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# Obesity Clinical Trials: A Promising Research Landscape

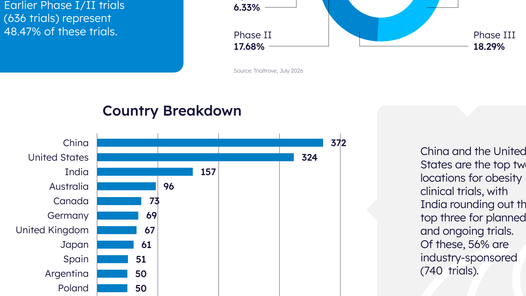
**See which countries, phases, drugs, & MOAs are leading the way**

Obesity is a hot topic in the pharmaceutical industry, with GLP-1 drugs dominating the headlines. In 2026, according to Gallup research, 11% of US adults take GLP-1 injectables for weight loss purposes, up from 3% in 2024. And 15% have used the medications at some point, up 9%.[1] With oral versions of these drugs coming onto the market, those numbers are expected to surge.

The clinical trial landscape mirrors these obesity trends. Globally, there are 5,189 trials, of which 1,119 are planned or ongoing.

## Global Obesity Clinical Trials

### Trial Status




Source: Trialtrove, July 2026

Taking a deeper dive into the ongoing and planned trials, we see an even split between the open trials recruiting patients (556 trials) and planned trials (549 trials). Earlier Phase I/II trials (636 trials) represent 48.47% of these trials.

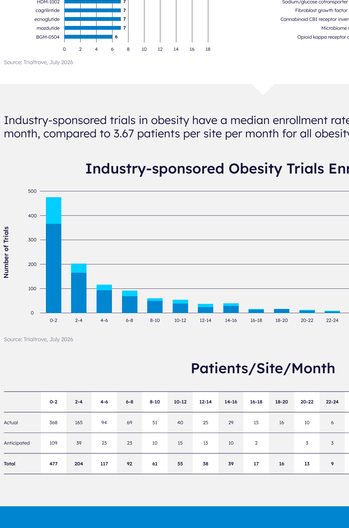
## Ongoing & Planned Trials

### Trial Phase




Source: Trialtrove, July 2026

## Country Breakdown




China and the United States are the top two locations for obesity clinical trials, with India rounding out the top three for planned and ongoing trials. Of these, 56% are industry-sponsored (740 trials).

Source: Trialtrove, July 2026

Looking at the Mechanism of Action (MoA) of the planned and ongoing industry trials for obesity, GLP-1 has the top spot with 57% (397 of 702 trials), represented by multiple drugs. The top tested drugs include mostly drugs that have yet to be approved.

## Primary Tested Drug, MoA

### Primary Tested Drug




### Primary Tested Drug: Mechanism of Action




Source: Trialtrove, July 2026

Industry-sponsored trials in obesity have a median enrollment rate of 3.35 patients per site per month, compared to 3.67 patients per site per month for all obesity trials.

## Industry-sponsored Obesity Trials Enrollment Rate




Source: Trialtrove, July 2026

## Patients/Site/Month

| | 0-2 | 2-4 | 4-6 | 6-8 | 8-10 | 10-12 | 12-14 | 14-16 | 16-18 | 18-20 | 20-22 | 22-24 | 24-26 | 26-28 | 28-30 | 30-32 | 32-34 | 34-36 | >=36 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actual | 368 | 165 | 94 | 69 | 51 | 40 | 25 | 29 | 15 | 16 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 46 |
| Anticipated | 109 | 39 | 23 | 23 | 10 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 2 | | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| Total | 477 | 204 | 117 | 92 | 61 | 55 | 38 | 39 | 17 | 16 | 13 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 63 |

Total trial starts in obesity were relatively flat from 2017 to 2020 before beginning a steady rise from 2021 on.

The level of industry involvement remained consistent, averaging 39% of trial starts from 2017 to 2022 before ramping up from 2023 on, representing 65% of trial starts. Trials evaluating a GLP-1 followed a similar trend, evaluated in an average of 25% of trials from 2017 to 2022 before increasing to ~60% from 2024 on.

## Trial Starts by Year

| Year | No. of trials | Industry Trials (% of total trials) | Total GLP-1 Trials (% of total trials) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2017 | 132 | 56 trials (42%) | 26 trials (20%) |
| 2018 | 152 | 65 trials (43%) | 37 trials (24%) |
| 2019 | 142 | 46 trials (32%) | 27 trials (19%) |
| 2020 | 145 | 58 trials (40%) | 37 trials (26%) |
| 2021 | 208 | 76 trials (37%) | 67 trials (32%) |
| 2022 | 248 | 95 trials (38%) | 73 trials (29%) |
| 2023 | 313 | 148 trials (47%) | 129 trials (41%) |
| 2024 | 399 | 250 trials (63%) | 229 trials (57%) |
| 2025 | 401 | 301 trials (75%) | 248 trials (62%) |
| 2026 (YTD) | 193 | 152 trials (79%) | 117 trials (61%) |

*Please note that the starts for recent years, especially 2025 and current, are likely underreported due to inherent reporting bias.*

Source: Trialtrove, July 2026

[1] Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index


See how Citeline helps find, engage, and enroll patients

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