



# China



## Country report card - children

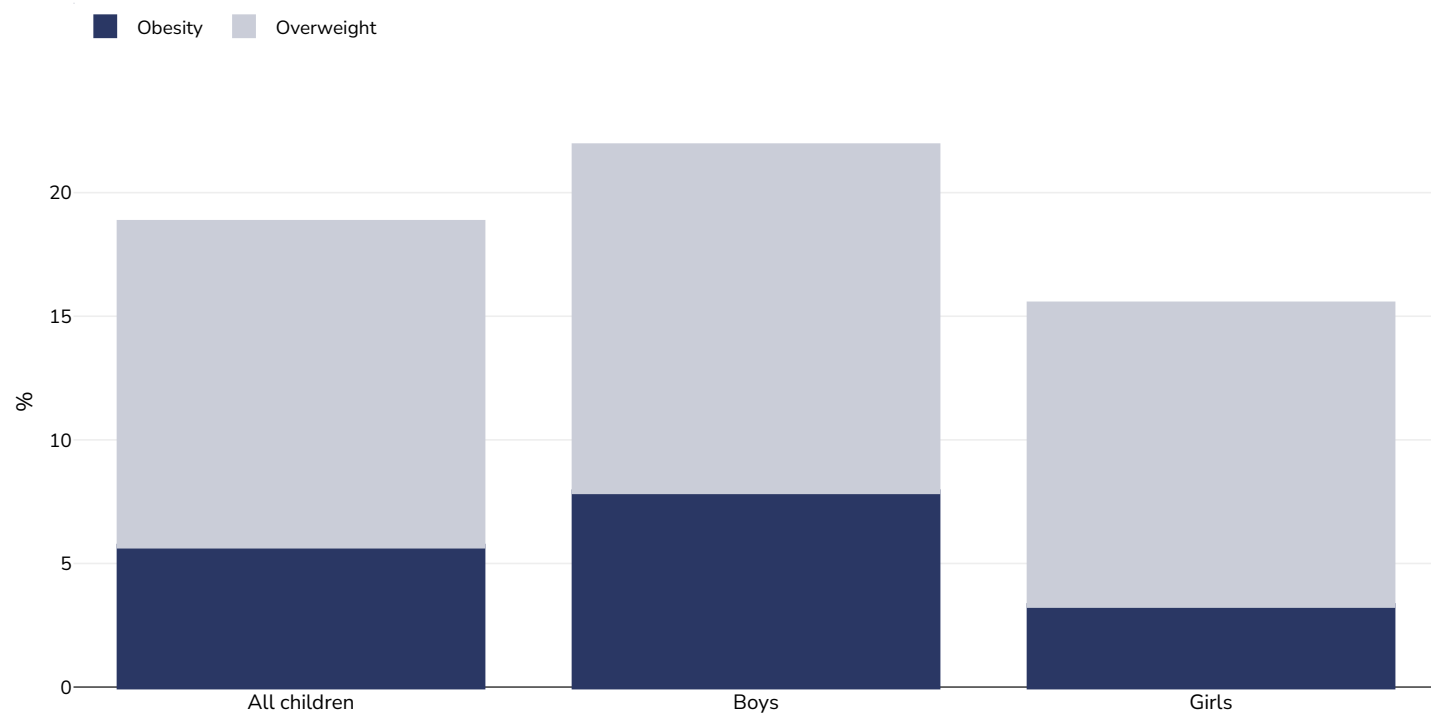
*This report card contains the latest data available on the Global Obesity Observatory on overweight and obesity for children, including adolescents (aged 5 to 18 years). Where available, data on common and relevant obesity drivers and comorbidities are also presented.*

*View the latest version of this report on the Global Obesity Observatory at <https://data.worldobesity.org/country/china-42/>.*

| Contents   | Page |
|--|------|
| Obesity prevalence   | 3    |
| Trend: Children living with Overweight or obesity in China | 4    |
| Overweight/obesity by education                            | 5    |
| Overweight/obesity by age                                  | 6    |
| Overweight/obesity by region                               | 7    |
| Overweight/obesity by socio-economic group                 | 10   |
| Overweight/obesity by ethnicity                            | 13   |
| Double burden of underweight & overweight                  | 14   |
| Insufficient physical activity                             | 15   |
| Mental health - depression disorders                       | 18   |
| Mental health - anxiety disorders                          | 21   |

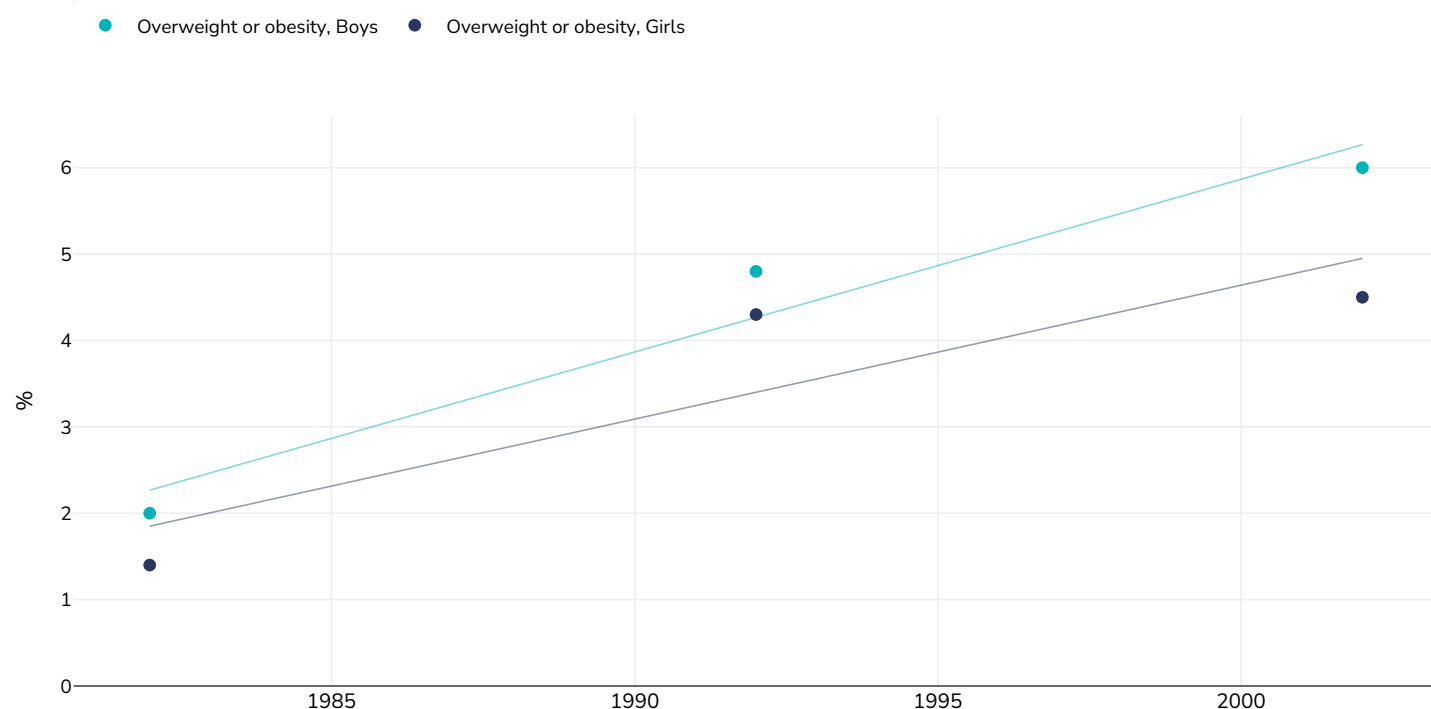
## Obesity prevalence

### Children, 2015



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Survey type:  | Measured   |
| Age:          | 7-18   |
| Sample size:  | 1617   |
| Area covered: | National   |
| References:   | Zhang J, Wang H, Wang Z, Du W, Su C, Zhang J, Jiang H, Jia X, Huang F, Ouyang Y, Wang Y, Zhang B. Prevalence and stabilizing trends in overweight and obesity among children and adolescents in China, 2011-2015. BMC Public Health. 2018 May 2;18(1):571. doi: 10.1186/s12889-018-5483-9. |
| Definitions:  | IOTF International Cut off. WHO & WGOC also available in paper.  |
| Cutoffs:      | IOTF   |

## Children living with Overweight or obesity in China



Survey type:

Measured

References:

1982: Li Y., Schouten EG, Hu X et al. Obesity prevalence and time trend among youngsters in China, 1982-2002. Published in Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Our version from Book - Li Y. Childhood Obesity in China: prevalence, determinants and health.

