

# First Drug for Sleep Apnoea

Posted at: 27/12/2024

## First Drug for Sleep Apnoea

**Context :** The **United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA)** has approved **Tirzepatide**, marketed as **Zepbound**, as a treatment for **Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA)**. This marks the first drug-based option for certain patients with OSA, a condition previously treated primarily through mechanical interventions and lifestyle changes.

The approval recommends **Zepbound** in combination with a **low-calorie diet** and **increased physical activity**, targeting individuals with **moderate to severe OSA**. This milestone highlights Tirzepatide's versatility, extending its applications beyond managing **type 2 diabetes** and **obesity**.

---

## Understanding Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA)

### Types of Sleep Apnoea

1. **Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA):**
  - The most prevalent form, caused by **physical blockage** of the airway during sleep.
2. **Central Sleep Apnoea:**
  - Results from the **brain failing to signal breathing muscles** correctly.
3. **Complex Sleep Apnoea Syndrome:**
  - A combination of **OSA and central sleep apnoea**.

### What is OSA?

OSA is a **sleep disorder** characterized by **repeated interruptions in breathing** during sleep, often caused by the **relaxation of throat muscles**.

- These interruptions, or **apneas**, can lead to:
  - A choking sensation.
  - Brief awakenings that **disrupt sleep quality**.
- Individuals with OSA may feel **excessively fatigued during the day**, despite spending sufficient time in bed.

---

## Link Between Obesity and OSA

### How Obesity Contributes to OSA

- **Fat accumulation** around the neck and tongue causes airway obstruction.

- **Abdominal fat** reduces lung size, increasing the risk of airway blockage.
- Studies reveal that over **50% of OSA patients are obese**, and **25% are overweight**.

### Additional Risk Factors

- **Aging**
  - **Smoking**
  - **Family history** of sleep apnoea
- 

### Current Treatments for OSA

- **Positive Airway Pressure Machines:**
    - Devices like CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) deliver pressurized air to keep airways open during sleep.
  - **Lifestyle Modifications:**
    - Weight loss, exercise, and dietary changes.
  - **Medications:**
    - Prescribed to improve sleep quality, though none were specifically designed for OSA—until now.
- 

### How Zepbound Works

- **Mechanism of Action:**
    - Zepbound activates intestinal hormone receptors like **GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide)** and **GIP (glucose-dependent insulinitropic polypeptide)**. These hormones:
      - **Reduce appetite.**
      - **Limit food intake**, aiding weight loss.
  - **Target Population:**
    - Individuals who are obese or overweight with conditions like **type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure**.
  - **Effectiveness in Treating OSA:**
    - Studies indicate that **reducing body weight** with Zepbound significantly improves OSA by decreasing **fat accumulation around the neck and abdominal fat**, which obstruct airways.
- 

### Significance of FDA Approval

#### 1. First Drug for OSA:

- Zepbound is the first medication specifically approved for **moderate to severe OSA**,

addressing a critical gap in treatment options.

## 2. Expanded Applications of Tirzepatide:

- Initially developed for managing **type 2 diabetes**, the drug now demonstrates potential in treating a range of conditions linked to **obesity**, including OSA.

## 3. Broader Health Impacts:

- Zepbound's ability to reduce body fat opens possibilities for treating multiple obesity-related disorders, with ongoing studies exploring additional mechanisms.

---

## Conclusion

The FDA's approval of **Zepbound** is a game-changer in the treatment of **obstructive sleep apnoea**. By targeting the root cause—excess fat—Zepbound offers an innovative approach to managing OSA, potentially improving the lives of millions. This development underscores the growing recognition of **obesity's role** in chronic conditions and highlights the importance of holistic treatment strategies. As research continues, Zepbound's applications may expand, benefiting a wider spectrum of patients.



AKKA IAS ACADEMY  
www.akkaias.com