

## Consumer Attitudes Toward Prescription Weight-Loss Medications in U.S. Adults

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Obesity is a complex, chronic disease associated with significant morbidity, mortality, and high healthcare costs. Obesity treatment options include lifestyle and dietary modifications, medication, and bariatric surgery. The recent popularity of novel medications for obesity treatment is due to their high clinical efficacy. However, public perception regarding the use of these medications remains highly variable. Thus, further exploration is needed to understand factors associated with consumer acceptance and skepticism of these prescribed weight-loss medications. This study aimed to explore the macro-level and individual-level factors influencing consumer perceptions regarding the safety and effectiveness of prescription weight-loss medications. A secondary cross-sectional analysis was conducted utilizing 2025 International Food Information Council's Food & Health Survey, which contains nationally representative consumer data. Relationships between consumers' health-related behaviors, institutional trust, and their corresponding attitudes toward prescription weight-loss medication were studied using Chi-square/Fisher's, or Mann-Whitney tests. Preliminary analysis revealed that positive consumer perceptions of pharmacological safety and effectiveness are associated with knowledge of standardized public health frameworks such as MyPlate and dietary guidelines, as well as personal weight-management goals ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conversely, skepticism toward these medications was strongly linked to broader systemic distrust, including perception regarding food safety and the healthfulness of the typical American diet ( $p < 0.05$ ). Surprisingly, variables associated with the individual's health, such as nutritional literacy, self-reported dietary quality, and physical activity, were not significant factors for acceptance of these medications ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, individuals with a prior/current clinical history of using prescription weight-loss medications were more likely to perceive these medications as safe and effective ( $p < 0.05$ ). In U.S. adults, the attitudes toward pharmacological weight-loss medications seem more closely associated with systemic trust and public health engagement than individual nutrition literacy or lifestyle habits. Further larger-scale studies are needed to explore these factors in detail.

### References

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