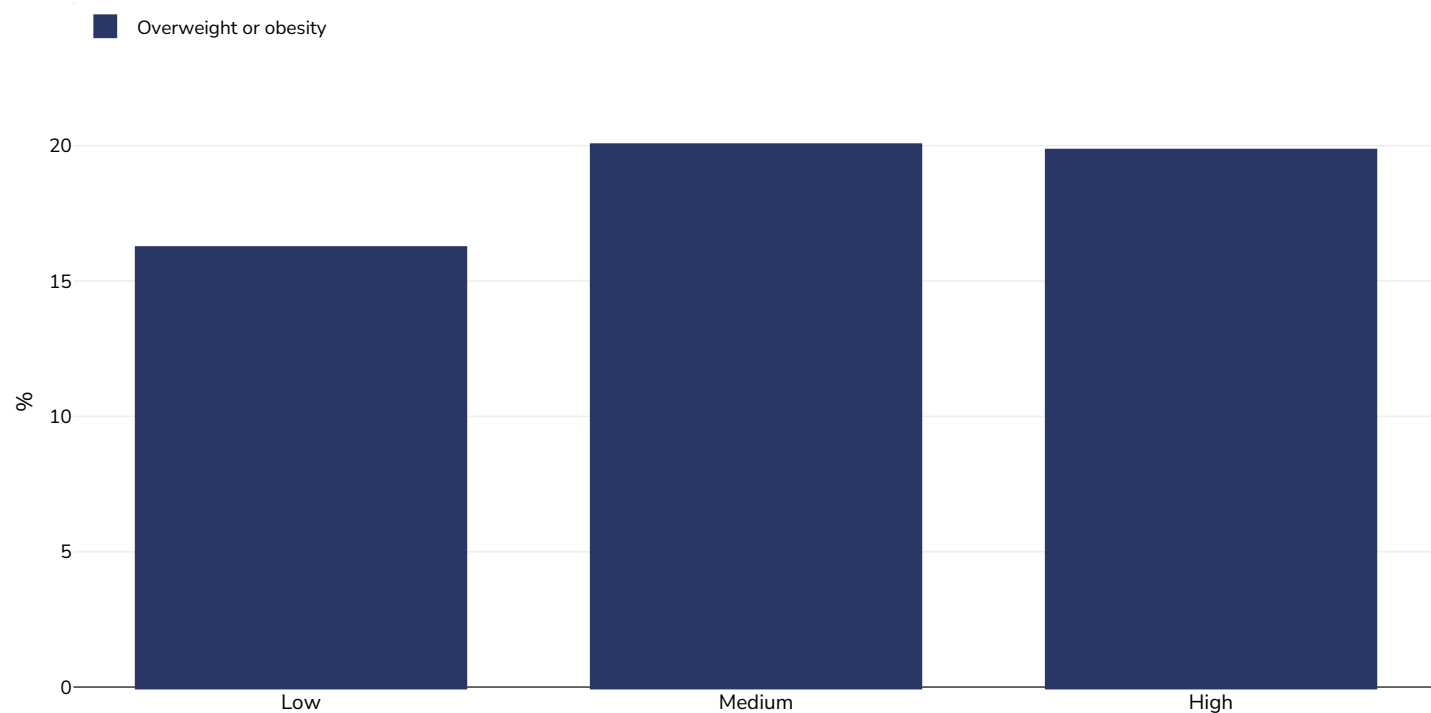
1992: Li Y., Schouten EG, Hu X et al. Obesity prevalence and time trend among youngsters in China, 1982-2002. Published in Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Our version from Book - Li Y. Childhood Obesity in China: prevalence, determinants and health. Chapter 2

2002: Yanping L, Evert GS, Xiaoqi H, Zhao C, Dechun L and Guansheng M. 2008. Obesity prevalence and time trend among youngsters in china, 1982 - 2002. Asia Pac Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 17(1):131 - 137.

*Different methodologies may have been used to collect this data and so data from different surveys may not be strictly comparable. Please check with original data sources for methodologies used.*

## Overweight/obesity by education

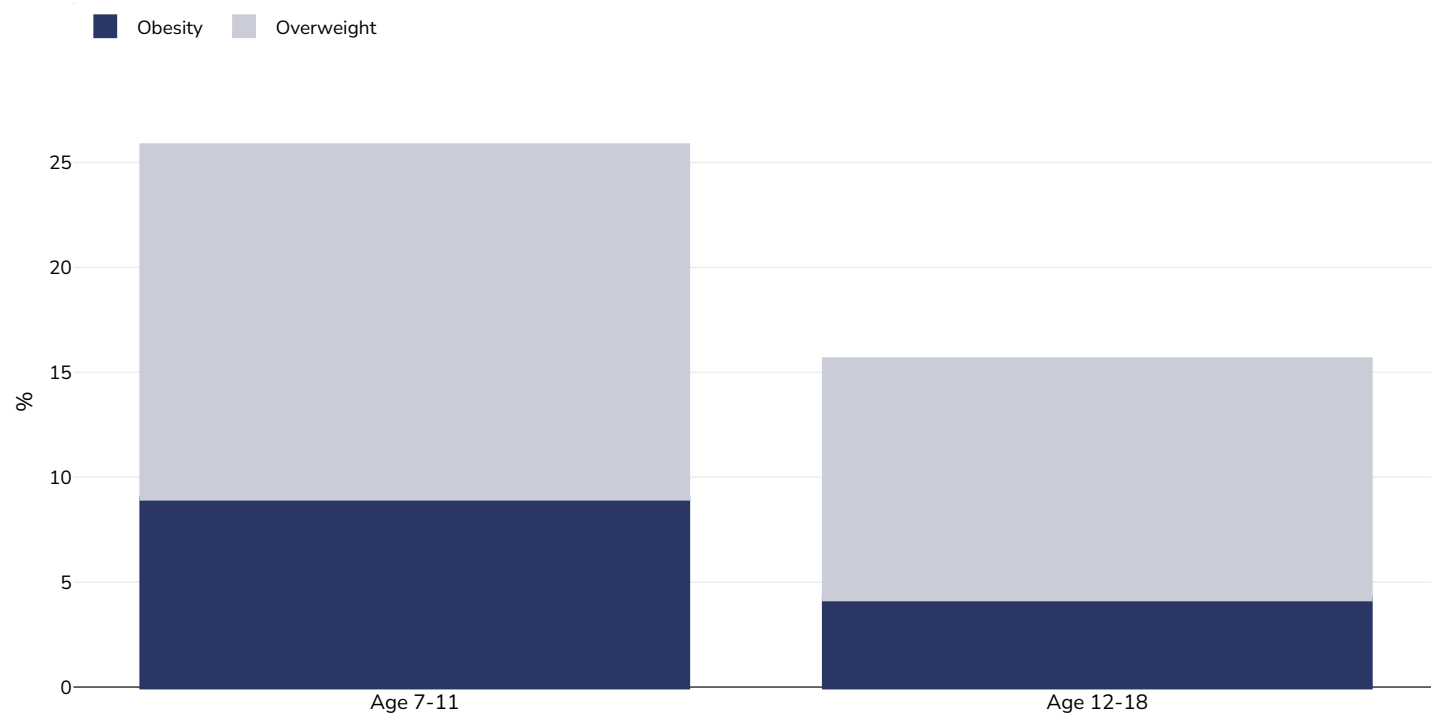
### Children, 2014



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Survey type:  | Measured   |
| Age:          | 5-12   |
| Sample size:  | 9917   |
| Area covered: | Regional - Guangzhou (urban setting)   |
| References:   | Liu W, Liu W, Lin R, et al. Socioeconomic determinants of childhood obesity among primary school children in Guangzhou, China. BMC Public Health. 2016;16:482. doi:10.1186/s12889-016-3171-1.  |
| Notes:        | BMI standard deviation scores (BMI z-score) were derived using the age (calculated by subtracting the date of birth from the date of examination) and sex specific WHO growth reference for school-aged children, which were further classified as non-overweight ( $\leq 1SD$ ), overweight ( $>1SD$ ) and obese ( $>2SD$ ). Overweight and obesity prevalence by Father's education. Education was categorised into low (primary and junior high school level), medium (senior high and vocational school level) or high (university level or higher). |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO  |

