosing profile, we expect Wegovy to emerge as a market leader, generating more than \$1 billion in sales by 2033.



### Adoption in real-world settings

Given Wegovy's early entry compared with that of other weekly dosed therapies in the pipeline, including tirzepatide (Eli Lilly's Zepbound), cagrilintide / semaglutide FDC (Novo Nordisk's CagriSema), and mazdutide (Innovent Biologics), coupled with the additional cardiovascular benefits it offers, we expect Wegovy to enjoy substantial uptake in China despite the anticipated entry of biosimilars starting in 2028.



### Market access and reimbursement

Considering the high prevalence of obesity / overweight in China and the burden on healthcare budgets, we do not anticipate Wegovy's inclusion in the NRDL. Patients will likely have to pay for the drug out-of-pocket.

# About the author



## Sahil Arora

### Healthcare Research and Data Analyst

Sahil Arora is involved in primary and secondary market research to create syndicated landscape and forecast content and provide market insights into various therapy areas in China, such as NASH, bladder cancer, CAR T-cell therapies, obesity/overweight, and ulcerative colitis. He has expertise in market forecasting, competitive intelligence, key opinion leader (KOL) identification, KOL profiling, and social media footprint analysis. He holds a master's degree in pharmaceutical management from NIPER Mohali in India.

### Clarivate coverage in China in 2024

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Obesity/Overweight
- Psoriasis
- Non-Small-Cell Lung Cancer
- Breast Cancer
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Gastroesophageal Cancer
- Asthma
- Prostate Cancer
- Renal Cell Carcinoma
- Colorectal Cancer
- Schizophrenia
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Systemic Lupus Erythematosus



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