

Pharmacologic treatment of obesity in Spain: results from a physicians' prescription panel

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OBJECTIVES

- The recent approval by the EMA and FDA of certain medications for weight loss has been under scrutiny, with authorities concern with its use outside of the nationally authorized and/or reimbursed indications [1-4]. None of these drugs were reimbursed for obesity in Spain by 21st June 2024 [5].
- This study aims to investigate the real-world prescriptions for obesity in Spain.

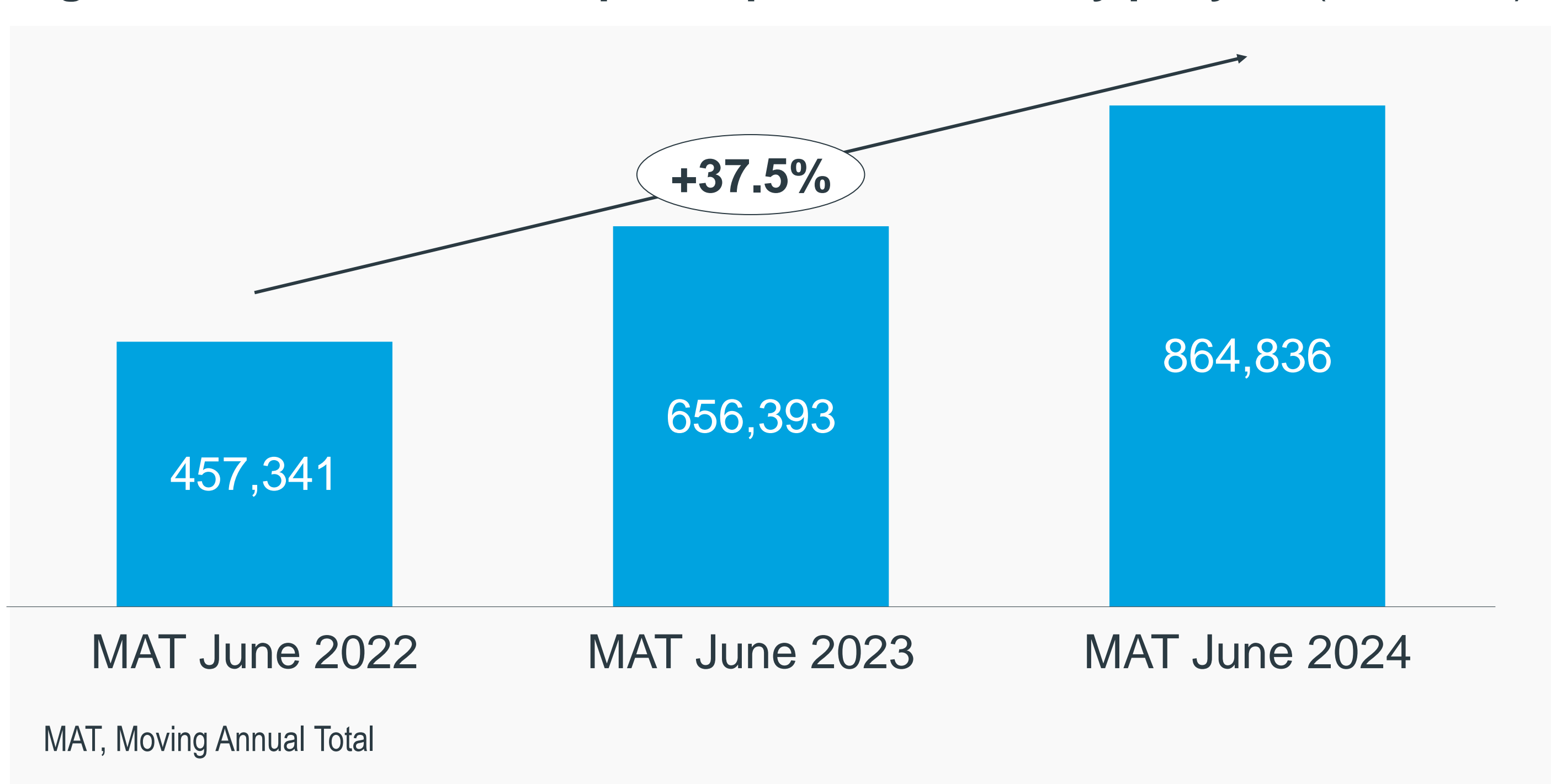
METHODS

- Prescription data from IQVIA's EPM (*Estudio de Prescripciones Médicas*) extracted on the 5th October 2024 were analyzed.
- The EPM is a study conducted on a quarterly basis with a sample of 965 physicians from over 19 medical specialties practicing in Spain, representing 0.5% of the universe. Prescription data is then extrapolated to the whole universe.
- The survey collects anonymized data on retail product prescriptions made by physicians to their patients, including data on the patient's characteristics, type of consultation, prescribing physician, posology, and associated diagnosis (ICD10).
- For this study, all prescriptions over 36 months (from July 2021 to June 2024) associated with a diagnosis of overweight and obesity (E66 *sobrepeso y obesidad*) were extracted. Then, all prescriptions for the molecules that had been prescribed for obesity were extracted to compare the characteristics of the patients according to the indication.