## Overweight/obesity by age

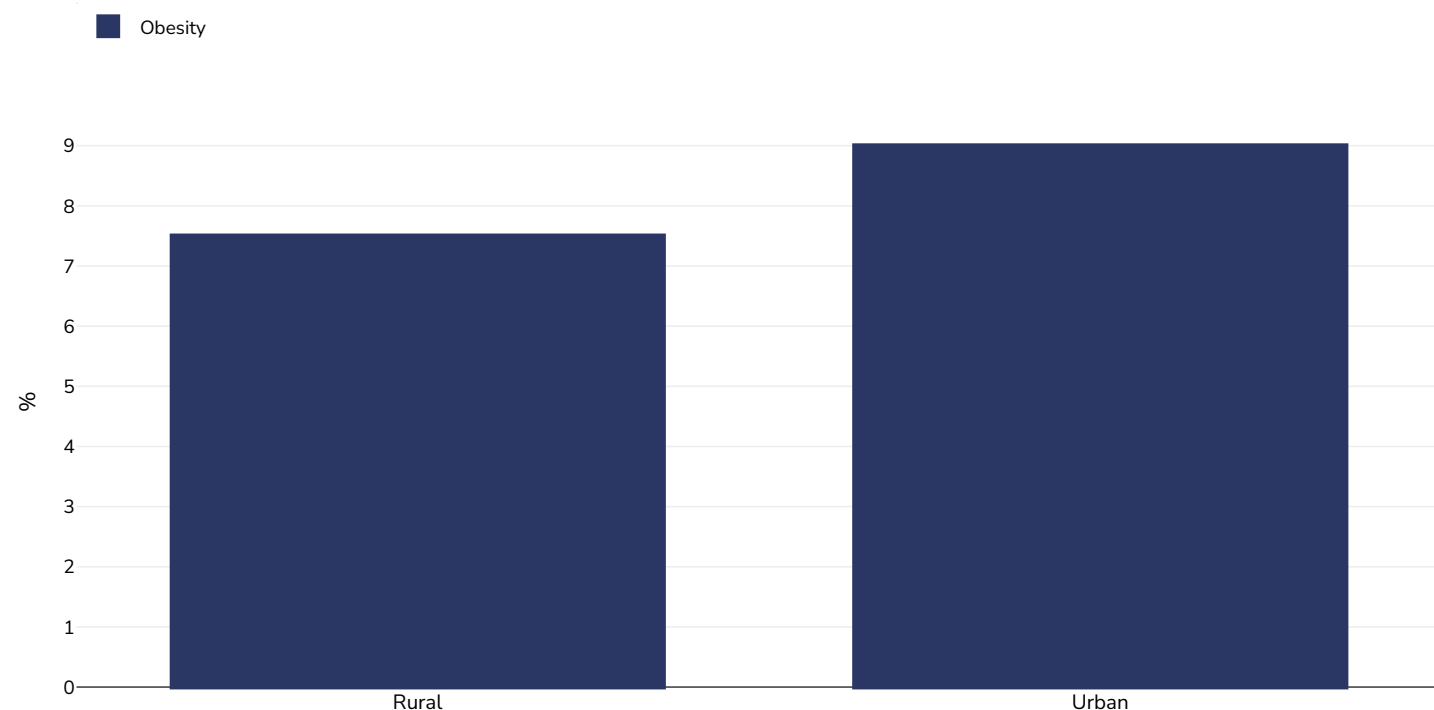
### Children, 2015



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Survey type:  | Measured   |
| Sample size:  | 1617   |
| Area covered: | National   |
| References:   | Zhang J, Wang H, Wang Z, Du W, Su C, Zhang J, Jiang H, Jia X, Huang F, Ouyang Y, Wang Y, Zhang B. Prevalence and stabilizing trends in overweight and obesity among children and adolescents in China, 2011-2015. BMC Public Health. 2018 May 2;18(1):571. doi: 10.1186/s12889-018-5483-9. |
| Notes:        | International Cut off used, WHO & WGOC also available  |
| Cutoffs:      | IOTF   |

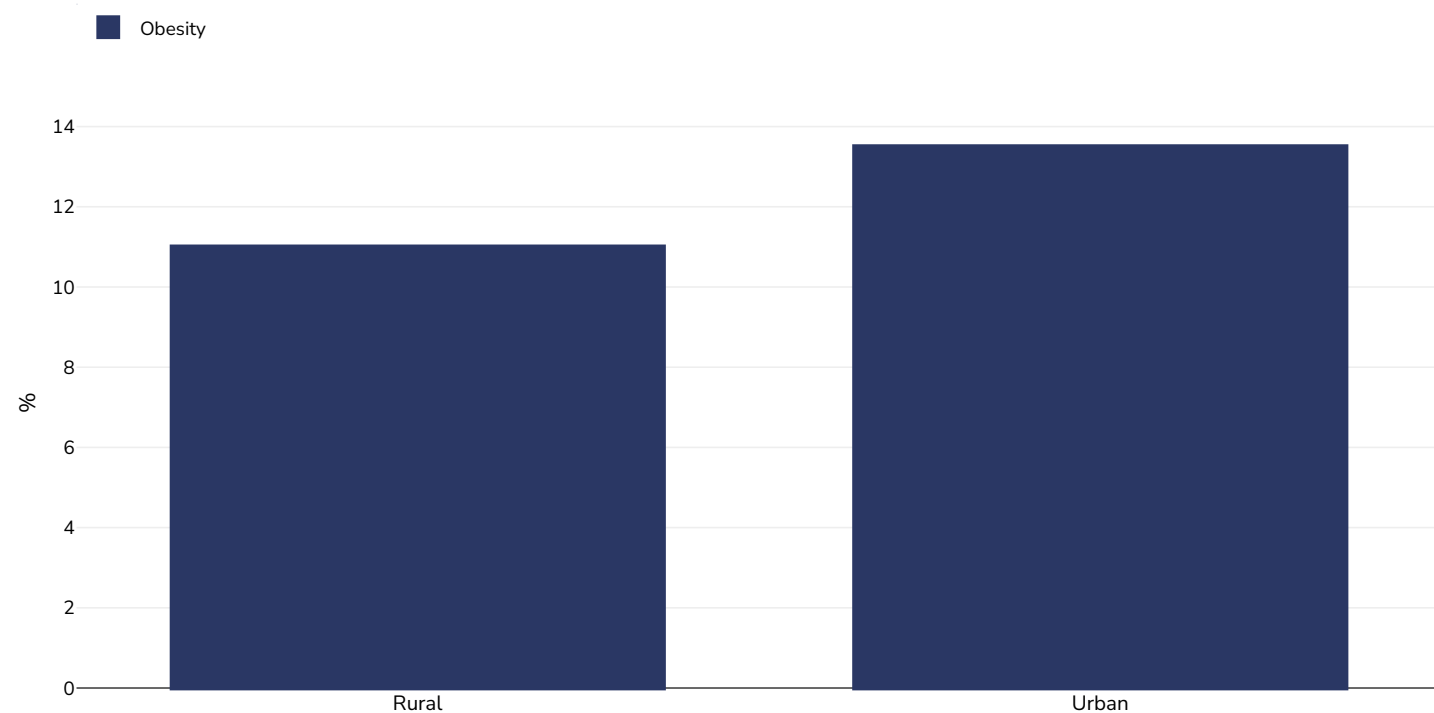
## Overweight/obesity by region

### Children, 2019



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Survey type:  | Measured   |
| Age:          | 7-18   |
| Sample size:  | 212,713  |
| Area covered: | National   |
| References:   | Song, X. et al. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1</a> . |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO 2007   |

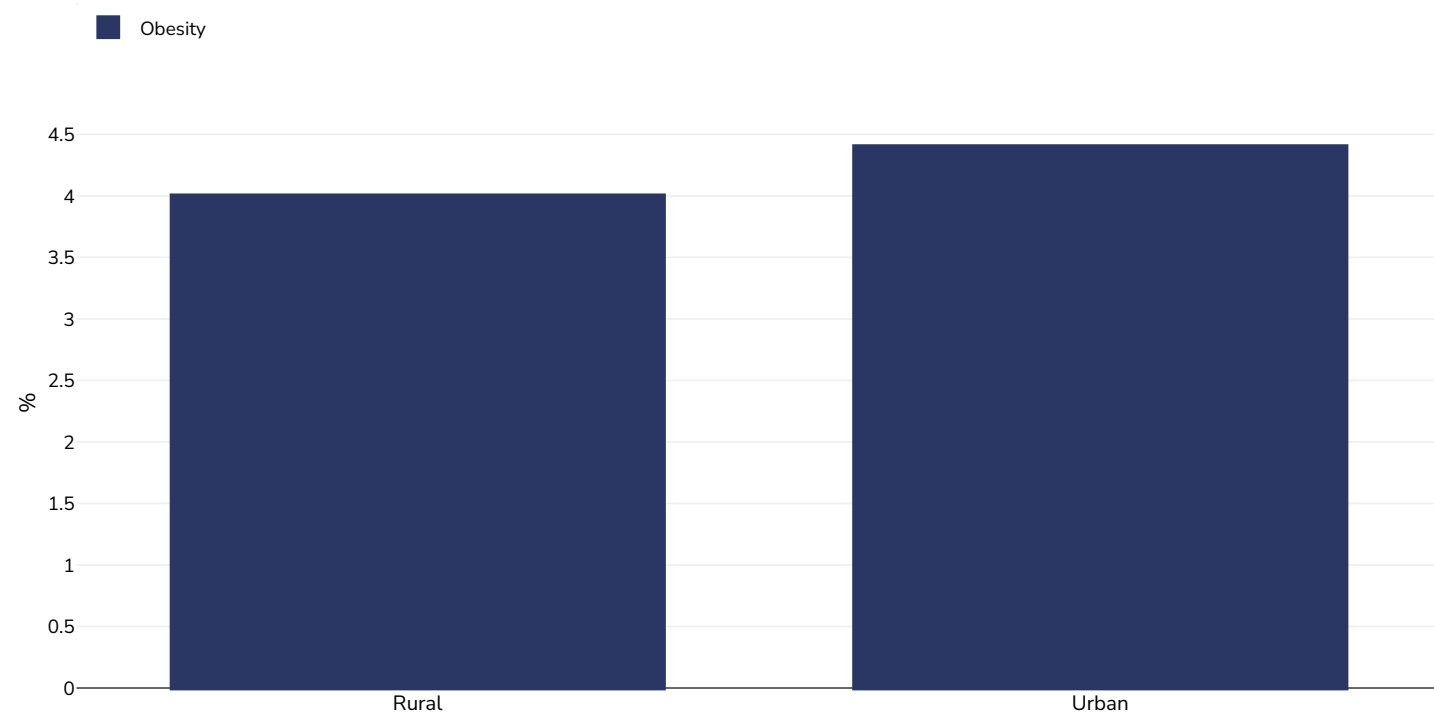
## Boys, 2019



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Survey type:  | Measured   |
| Age:          | 7-18   |
| Sample size:  | 212,713  |
| Area covered: | National   |
| References:   | Song, X. et al. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1</a> . |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO 2007   |



