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# A Descriptive Content Analysis of Weight Loss Injectables on UK TikTok

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## #Mounjaro

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### Abstract

There is growing public interest in the use of Glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) agonists such as Mounjaro for the treatment of obesity. This study provides a descriptive content analysis of the 100 most *liked* #Mounjaro TikTok videos for UK-based creators and aimed to describe the content of these videos in relation to several categories, including: 1) who is featured, 2) the use of promotions, 3) product details and claims, and 4) video tone. Videos were coded using a codebook adapted from previous weight loss-related content analyses. The study identified the reach of Mounjaro content with the 100 videos being viewed nearly 46 million times. Findings show that most content (95%) is posted by accounts who do not state their credentials. Furthermore, most content focuses on discussions of personal experiences (44%), with only 2% of videos underpinned by scientific evidence. Forty per cent of videos included promotions, e.g., discount codes. The study identified the potential risks (e.g., health misinformation) and opportunities (e.g., developing a sense of social support) of Mounjaro content on TikTok. These findings highlight the need for regulatory bodies to consider the risks of health misinformation and address the use of promotional referral codes as a form of stealth advertising for prescription medications.

### Keywords

Social media, GLP-1, weight loss medication, Trizepatides, Ozempic.

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Glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) agonists are a class of medications used to treat diabetes and have recently been approved to manage obesity in the United Kingdom (National Institute for Health and Social Care [NICE], 2023). In the UK it can be prescribed to those classified as obese or those who are overweight, with at least one weight-related health problem (e.g., high cholesterol) (Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency [MHRA], 2023b). There are two classes of medications, including semaglutides (e.g., Ozempic and Wegovy) and trizepatides (e.g., Mounjaro). In the UK, both Wegovy and Mounjaro were approved for the treatment of obesity in 2023 (NICE, 2023). However, there is limited access to weight loss injectables in the UK through the National Health Service (NHS). Obtaining GLP-1 agonists through the NHS was only introduced at the end of 2024, and is initially restricted to those with a BMI in excess of 40 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and at least three weight related conditions such as hypertension (NICE, 2024) Official statistics on the use of weight loss injectables in the UK are not available, however, it is widely reported in the media that individuals are accessing this medication through online pharmacies, with concerns being raised over misuse and the lack of clinical support (Loth & Spary, 2024; The Telegraph, 2024). Findings of a recent small study of eleven GLP-1 users in the UK echo these concerns, by noting that online pharmacies were the most popular way of sourcing the medication (46), with other sources including private sellers (18%), private doctors (18%) and a beauty salon (9%) (Martin et al. 2025).

### **Public Interest in Weight Loss Injectables**

Public interest in GLP-1 agonists for weight loss has surged, as shown by a Google Trends study highlighting a sharp increase in searches for ‘Ozempic’ following its Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval in the United States (Han et al. 2024). Accessing information about GLP-1 agonists also extends to searching for information on social media platforms such as TikTok (Basch et al. 2023). Although only formally approved by the FDA for the treatment of diabetes, Ozempic is used off-label for obesity management and is thought to be popularised by celebrities and social media (Han et al. 2024).

Ozempic is not approved for weight loss in the UK, but a Google Trends study found that ‘Mounjaro’ is searched more frequently in the UK compared to other GLP-1 agonists and global locations (Shareef et al. 2024). This information suggests that Mounjaro is likely to be the most popular weight-loss injectable in the UK and highlights how individuals are actively searching online for information relating to this GLP-1 agonist. Although no formal statistics exist on the popularity of weight loss injections in the UK, the media report that the demand for Mounjaro significantly outstrips that of Wegovy (Bowcott, 2024).

### **Using TikTok to Access Health-Related and Weight Loss Information**

A recent survey found that 66% of people actively seek health-related information (e.g., support with medical conditions or lifestyle behaviours) on TikTok, while 92% encounter it unintentionally, suggesting most users are exposed to health content (Kirkpatrick & Lowrie, 2024). TikTok is a social media platform based around short videos and is different from other social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook that tend to focus on photographs and texts (Raiter et al. 2023). TikTok has a continuous feed of videos on a “For You” page, with content reflecting the interest of the user (TikTok, 2025c). This means that content viewed and

posted on TikTok is to a broader audience than just the content creator's followers. A recent poll by YouGov identified that TikTok is the 8th most popular social media platform for adults in the UK (YouGov, 2024). However, it is estimated that people in the UK spend more time on TikTok, than any other country, with on average of over 49 hours a month (We Are Social, 2024). Whilst not the most popular social media platform in the UK, the distinctive features of TikTok (e.g., short form videos and unique algorithm) intensify issues of health misinformation, by valuing viral content over credible content (Zeng et al. 2025). These characteristics of TikTok make it a particularly relevant site for investigating how medications like Mounjaro are portrayed and discussed.