RESULTS

- According to the EPM data, it is estimated that between July 2021 and June 2024, 2.0 Million retail drug prescriptions were indicated for the treatment of obesity (ICD10 E66) in Spain, having grown at an average rate of 37.5% per year during this period (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Estimated number of prescriptions for obesity per year (7/21-6/24)

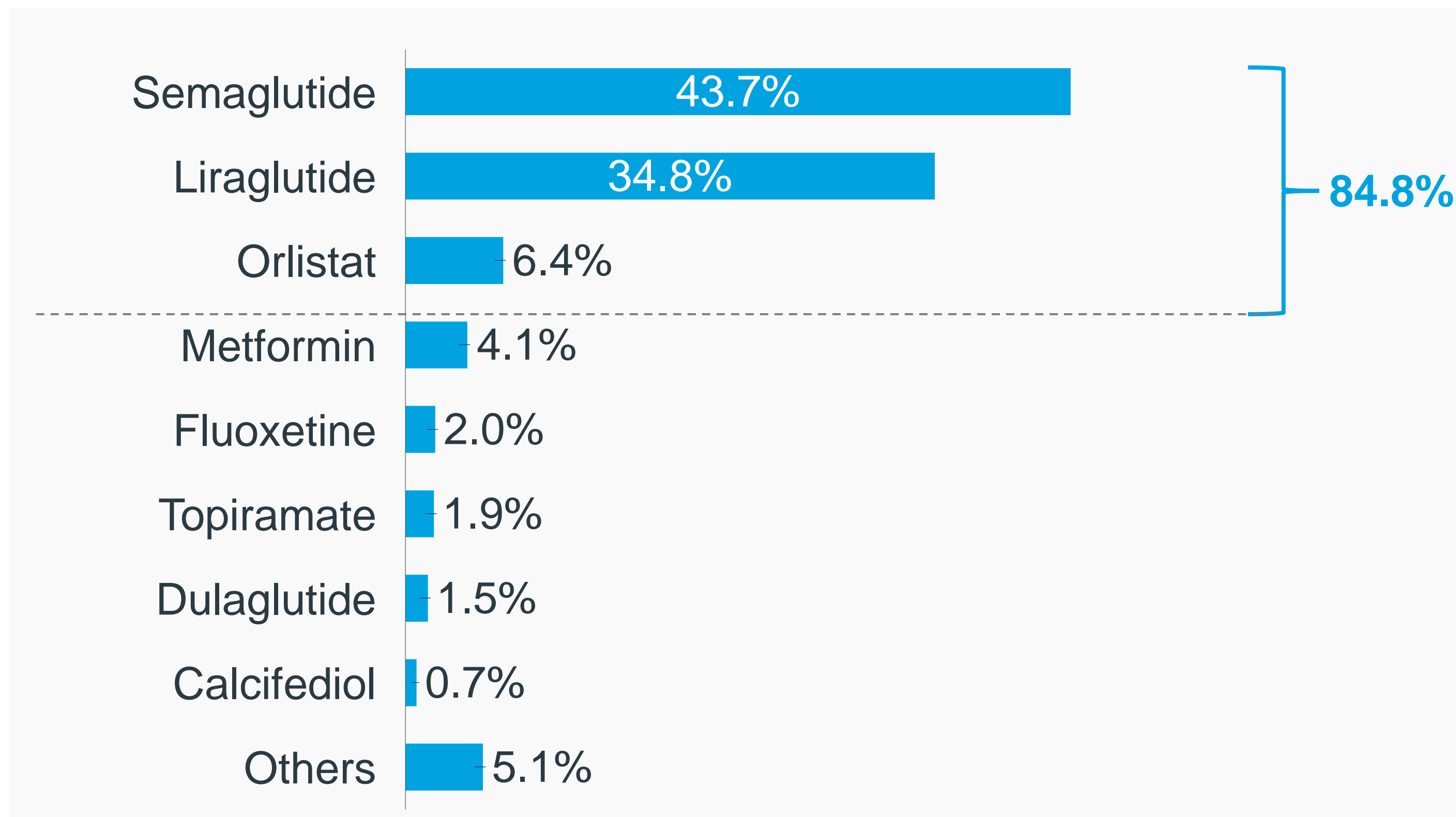


- Over the past 12 months analyzed (July 2023 – June 2024), a total of 864,836 prescriptions were issued for obesity in Spain (Fig. 1).
- Eight molecules made up 94.9% of all obesity prescriptions during this period, with three molecules - semaglutide, liraglutide, and orlistat - accounting for 84.8% (Fig. 2).