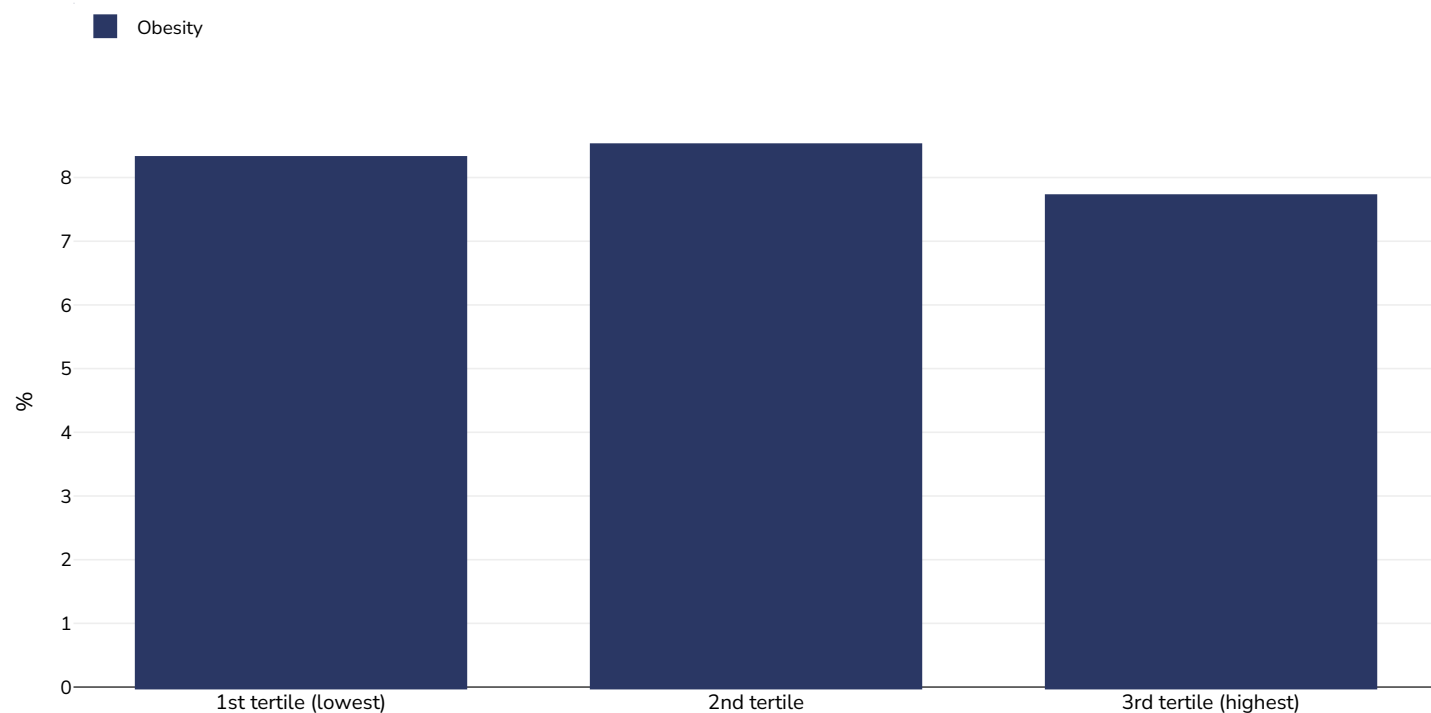
## Girls, 2019



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Survey type:  | Measured   |
| Age:          | 7-18   |
| Sample size:  | 212,713  |
| Area covered: | National   |
| References:   | Song, X. et al. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1</a> |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO 2007   |

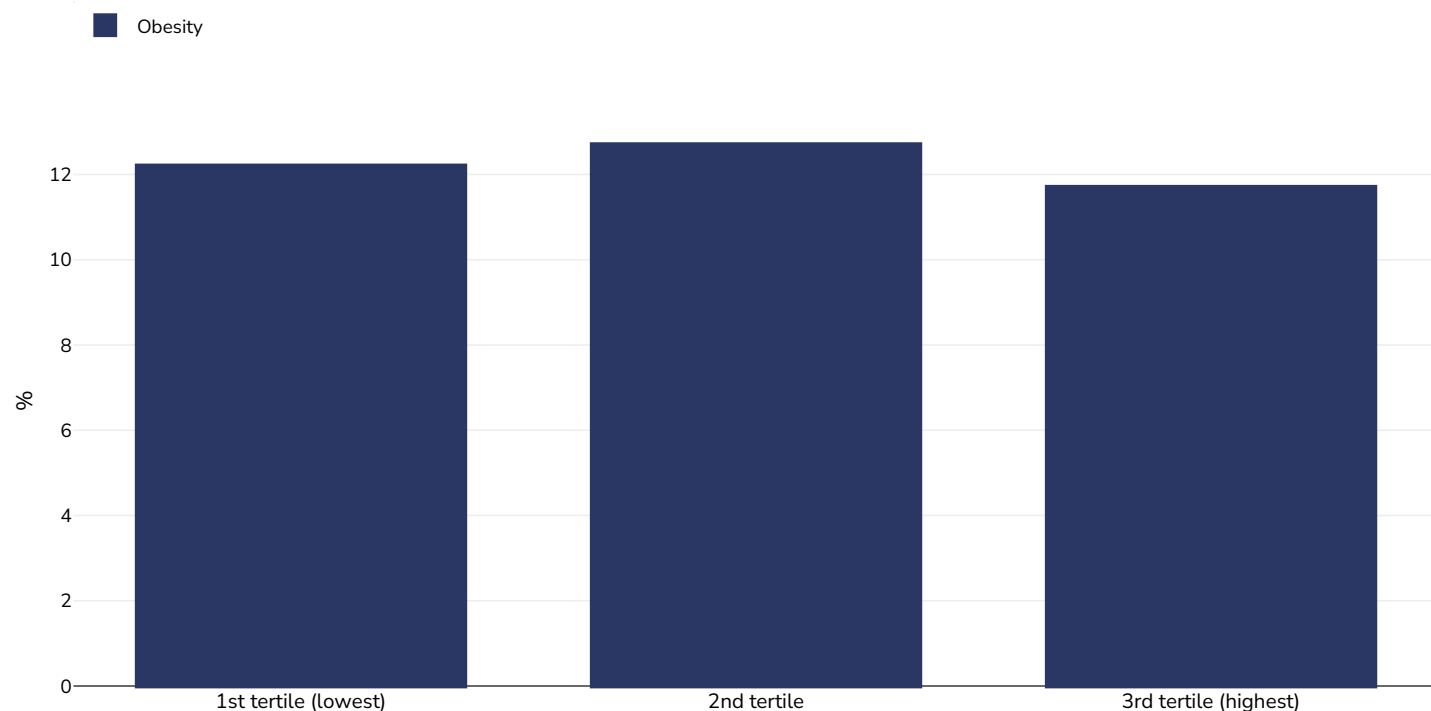
## Overweight/obesity by socio-economic group

### Children, 2019



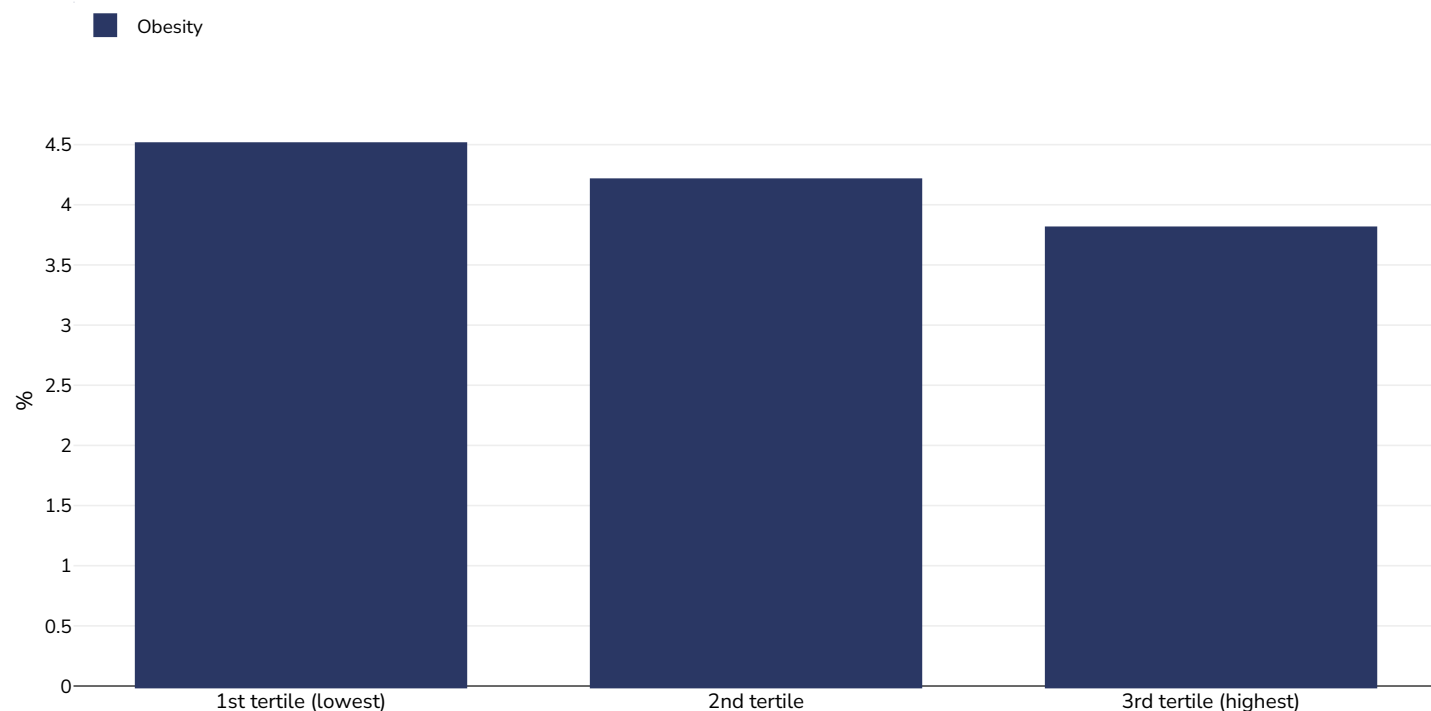
|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Survey type:  | Measured  |
| Age:          | 7-18  |
| Sample size:  | 212,713   |
| Area covered: | National  |
| References:   | Song, X., Zhou, B., Baird, S., Lu, C., Majid Ezzati, Chen, L., Liu, J., Zhang, Y., Wang, R., Ma, Q., Jiang, J., Qin, Y., Dong, Z., Yuan, W., Guo, T., Song, Z., Liu, Y., Dang, J., Hu, P. and Dong, Y. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1</a> |
| Notes:        | 106,703 boys, 106,010 girls. Only includes Han ethnicity  |
| Definitions:  | Regional socioeconomic status defined using the value added of the primary sector as a percentage of GDP  |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO 2007  |