Videos that include health-related discussions and medical advice are popular on TikTok, for example, the hashtag #Obesity had nearly 500 million views in 2021 (Zenone et al. 2021). Specifically in relation to weight-loss strategies, these are frequently portrayed on TikTok, with the hashtag #WeightLoss having over 10 billion views (Minedeo & Pope, 2022). This suggests TikTok is a platform for both sharing and viewing weight loss content, including widely accessible information on weight loss injections. The top 100 Ozempic videos alone have over 700 million views (Basch et al. 2023).

Health-related content on TikTok is popular but may promote harmful diet culture (Raiter et al. 2023). Studies warn about the quality of health information, urging caution for TikTok users (Kong et al. 2021). Others call for more research to assess the credibility of advice and its sources (Zenone et al. 2021). In relation to weight-loss, muscle building and detox supplements, most content posted is not supported by scientific evidence and is posted by those who do not disclose their credentials (Raffoul et al. 2024). Specific to weight loss injectables, most TikTok videos on Ozempic are uploaded by non-professionals, with the suggestion that TikTok users may not be able to distinguish between scientific evidence and personal anecdotes (Basch et al. 2023). Moreover, it is proposed that public opinion on weight loss injectables has a greater impact on individuals rather than scientific evidence (Han et al. 2024). These findings have important implications for Mounjaro users seeking advice and guidance.

Although concerns have been expressed over the quality and impact of social media information relating to weight loss injectables, TikTok has the potential to be a space of community, connectiveness and belonging (Paciente et al. 2023). This sense of community and the seeking of health-related information might be particularly relevant in the UK, whereby, access to Mounjaro on the National Health Service (NHS) is limited (NICE, 2024). Given the concerns raised in the media over the lack of support provided by online pharmacies (Loth & Spary, 2024), the sense of community from TikTok and the search for health-related information may be more pertinent.

## The Current Study

Whilst a previous cross-national descriptive content analysis of the weight loss injection Ozempic has been conducted (Basch et al. 2023), existing research does not wholly capture the unique context of the UK. As Ozempic is not currently licensed for use in the UK, it is more likely that UK users will search for and engage with content more relevant for them, which is supported by the fact UK users are more likely to search “Mounjaro” on Google, compared to other GLP-1 agonists (Shareef et al. 2024). Furthermore, as medication in the UK is traditionally available through the NHS with clear clinical support, the concerns regarding how

individuals are accessing weight loss injectables (e.g., through online pharmacies, unregulated sources etc.) and associated lack of medical guidance (Loth & Spary, 2024; Martin et al. 2025), further justify the need for exploration in the UK context. Thus, the contemporary UK setting has informed the need for this study. The aim of this study is to conduct a descriptive content analysis of UK-based Mounjaro-related videos on TikTok. Specifically, this study aims to descriptively analyse the content of the 100 most liked #Mounjaro videos, including understanding who is featured in the videos (e.g., demographics and credentials), the use of promotions in videos, product details and claims (e.g., side effects, how to access the product) and the tone of the videos. This extends the previous research of Basch et al., (2023) by offering an insight into the UK context, with more detailed coding parameters based on the coding procedures of previous content analyses exploring diet-related products (Raffoul et al. 2024).

## Methods

### *Study Design*

This study was conducted using content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic approach to research in which coding rules are used to condense words, texts, or images into different categories (Zaidman-Zait, 2014). Specifically, the approaches adopted in this study were guided by previous content analysis research on TikTok Hashtags and health (e.g., Raffoul et al. 2024).

