

Health Care

# Kansas City-led clinical trial on popular weight-loss drug is honored as a 'breakthrough of the year'

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An executive at Saint Luke's Health System leads a groundbreaking study on a popular weight-loss drug that revealed new health benefits beyond weight loss.

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A clinical trial led by an executive at Saint Luke's Health System in Kansas City has received a prestigious nod - being named as a scientific breakthrough of the year by *Science Magazine*, a peer-reviewed academic journal.

The study was one of several that received a mention for showcasing how blockbuster weight-loss drugs are showing promise for a wider range of health benefits, including heart health.

Dr. Mikhail Kosiborod, vice president of research at Saint Luke's, led a study involving 529 patients with obesity and heart failure. They were randomly assigned either a placebo or semaglutide, marketed in the U.S. as Ozempic for diabetes and Wegovy for obesity. After one year, the patients taking semaglutide had "almost double the heart improvement, as measured by a standard heart failure questionnaire, and could walk an extra 20 meters in 6 minutes compared with those in the placebo group," *Science Magazine* reports.

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The study served as the leading presentation at the European Society of Cardiology 2023 Congress, the world's largest cardiovascular conference.

A separate clinical trial with 17,000 patients led by a doctor at Cleveland Clinic found that patients taking semaglutide had a 20% lower risk of fatal or nonfatal heart attacks and strokes compared with those taking the placebo.

"To our knowledge, this is the first trial of its kind to specifically target obesity as a treatment strategy in patients with heart failure," Kosiborod said in a release. "These findings will likely have a significant impact on clinical practice, especially since there are so few effective therapies for this patient group. Furthermore, the results of (the study) should change the nature of the conversation about the role of obesity in heart failure from a coexisting condition to a root cause and a target for intervention."

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