## Boys, 2019



|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Survey type:  | Measured  |
| Age:          | 7-18  |
| Sample size:  | 212,713   |
| Area covered: | National  |
| References:   | Song, X., Zhou, B., Baird, S., Lu, C., Majid Ezzati, Chen, L., Liu, J., Zhang, Y., Wang, R., Ma, Q., Jiang, J., Qin, Y., Dong, Z., Yuan, W., Guo, T., Song, Z., Liu, Y., Dang, J., Hu, P. and Dong, Y. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1</a> |
| Notes:        | 106,703 boys, 106,010 girls. Only includes Han ethnicity  |
| Definitions:  | Regional socioeconomic status defined using the value added of the primary sector as a percentage of GDP  |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO 2007  |

## Girls, 2019

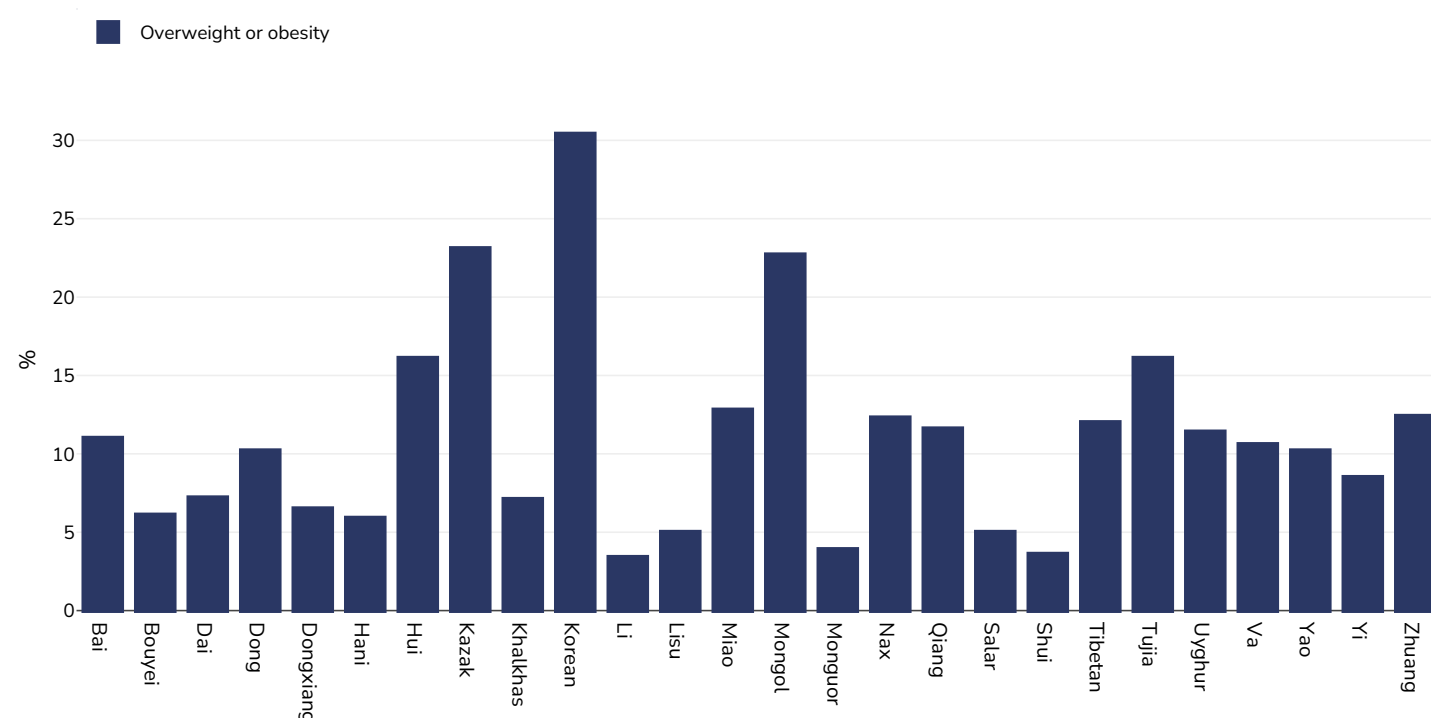


|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Survey type:  | Measured  |
| Age:          | 7-18  |
| Sample size:  | 212,713   |
| Area covered: | National  |
| References:   | Song, X., Zhou, B., Baird, S., Lu, C., Majid Ezzati, Chen, L., Liu, J., Zhang, Y., Wang, R., Ma, Q., Jiang, J., Qin, Y., Dong, Z., Yuan, W., Guo, T., Song, Z., Liu, Y., Dang, J., Hu, P. and Dong, Y. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1</a> |
| Notes:        | 106,703 boys, 106,010 girls. Only includes Han ethnicity  |
| Definitions:  | Regional socioeconomic status defined using the value added of the primary sector as a percentage of GDP  |
| Cutoffs:      | WHO 2007  |

## Overweight/obesity by ethnicity

Ethnic groups are as defined by publication of origin and are not as defined by WOF. In some instances ethnicity is conflated with nationality and/or race.

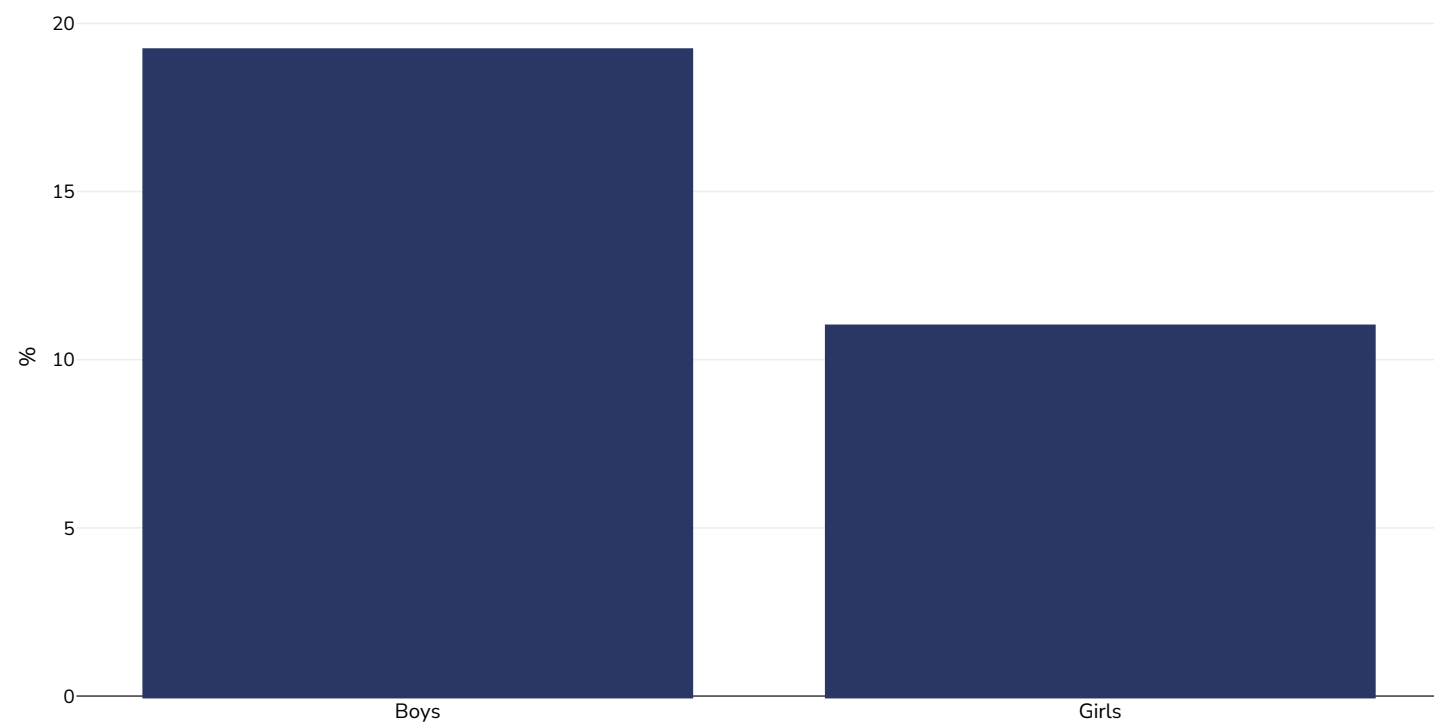
### Children, 2014



|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Survey type:  | Measured  |
| Age:          | 7-18  |
| Sample size:  | 80,821  |
| Area covered: | National  |
| References:   | Dong, Yanhui, et al. "Prevalence of Excess Body Weight and Underweight among 26 Chinese Ethnic Minority Children and Adolescents in 2014: A Cross-Sectional Observational Study." BMC Public Health, vol. 18, no. 1, 27 Apr. 2018, 10.1186/s12889-018-5352-6. |
| Notes:        | Data from Chinese National Survey on Students Constitution and Health 2014  |
| Cutoffs:      | Overweight and obesity was defined as $\geq$ the referent age- and sex- specific 85th centile according to the reference developed by Working Group on Obesity in China (WGOC)  |