### *Data Collection*

Hashtags were used to capture TikTok content related to Mounjaro. Hashtags are used to add to captions on TikTok and can be words or phrases that are preceded by a hashtag symbol (#). Hashtags can be used by users to search for specific content related to that word or phrase. When a hashtag is typed into the search bar, users are taken to a list of videos that are sorted from the most to least viewed (Pryde et al. 2024). To identify the most relevant hashtag for the study, the researchers compiled a list of possible relevant hashtags. Examples of hashtags included in the list included #Mounjaro, #MoujaroJourney, and #WeightLossInjections. On 3rd December 2024 a search was conducted on TikTok of all publicly available videos with these hashtags. The hashtag with the highest 'like count' was selected as the most salient for the study. This hashtag was #Mounjaro, which returned 231.3K videos.

Videos using the hashtag #Mounjaro were screened and sorted by 'like count' from high to low. Other content analysis has used the like count on TikTok as a way of identifying the most relevant post for a content analysis (e.g., Pleasure et al. 2024). "Like count" was used over other TikTok engagement metrics like "top posts", as other engagement metrics may be influenced by the algorithm of the specific user, whereas "like count" is an objective filter of the number of likes from high to low. Filters were used to identify content posted within the last 6 months. The researchers chose six months as the timeframe to capture contemporary content about the weight loss medication. Videos and profiles were screened by the second author to assess if the creators of the selected videos were based in the UK. As Mounjaro was only approved for use in the UK in December 2023 (NICE, 2023), these search criteria reflected the growing interest in the medication. The study sample size consisted of the 100 most *liked* videos. The decision to analyse 100 videos reflects both methodological and practical decisions. The purpose of the study was to describe patterns in popular #Mounjaro content,

rather than testing hypotheses. Thus, the sample size was determined by the descriptive and exploratory nature of the study, to capture breadth in content, whilst considering practical implications related to the feasibility of coding. This approach is consistent with previous social media content analyses (e.g., Basch et al. 2023; Raffoul et al. 2024). All videos were downloaded from TikTok by the second author on 3rd December 2024. At the same time as downloading the videos, all other relevant data was collected and tabulated e.g., Hashtags, captions, number of likes etc. Given the study involved the collection of publicly available online data, ethical approval was not required for this study.

### *Codebook*

A codebook (see Supplementary Material A) was created by the researchers based upon an existing codebook that explored weight loss, muscle building, cleanses, and detox supplement videos on TikTok (Raffoul et al. 2024). The codebook by Raffoul et al. (2024) includes several different categories: 1) key video features (e.g., Hashtags, numbers of views), 2) featured people (e.g., gender expression, assumed age), 3) products details and claims (e.g., before and after, use of evidence), 4) other video elements (e.g., tone of the video). Before trialling the codebook, we removed elements of the codebook that would not be relevant for this study e.g., we removed product claims such as “helps you cleanse or detox” and replaced with more relevant claims, such as, “appetite suppression”. At this stage we also added in some additional categories, including: 1) potential side effects (e.g., nausea, constipation etc.) and 2) video focus (e.g., taking injection, transformation etc.). To enhance conceptual clarity, the category previously labelled “any mentions of scientific evidence to support use” was relabelled as “basis of claims”, to more accurately reflect how users justified their views. Furthermore, the “anecdotal evidence” code within this category was renamed as “personal experiences (anecdotal).”

The authors of the study were Mounjaro users during the study and for several months before the data were collected. We have also been TikTok users for many years. Before starting the study and through our personal TikTok algorithms, we saw and interacted with content about weight loss injectables on TikTok. This provided us with prior knowledge that allowed us to appropriately adapt the codebook. Before trialling the codebook, the researchers discussed together each coding category and potential examples of how each code could be portrayed in videos. Any initial discrepancies between interpretations of the coding categories were discussed and a consensus was reached on how to proceed. The team debated categorising weight loss as a side effect. Our discussions concluded that weight loss potentially has dual status as both an intended effect and a side effect. However, through the peer review process, it was agreed that given the focus of the study is on weight loss, this would not be included as a side effect.

