Could a new generation of weight-loss drugs make a dent in the obesity epidemic?

In a field plagued by drugs with dangerous side effects and product recalls, doctors have been hesitant to prescribe these products—and companies have been nervous about investing in developing new ones.

The emergence of Wegovy and a handful of other drugs over the past few years coincides with a shift in the medical complex's and pharmaceutical industry's description of people who have obesity, a controversial word that is defined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as anyone with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. In the past, obesity was framed as a behavioral issue.

Today, it is seen by many as a chronic disease that, because of links to other conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, warrants continuous treatment.

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The financial potential of a safe and effective weight-loss drug is staggering. About 42% of people in the US meet the CDC's definition of obesity. And people with lower BMIs who have metabolic diseases are eligible for either Wegovy or a shorter-acting version of the drug called Saxenda (liraglutide) that was approved in 2014. Chronic weight management means years, if not decades, of treatment.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.