## Double burden of underweight & overweight

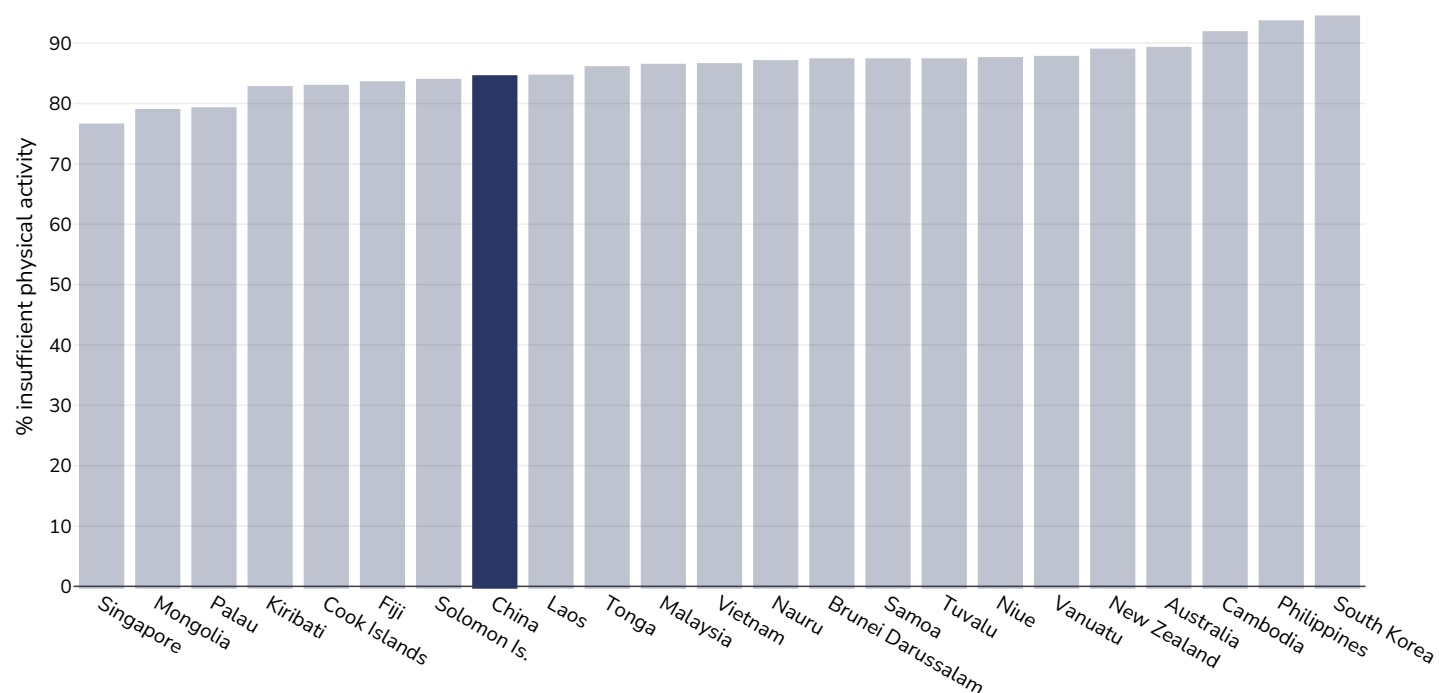
### Children, 2022



|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Survey type: | Measured   |
| Age:         | 5-19   |
| References:  | NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC). Worldwide trends in underweight and obesity from 1990 to 2022: a pooled analysis of 3663 population representative studies with 222 million children, adolescents, and adults. Lancet 2024; published online Feb 29. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02750-2">https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02750-2</a> . |
| Notes:       | Age standardised estimates   |
| Definitions: | Combined prevalence of BMI < -2SD and BMI > 2SD (double burden of thinness and obesity)  |
| Cutoffs:     | BMI < -2SD and BMI > 2SD   |

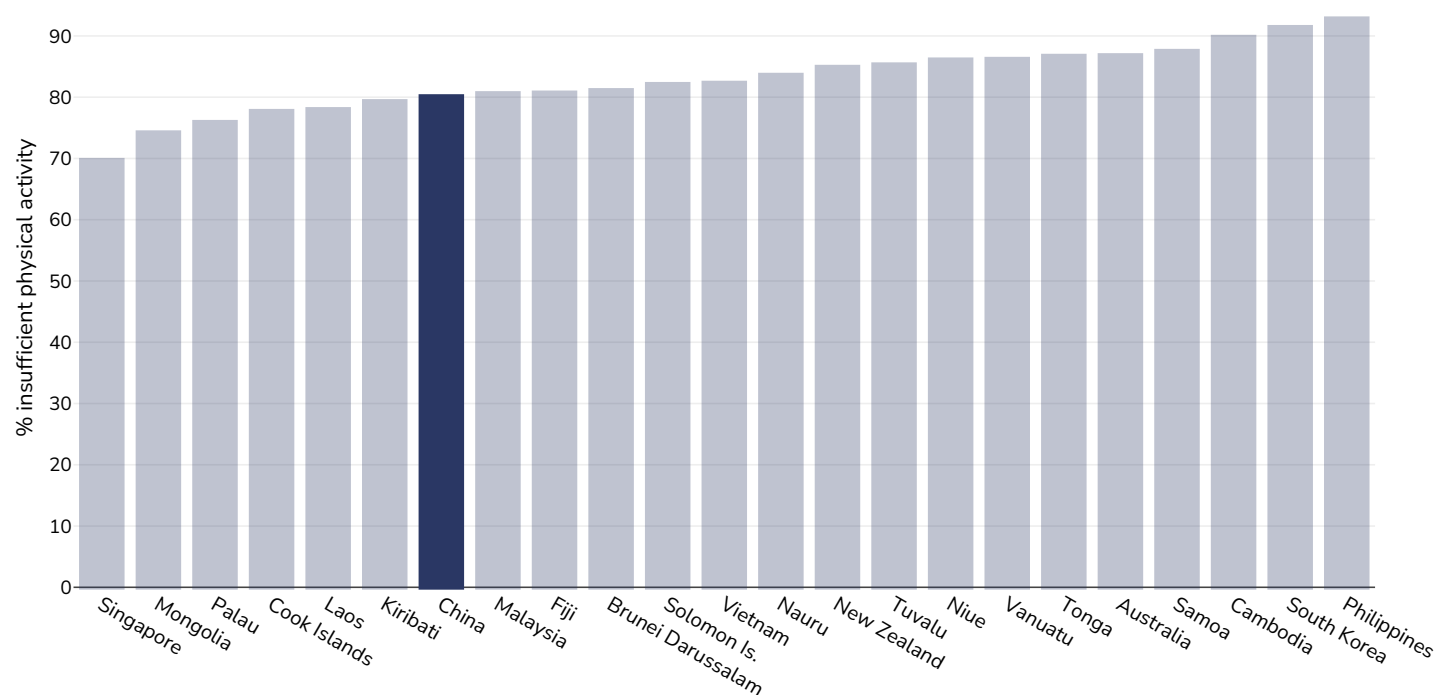
## Insufficient physical activity

### Children, 2016



|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Survey type: | Self-reported  |
| Age:         | 11-17  |
| References:  | Global Health Observatory data repository, World Health Organisation, <a href="https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en">https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en</a> (last accessed 16.03.21) |
| Notes:       | % of school going adolescents not meeting WHO recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, i.e. doing less than 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.                                   |
| Definitions: | % Adolescents insufficiently active (age standardised estimate)  |