To explore initial levels of agreement and to check for any required refinements to the codebook the two researchers independently watched and coded the top 10 most liked videos under the hashtag #Mounjaro. A threshold of 80% coding agreement was adopted to establish inter-rater reliability, as this reflects the boundaries established in previous research (Raffoul et al. 2024). During the initial coding, all codes achieved this threshold, except “basis of claims”. For the six codes that did not achieve 100% (see Supplementary Material B) the two researchers discussed their reasons for allocation, in order to develop greater agreement in the main coding stage. The category “basis of claims” did not meet the initial threshold, with only

60% agreement as there were some discrepancies between the interpretation of ‘personal experiences (anecdotal)’ vs ‘no claims of evidence’. It was agreed by the two coders that personal discussions of outcomes and/or experiences would be coded as ‘personal experiences (anecdotal)’. The 10 videos were again independently recoded by the two researchers, and an agreement of 100% for this category was achieved. During this initial stage, the researchers discussed refinements to codes, which included adding elements that were not captured by the initial codebook. For example, in the “credentials” category, the options “media outlet” and “politician” were added. The two researchers coded an additional forty-five videos independently. A random sample of 10 videos was selected by each researcher and coded to check for consistency across coders, with all categories exceeding the 80% threshold (see Supplementary Material B).

### Data Analysis

To analyse the videos a quantitative content analysis approach was adopted, in which, descriptive statistics were calculated (e.g., percentages and frequencies). Table 1 and Table 2 in the results section present the descriptive statistics; however, all codes scoring 0% are not included in these tables. There were categories in the codebook in which multiple codes could apply to a single unit (i.e., the categories were not mutually exclusive); therefore, initial percentages for some categories exceeded 100%. To overcome this issue, we added an additional category for combined variables when presenting the results. For example, in the “Before and After” category “Included both a visual and verbal before and after component” were added for videos that were coded as both “Included a visual before and after component” and “Described the before and after (e.g., I weighed X lbs before and weigh X lbs now)” This allowed the percentages for each category to add up to 100%.

## Results

The 100 #Mounjaro TikTok videos were collectively viewed 45,929,900 times, with a collective like count of 958,063, a total number of comments of 63,111 and a collective share number of 156,532. Videos were posted between 13th June 2024 and 1st December 2024.

The 100 videos were posted by 83 different TikTok content creators, with 11 creators being featured more than once. The TikTok creators had on average 33,409 followers ( $SD = 146,312.1$ ). The creator with the most followers had 1,300,000 and the creator with the lowest number of followers had 562.

The number of likes on each video ranged from 362 to 148,100 ( $M = 95,080.6$ ,  $SD = 7962.2$ ), whilst the number of views ranged from 21,900 to 3.9million ( $M = 459,300$ ,  $SD = 583,400$ ). On average each video was saved 785 times ( $SD = 1190.9$ ), with a range of 19-8,979 saves. Videos were shared on average 1,565.3 ( $SD = 3422.8$ ), with a range between 13 and 25,100 shares. Two videos had comments turned off, but the remaining videos had on average 420.2 ( $SD = 390$ ) comments, with comments ranging from 12 to 1449.

Table 1 summarises the characteristics of individuals in the top 100 UK-based Mounjaro TikTok videos. Most featured at least one person (98%) with a feminine gender expression (91%), assumed to be white (84%), and without stated credentials (95%). Many creators claimed they had personally used the product (94%) and did not include disclaimers (e.g., did not disclose they were not an expert when sharing opinions or advice) (95%). Forty per cent of

posts and/or profiles included verbal or textual promotion of an injectable or related product (e.g., protein supplements or fibre gummies).

Table 2 summarises UK-based TikTok videos about Mounjaro. Most videos portrayed it positively (68%), relying on discussions of personal experiences (78%). Side effects were discussed in 24 videos, including nausea ( $n = 8$ ), hospital admission ( $n = 3$ ), sulphur burps ( $n = 2$ ), headaches ( $n = 2$ ), constipation ( $n = 2$ ), and others ( $n = 8$ ). Product claims were made in 90% of videos, with 22 videos making multiple claims about the product. Over half of the videos (53%) made claims that the product led to weight loss.

