

## TCR 2025 – Track I

### **Slimming Down Society: The Impact of Anti-Obesity Medications on Lifestyle and Consumer Behavior**

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#### **Statement of Research Focus**

In recent years, rising obesity rates have become a significant public health concern, affecting 42% of the population and prompting the development of new treatments to combat this epidemic. Among these, glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) medications, such as Ozempic and Wegovy, have emerged as highly effective in promoting weight loss (Liu *et al.*, 2023). Originally developed to manage type 2 diabetes by improving blood sugar control, GLP-1 drugs are now recognized for their significant potential to reduce body weight (e.g., Moore *et al.*, 2023; Popoviciu *et al.*, 2023; Wadden *et al.*, 2023). These medications are transforming individual eating habits and reshaping broader consumer behavior, societal expectations, and market trends, as highlighted by recent news coverage (e.g., Eisinger, 2024; Cerullo, 2023). This session aims to explore the impact of GLP-1 medications on lifestyle changes, particularly within the context of weight loss regimens, while examining their wider economic and societal implications. The discussion will focus on current approaches and future research directions, aiming to build consensus on policy implications for this inherently complex topic.

#### **Goal of Proposed Track**

Our proposed track aims to explore the lifestyle changes induced by the use of GLP-1 anti-obesity medications. Specifically, it will investigate how these medications, known for their appetite-suppressing effects, influence dietary habits, physical activity levels, overall lifestyle choices, and consumption and buyer behavior among users. Additionally, the research will delve into the psychological and social impacts of significant weight loss, examining shifts in self-perception, risk proneness, social interactions, and mental health. Beyond individual experiences, the study will assess the broader impact on consumer behavior, focusing on changes in purchasing patterns related to food, clothing, and health-related products. The research will also consider the potential ripple effects on various sectors of the economy, including food and beverage, retail, and healthcare. Finally, the study will evaluate the societal and economic implications of widespread adoption of these medications, exploring their influence on public health outcomes, healthcare costs, and societal attitudes towards obesity and weight management. While we explore the relevant concepts, we will do so within the theoretical and problem-based contexts the participants of our session bring to the table.

#### **Methodology**

The research will begin with a comprehensive literature review to understand the existing body of knowledge on GLP-1 medications, obesity management, and consumer behavior. This will help identify gaps that the current study can address. Following this, data will be collected through surveys and in-depth interviews. The survey will target individuals using GLP-1 medications, gathering quantitative data on their lifestyle changes, purchasing habits, and perceptions of the drugs' impact on their lives. Interviews with healthcare providers, nutritionists, and industry experts will provide qualitative insights into the broader implications of these medications. The collected data from consumers and providers will then be analyzed using quantitative methods to identify patterns and

correlations, while qualitative analysis will be employed to explore the nuances of individual experiences and industry responses. This mixed-methods approach will provide a holistic understanding of the impact of GLP-1 medications on lifestyle changes and consumer behavior.

### **Expected Outcomes**

The research is expected to provide a detailed understanding of how GLP-1 anti-obesity medications are reshaping lifestyles and consumer behavior. It will offer insights into the broader societal and economic implications of these changes, helping to inform healthcare policies, industry strategies, and public health initiatives. The findings could also contribute to the development of targeted interventions that support individuals in making sustainable lifestyle changes while navigating the evolving landscape of weight management. We expect to attract participants who are interested in the topic, such as behavioral scientists, healthcare professionals, public health experts, economists, consumer well-being researchers, and industry executives from the food and retail sectors, along with patient advocates and ethicists to explore the medical, economic, behavioral, and ethical impacts of GLP-1 anti-obesity medications. Before the conference, we invite both junior and senior researchers with an interest or expertise in the subject matter to join us. We welcome scholars from a variety of disciplines. To encourage textured, impactful discussion, submissions of any methodology will be considered equally.

Desired outcomes from this conference include the development of a conceptual paper based on findings from case analysis, recommendations for policy makers, creation of cases for the TCR list-serve, and future research projects that may emerge from discussion as a result of the conference.

### **References**

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## Biographies

**Naz Onel** is an Associate Professor of Business Administration and the Director of the Dual Degree Program at Stockton University, NJ. Concurrently, she holds the position of President at the Northeast Business & Economics Association (NBEA), where she has been a board member since 2018. She also holds the role of Editor-in-Chief for the *SAM Advanced Management Journal (SAMAMJ)*, published by Emerald. Her principal areas of research are consumer decision-making and well-being. To date, she has made significant contributions to her field, publishing numerous refereed journal articles, book chapters, and refereed conference proceedings. Her active participation in academic and professional conferences includes keynote and guest speaker presentations, panel discussions, and various organizational roles such as conference chair, proceedings editor, track chair, editorial board member, retreat and roundtable facilitator, and ongoing reviewer for academic journals and conferences.

**Avinandan (Avi) Mukherjee** is the current Provost and the former Dean of the Lewis College of Business at Marshall University. He is a distinguished researcher, with more than 100 scholarly articles in leading journals and over 6,000 citations. His research lies at the interface of sustainability, technology and business. He co-authored a scholarly book titled “An Integrated Approach to Environmental Management” published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. He is the Founding Editor of the *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*, and the immediate past President of the Society for Advancement of Management.

**Uma Sundaram, MD, AGAF**, is Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Education and Founding Chair of the Department of Clinical and Translational Sciences at Marshall University School of Medicine. Dr. Sundaram is a gastroenterologist specializing in the care of patients with inflammatory bowel disease, obesity and hepatobiliary diseases and in therapeutic biliary endoscopy. He has been a basic, clinical and translational biomedical researcher dating back to his undergraduate training in Bioengineering at the Johns Hopkins University. As a principal investigator his research has been continuously with more than \$50 million dollars from the National Institutes of Health, Veterans Affairs, AHA, AGA, CCFA and WV HEPC. As an educator he has trained more than 70 MDs, PhD, MD/PhD scientists who are all currently physicians and scientists around the country. His research has been continuously presented at the annual American Gastroenterological Association for more than 30 years. As founding director and principal investigator he obtained a \$20 million dollar grant for the statewide West Virginia Clinical and Translational Institute and a \$12 million dollar grant for the Appalachian Center for Cellular transport in Obesity Related Disorders. He is a recent recipient of the prestigious Veteran’s Affairs Senior Clinician Scientist Investigator Award. He has served as chair or member of numerous NIH, VA and AGA Scientific Review Committees. Throughout his career and currently he has been a dedicated clinician, educator, researcher and administrator in academic medicine at major universities in this country. Website: <https://umasundaramresearch.com/>