CONCLUSION

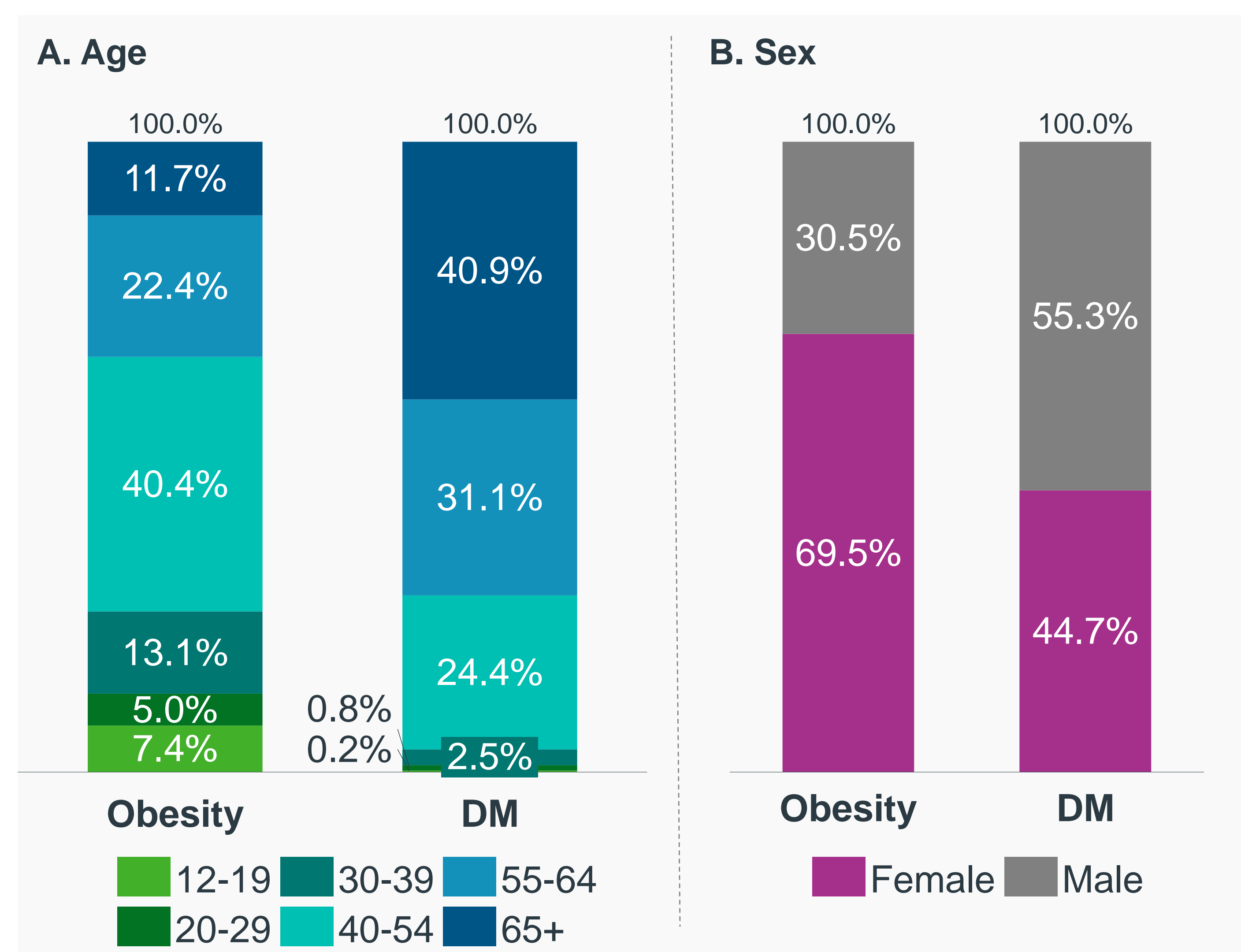
Despite the lack of reimbursement in Spain for treatments for obesity, prescriptions for this indication have been growing by 38% a year. Results suggest that there is a demand for obesity treatments, mainly driven by female patients under 55 years old.

Fig. 2 Prescriptions for obesity per molecule (N=864,836; 7/23-6/24)



- From July 2023 to June 2024, a total of 2.2 million prescriptions were estimated by the EPM for semaglutide, liraglutide, and orlistat, of which 58.7% were indicated for diabetes mellitus (DM), 34.1% for obesity, and 7.3% for other conditions.
- The characteristics of the patients being prescribed liraglutide, semaglutide, or orlistat for obesity have been contrasted with those of patients receiving it for DM and are summarized in Fig. 3:
 - While 72.0% of prescriptions for DM were made to patients aged 55 years or older, the percentage reduced to 34.1% when the prescription was for obesity.
 - There were also sex differences, with 69.5% of female patients in the obesity group compared to 44.7% in the DM group.

Fig. 3 Characteristics of patients being prescribed liraglutide, semaglutide, or orlistat for obesity vs. for diabetes mellitus (7/23-6/24)



- EPM is a valuable data source for gaining insights into prescriptions and related diagnoses. It may have some limitations due to its sample size in low-prevalence diseases or with a low number of prescriptions. Using it in combination with other sources such as Sell-in, Sell-out, or Longitudinal Patient Data would enable more robust conclusions to be drawn.

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