*Table 1.* Characteristics of Individuals Featured in the Top 100 UK-Based #Mounjaro TikTok Videos

Category	Percentage
Number of people	
At least one person	98%
No people	2%
Gender expression	
Feminine	91%
Masculine	7%
Multiple people with different gender expressions	2%
Assumed Age	
Adults	97%
Could not be established	3%
Assumed race/ethnicity	
White	84%
Black	8%
Mixed race	2%
South Asian	2%
Multiple people with different assumed race/ethnicity	1%
Can't identify	3%
Credentials	
Unstated	95%
Physician	3%
Media outlet	1%
Media outlet and politician	1%
Testimonial	
Claims to have used the product	94%
Does not claim to have used product	6%
Disclaimer	
Does not offer a disclaimer about advice given	95%
Offers a disclaimer about the advice given	5%
Promotions	
No promotions identifiable	60%
Text in the video/caption/bio promotes discount code for injection	36%
Influencer verbally promotes discount code for injectable related products	3%
Both text and verbal promotion of discount code for injectable	1%

Other product claims within the videos included appetite suppression (21%), positive impacts on mental health (21%) and impacts on “food noise” (12%). Ten videos made “other” product claims, which included a range of factors such as wider societal benefits, motivation to exercise and positive effects on polycystic ovary syndrome. While 57% did not specify how to obtain Mounjaro, 43% mentioned online pharmacies. In relation to the focus of the videos, most were discussions of users’ experiences (44%) or focused on body transformations (28%). The tone of videos was mostly confessional/personal (42%) or inspirational (32%).

*Table 2.* Details Related to the Weight Loss Injectable UK-Based Mounjaro Videos on TikTok

Category	Percentage
Depiction Type	
Positive	68%
Neutral	17%
Negative	11%
Both positive and negative	4%
Product claims	
At least one product claim is made	90%
No product claims are made	10%
Basis of claims	
Personal experiences (anecdotal)	78%
No claims of evidence	17%
Discusses both anecdotal and scientific evidence	3%
Claims of scientific evidence	2%
Product Side effects	
At least one side effect discussed	24%
No side effects discussed	76%
Before and After	
No before and after component	58%
Included a visual before and after component	22%
Described the before and after	12%
Included both a visual and verbal before and after component	8%
How to get/buy the product	
Unstated	53%
Online through a pharmacy	47%
Video Focus	
Discussions (e.g., experiences)	44%
Transformations	28%
Taking the injections	7%
Media/news	3%
What I Eat in A Day	3%
Physical activity/exercise	2%
Other	13%

**Table 2** Details Related to the Weight Loss Injectable UK-Based Mounjaro Videos on TikTok (continued)

Category	Percentage
<b>Background Sound</b>	
No music, just a person speaking	53%
Song sound (e.g., a pop song with words)	28%
Sound that is trending/not related to the content	12%
Generic background music (i.e., no words)	7%
<b>Speaking</b>	
Someone was speaking	54%
No one was speaking	46%
<b>Tone of video</b>	
Confessional/personal	42%
Inspirational	32%
Informational	15%
Comedic	7%
Promotional	2%
“Other”	1%

## Discussion

The aim of this study was to conduct a descriptive content analysis of UK-based Mounjaro-related videos on TikTok, specifically exploring the characteristics of individuals in the videos and the content of the videos in relation to tone, product claims and the use of promotions. The study highlights that most *liked* content is posted by those who have a feminine gender expression. Furthermore, the most popular #Mounjaro content is posted by those who do not state their credentials, with only 2% of videos using scientific evidence to support their claims. The tone of the 100 most liked #Mounjaro videos tends to be either confessional/personal or inspirational, with the majority of videos having a positive tone. Forty per cent of videos and/or associated profiles offered discount codes for injections or injectable-related products such as fibre gummies or protein supplements. This study offers valuable insights into the characteristics of content creators posting #Mounjaro videos, as well as providing a descriptive overview of the content of these videos. These findings are important for understanding how weight loss medications are framed on social media, and the implications this may have for public health communication and the spread of misinformation.

Most of the videos in the current study had content based on claims related to personal experiences (anecdotes), with most individuals within the videos having unstated credentials. This is consistent with evidence that suggests most weight-loss videos on TikTok are consumer generated with a lack of visible medical expertise (Samuel et al., 2022). These findings also support previous research that highlights how the majority of weight loss content online is posted by non-professionals (Basch et al. 2023) or by individuals who do not state their credentials (Raffoul et al. 2024). Similar patterns have been observed beyond weight-loss content; for example, Nickel et al. (2025) found very few TikTok or Instagram posts about medical tests drew on scientific evidence, with most relying on anecdotal accounts.

These patterns in the data are important as they suggest that the public's understanding of prescription medication, like Mounjaro, is potentially being shaped by peer communication as opposed to expert-led communication. To support this point, research has documented the potential for misinformation to be spread about weight loss injections through TikTok (Keating and Wild, 2023). Moreover, the quality of information on TikTok regarding weight-loss injectables has been deemed poor and has the potential to reinforce harmful social norms (Campos-Rivera et al. 2024). The consequences of health misinformation on social media are not well understood (Slyvia-Chou et al., 2020), however, the dissemination of misinformation about weight loss medication through TikTok is likely to have several implications. This may include individuals adopting influencer-based strategies over evidence-based approaches (The Lancet, 2024). For example, although not empirically studied, the UK media has reported on a TikTok trend known as the "Golden Dose" (Pharmacy UK, 2025) in which Mounjaro users attempt to extract an additional (fifth) dose from the pen, which are intended to be discarded after four uses. This has several potential implications including patient harm (e.g., sterility concerns, overdosing and device misuse; Pharmacy UK, 2025) and misuse of health care resources (e.g., emergency care for adverse effects).

Whilst the current study did not assess the quality of information in the videos, it does highlight a need for future research to explore how users interpret and use the information they receive about weight-loss injectables on TikTok. Indeed, dialogues related to social media and health are often dominated by discussions of risk, yet, it has been suggested that individuals are often critical and selective users of health-related content on social media (Goodyear and Quennerstedt, 2019) and are able to swipe past irrelevant content (Goodyear et al. 2022). Thus, whilst the current study highlights the dominance of personal testimony in #Mounjaro videos, future research should explore how users engage with, interpret and possibly contest what they see by creators who lack expert credentials.

The current study found that most of the content in the 100 Mounjaro videos focused on positive discussions of personal experiences. This is a pertinent finding in the context of the UK, given that most individuals are likely accessing the medication through online pharmacies that lack clinical support (Martin et al. 2025). It is possible that individuals are engaging with and *liking* videos relating to personal experiences, as they find these relatable and a means of social support. Indeed, Self Determination Theory states that for optimal psychological functioning, individuals need to feel a sense of relatedness, i.e., a sense of connection to others (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Social media plays a crucial role in weight loss programs, especially when offline support is lacking (Jane et al. 2018). Similarly, in this study, sharing information on experiences and side effects could potentially foster a sense of social support.

Most videos depicted Mounjaro positively, with creators predominantly claiming how Mounjaro aids with weight loss and offers additional benefits such as appetite suppression, improved mental wellbeing and reductions in "food noise". In relation to these positive depictions of the product, only 24% of videos mentioned at least one side effect, such as nausea, hospital admissions, and headaches. This sharing of side effects and product claims reflects the dual role of social media in disseminating health information and providing social support (Chen & Wang, 2021). These findings highlight the potential value of sharing the lived experience, as content creators appear to be negotiating the benefits and risks of the medication through personal narratives. This aligns well with research on chronic pain, which shows the key purpose of video content is to share both positive and negative personal stories (Yalamanchili et al. 2023). Whilst the majority of the most popular Mounjaro content is created

by individuals who do not disclose formal credentials, it is important to recognise the significance of informal experience-based dialogue in communicating the realities of weight loss medication in everyday life. These personal narratives of both benefits and risks, from those who have used the medication, may further foster a sense of connection and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2017), beyond dialogues with clinicians who may not have firsthand experience.

From the videos and/or exploring the profiles of the creators in the top 100 videos, it was evident that nearly half of them (47%) purchased their injectable online via a private pharmacy, with the remaining profiles/videos not stating where they acquired the product. This confirms the reports in the mainstream media that the medication is being acquired by these means (Loth & Spary, 2024). Whilst this is perfectly legal in the UK, concerns have been raised regarding this process of acquisition (Loth & Spary, 2024). However, this study uniquely highlights how this process of acquisition is potentially linked with creators adding promotions or discounts codes to their videos and/or their profiles. This study notably found that 40% of videos or profiles promoted discount codes for weight loss injectables or related products (e.g., fibre gummies). The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) monitoring report showed that a substantial proportion of influencer advertising is not adequately disclosed (ASA, 2025), suggesting that undisclosed promotional content is common and the extent of advertising in our sample may potentially be underestimated.

Many online pharmacies in the UK offer referral incentives; for example, in early 2025, MedExpress provided £40 credit per new customer, with a maximum accumulation of £4,000 per year (MedExpress, 2025). The use of discount codes to promote products is an established approach to increasing sales (Cox et al. 2024). According to TikTok, the use of discount codes would designate the content “branded content”, meaning creators must abide by rules and community guidelines (TikTok, 2025a). However, the community guidelines on TikTok clearly state that, “we do not allow showing or promoting disordered eating and dangerous weight-loss behaviours or facilitating the trade or marketing of weight loss or muscle gain products” (TikTok, 2025b). Furthermore, TikTok has a weight control and management policy which states that advertisement of weight loss injections is prohibited in many countries, including the UK (TikTok, 2025d). Further to this, the UK Government prohibits the advertisement of prescription-only medicines (MHRA, 2023a) and the ASA recently raised concerns about influencers advertising the medication (ASA, 2024). It is important to note that whilst the advertisement of prescription medication is prohibited in most countries, there are exceptions, including New Zealand and America (Toop and Mangin, 2006), with New Zealand considering regulatory change as part of upcoming legislation (New Zealand Ministry of Health, 2025). However, given the findings of the current study, it appears that a large proportion of popular Mounjaro-related TikTok videos in the UK are likely breaching TikTok guidelines and UK Government regulations. Thus, this form of stealth advertising via promotional referral codes requires urgent enforcement from both regulatory bodies and social media platforms like TikTok.

### *Implications for Policy and Practice*

This study highlights two key findings with significant implications for policy and practice. Firstly, the majority of the most popular Mounjaro content is produced by creators who do not state their credentials, which raises concerns about the increased risk of health misinformation.

Secondly, the high proportion of videos/profiles that were linked to promotional codes and thus, the use of stealth advertising of prescription medication. These findings underscore the urgent need for more stringent regulation and policing of social media guidelines (e.g., labelling promotional content), alongside enhanced government oversight (e.g., encouraging algorithms that prioritise expert health information) to address these emerging issues. In addition to regulation, there is a need for the promotion of digital health literacy, providing social media users with the skills to assess the credibility of information and to recognise the implications of commercial content (e.g., promo codes). Research highlights that individuals with higher health literacy are better able to critically engage with online content and negotiate health misinformation (Beese et al. 2024).

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

This study offers a unique insight into UK-based #Mounjaro content on TikTok; however, the findings of the study must be considered within the context of the limitations. Firstly, the study relied on Hashtags to find the most popular #Mounjaro videos (as determined by like count). Others have highlighted how content shown to users on TikTok is algorithm driven and thus it is less likely that individuals are actively seeking content using hashtags (Raffoul et al. 2024). Moreover, the cross-sectional data of 100 videos provides snapshot of content at a particular moment in time and thus does not consider the evolution of content and trends over time. The descriptive quantitative content analysis methodological approach is a limitation of the current study. Future research could adopt mixed-method or qualitative designs to further explore visual or narrative aspects of #Mounjaro videos. Additionally, future research should gain more in-depth information on the quality of information delivered through videos. Future research may also adopt mixed method approaches to understand users' interpretation of #Mounjaro content, as well as the impact on affective, cognitive and behavioural outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

This study provides a descriptive overview of the 100 most *liked* #Mounjaro videos posted by UK-based content creators on TikTok. This study identified that most of the content posted focused on positive discussions of personal experiences and relied on personal experiences (anecdotes) to support claims about the medication, with a minority of creators offering disclaimers about the information they shared. Whilst this may have implications for the potential sharing of misinformation, the discussion of personal experiences (e.g., side effects) could act as a form of social support for those sharing and viewing the videos. Future research should consider TikTok users engagement with weight loss injectable content in the context of risk versus opportunities.

The study also highlights the unique context of medication access in the UK, with nearly half of creators explicitly stating in their videos or profiles that they obtained it through an online pharmacy. This is novel for prescription medication in the UK as most medication is usually accessed through the NHS. Findings showed that 40% of videos and/or associated profiles had links to promotional codes for the medication or for medication-related products (e.g., electrolytes). Thus, it appears that a large proportion of #Mounjaro content violates both TikTok and UK Government guidelines about the advertisement of weight loss products and prescription medications and thus stronger enforcement may be needed.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## Ethics Statement

Ethical approval was not required as this study involves the analysis of publicly available online data

## Data Availability

Data available upon request.

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