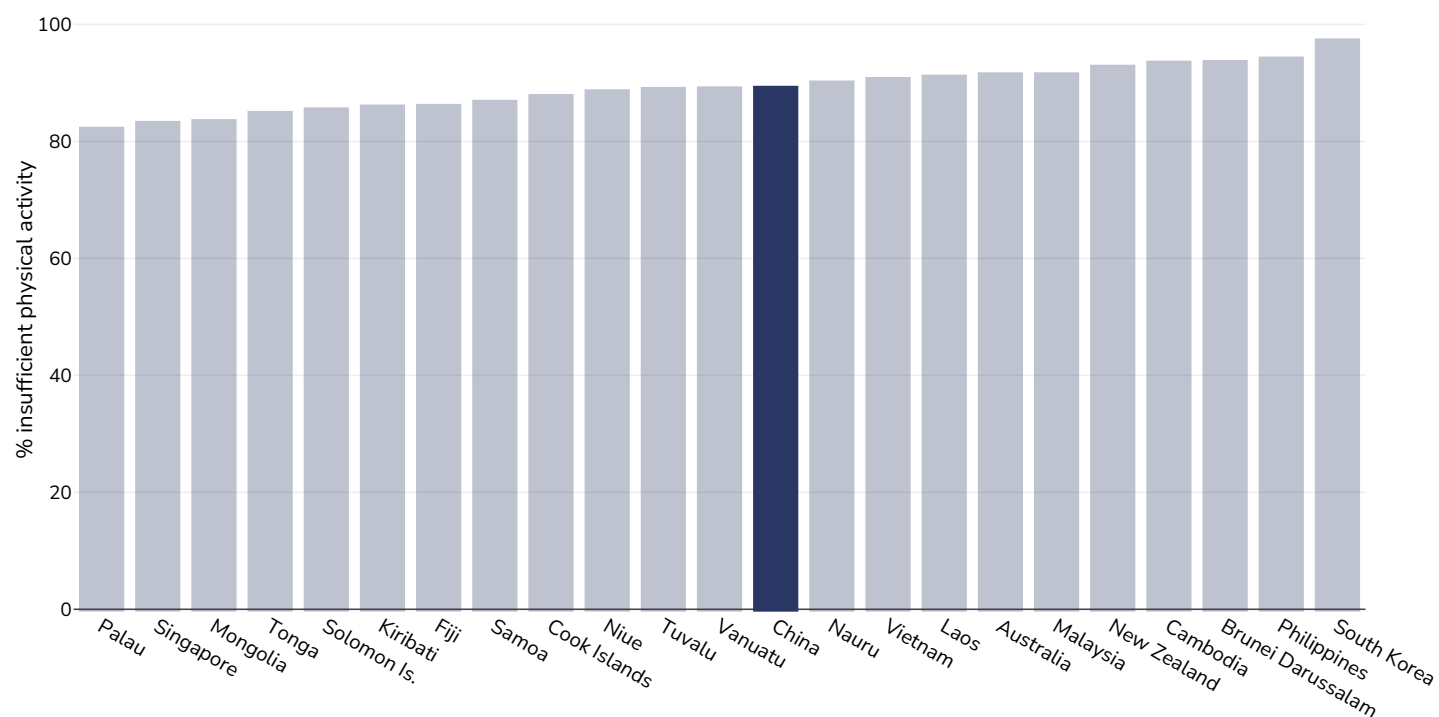
## Boys, 2016



|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Survey type: | Self-reported  |
| Age:         | 11-17  |
| References:  | Global Health Observatory data repository, World Health Organisation, <a href="https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en">https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en</a> (last accessed 16.03.21) |
| Notes:       | % of school going adolescents not meeting WHO recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, i.e. doing less than 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.                                   |
| Definitions: | % Adolescents insufficiently active (age standardised estimate)  |



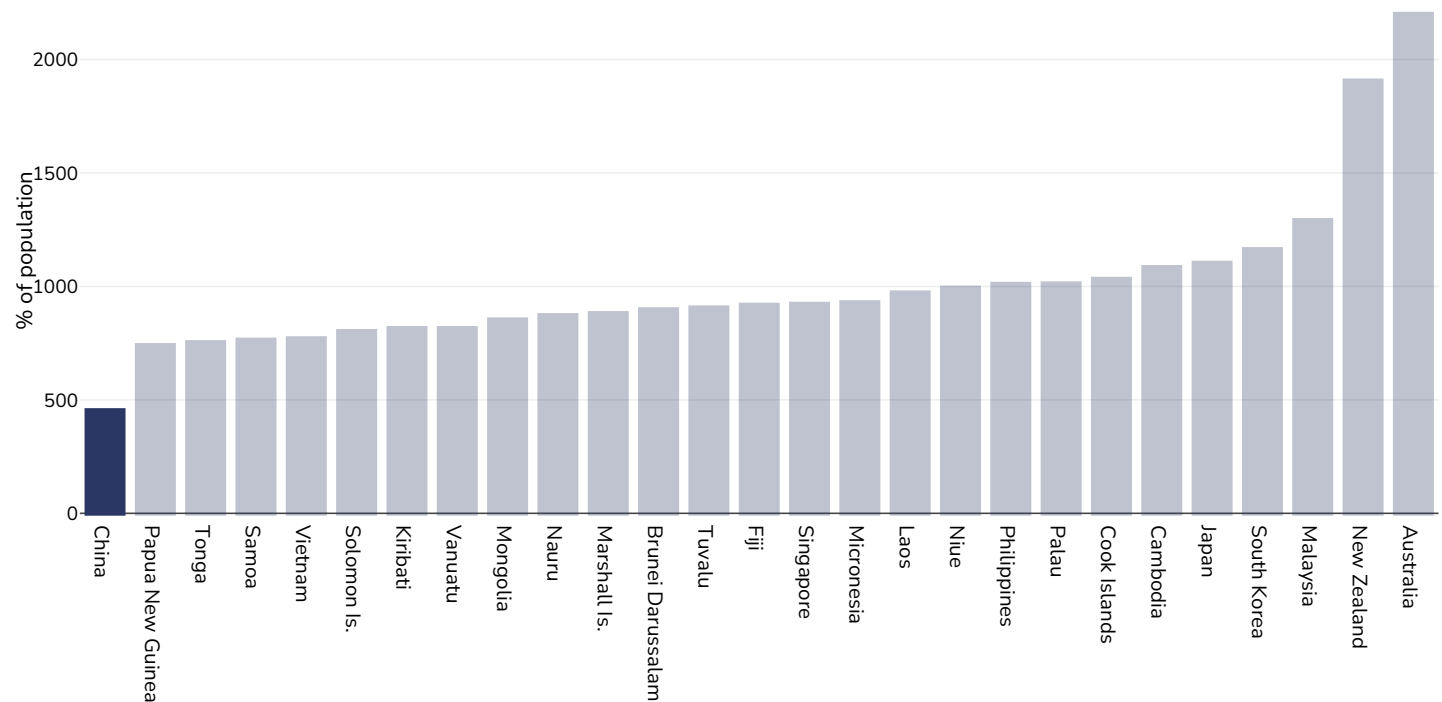
## Girls, 2016



|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Survey type: | Self-reported  |
| Age:         | 11-17  |
| References:  | Global Health Observatory data repository, World Health Organisation, <a href="https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en">https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en</a> (last accessed 16.03.21) |
| Notes:       | % of school going adolescents not meeting WHO recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, i.e. doing less than 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.                                   |
| Definitions: | % Adolescents insufficiently active (age standardised estimate)  |

## Mental health - depression disorders

### Children, 2021



Area covered:

National

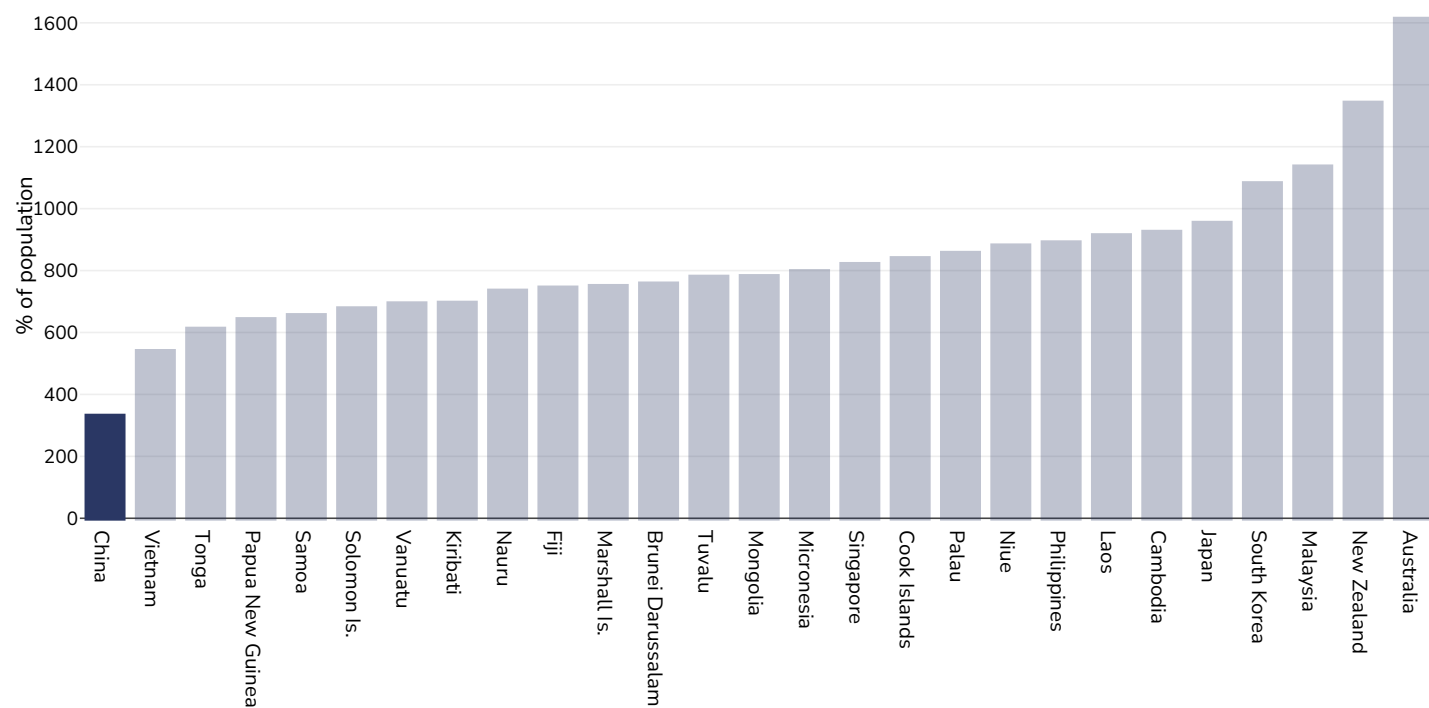
References:

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2023. Available from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare>. (Last accessed 23.04.25)

Definitions:

Number living with depressive disorder per 100,000 population (Under 20 years of age)

## Boys, 2021



Area covered:

National

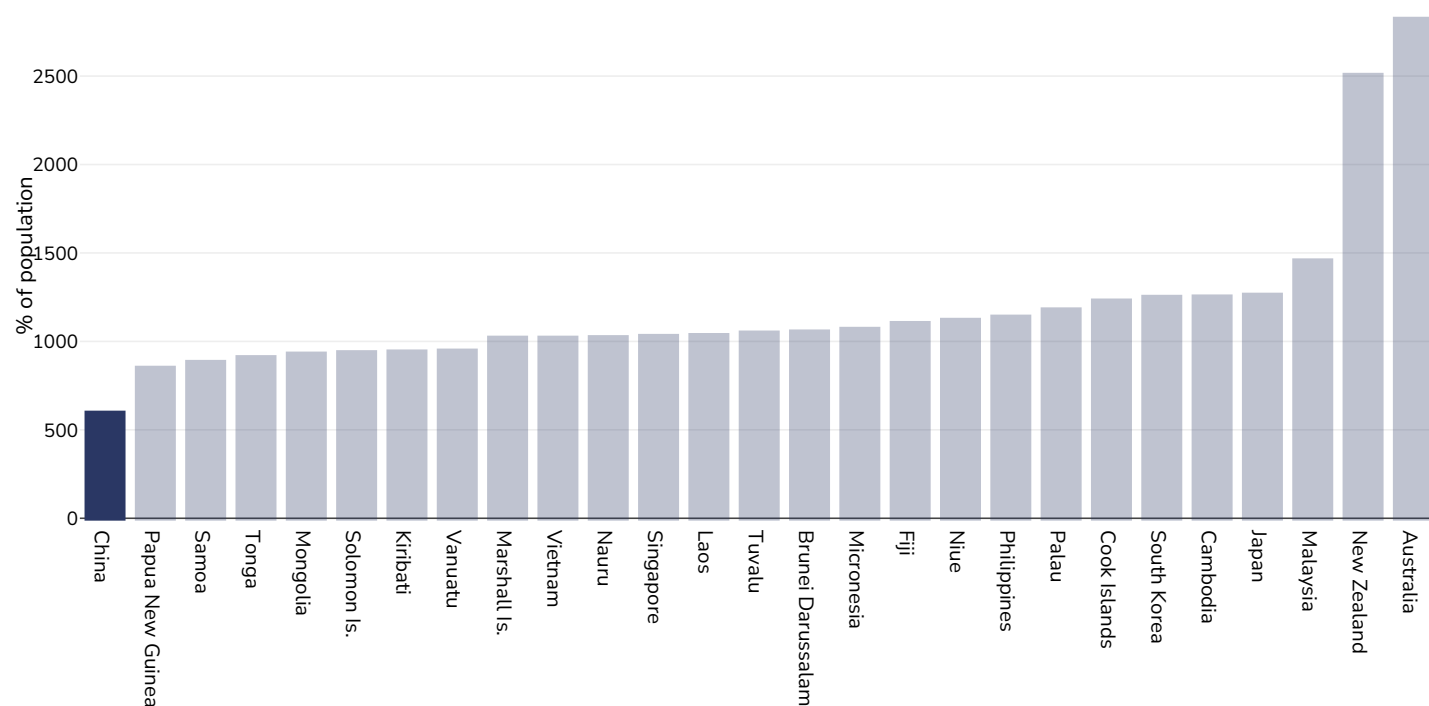
References:

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2023. Available from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare>. (Last accessed 23.04.25)

Definitions:

Number living with depressive disorder per 100,000 population (Under 20 years of age)

## Girls, 2021



Area covered:

National

References:

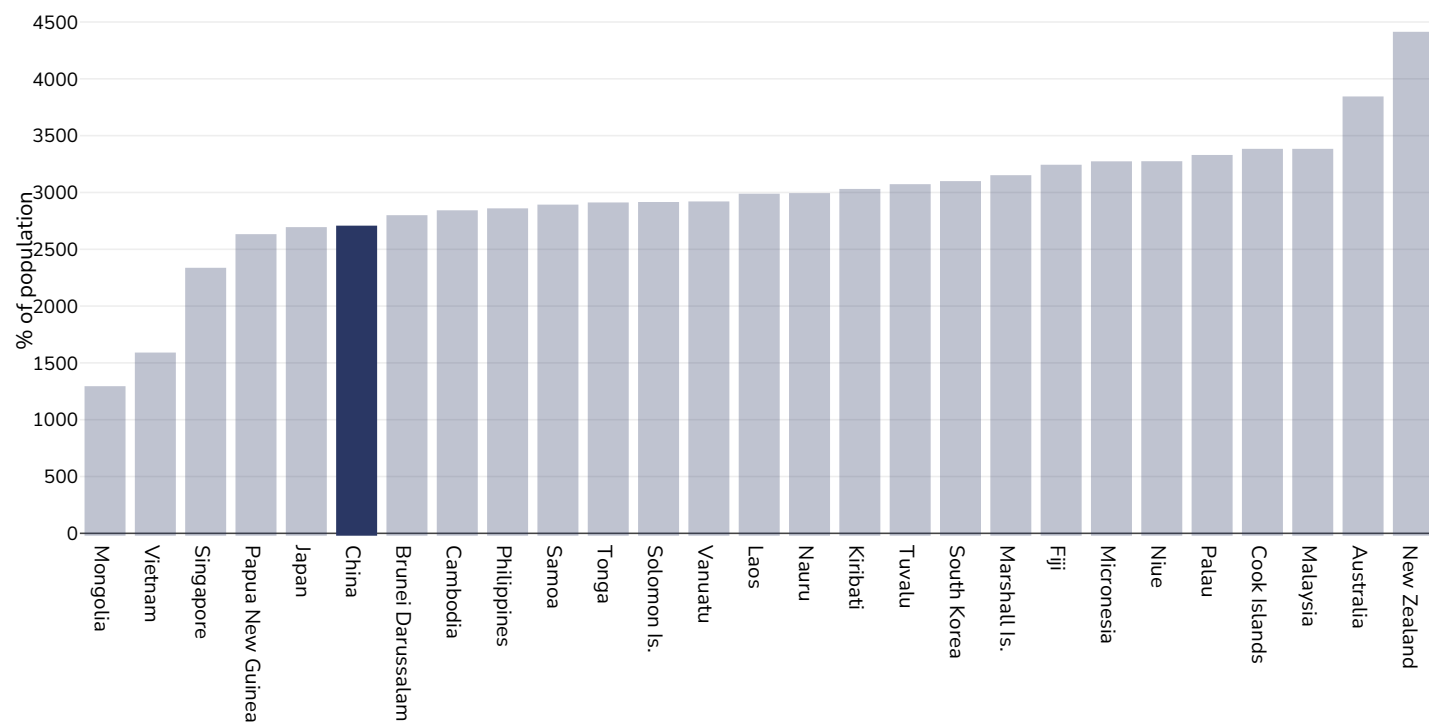
Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2023. Available from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare>. (Last accessed 23.04.25)

Definitions:

Number living with depressive disorder per 100,000 population (Under 20 years of age)

## Mental health - anxiety disorders

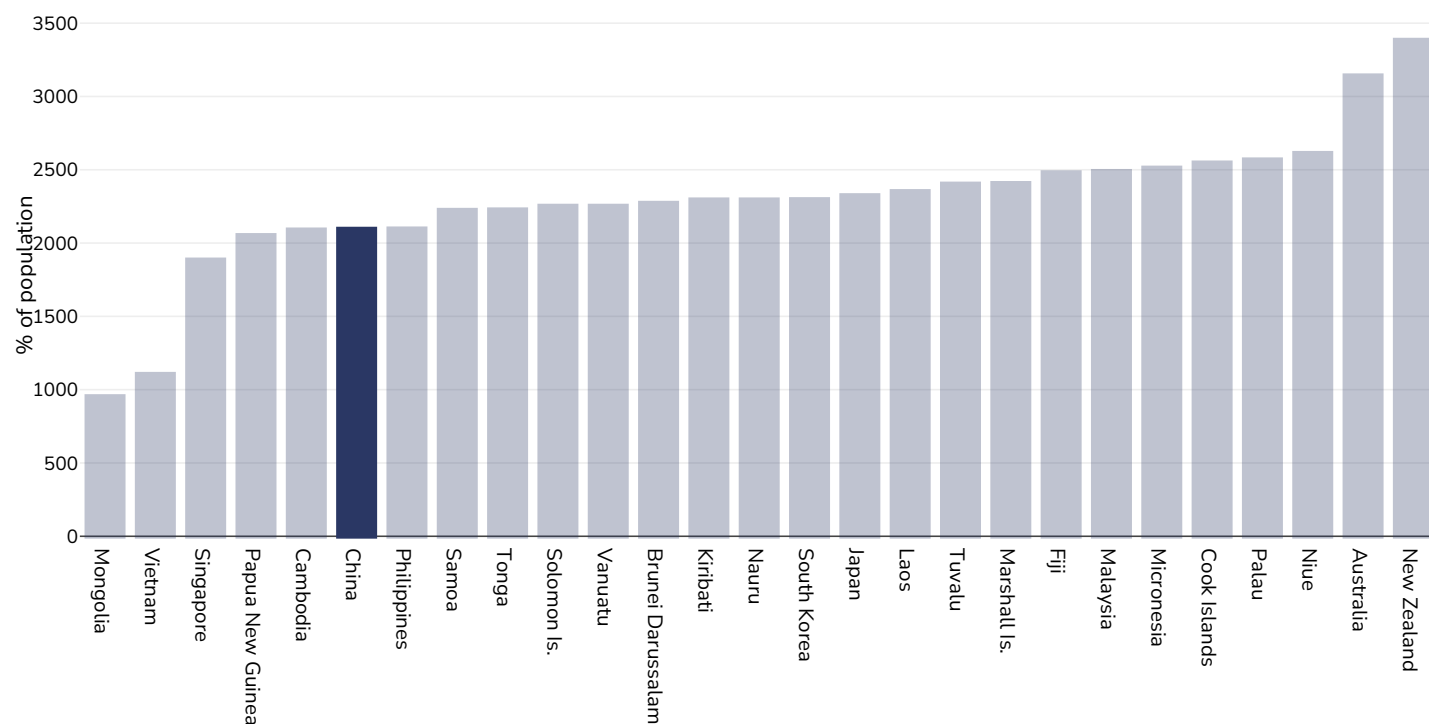
### Children, 2021



**References:**

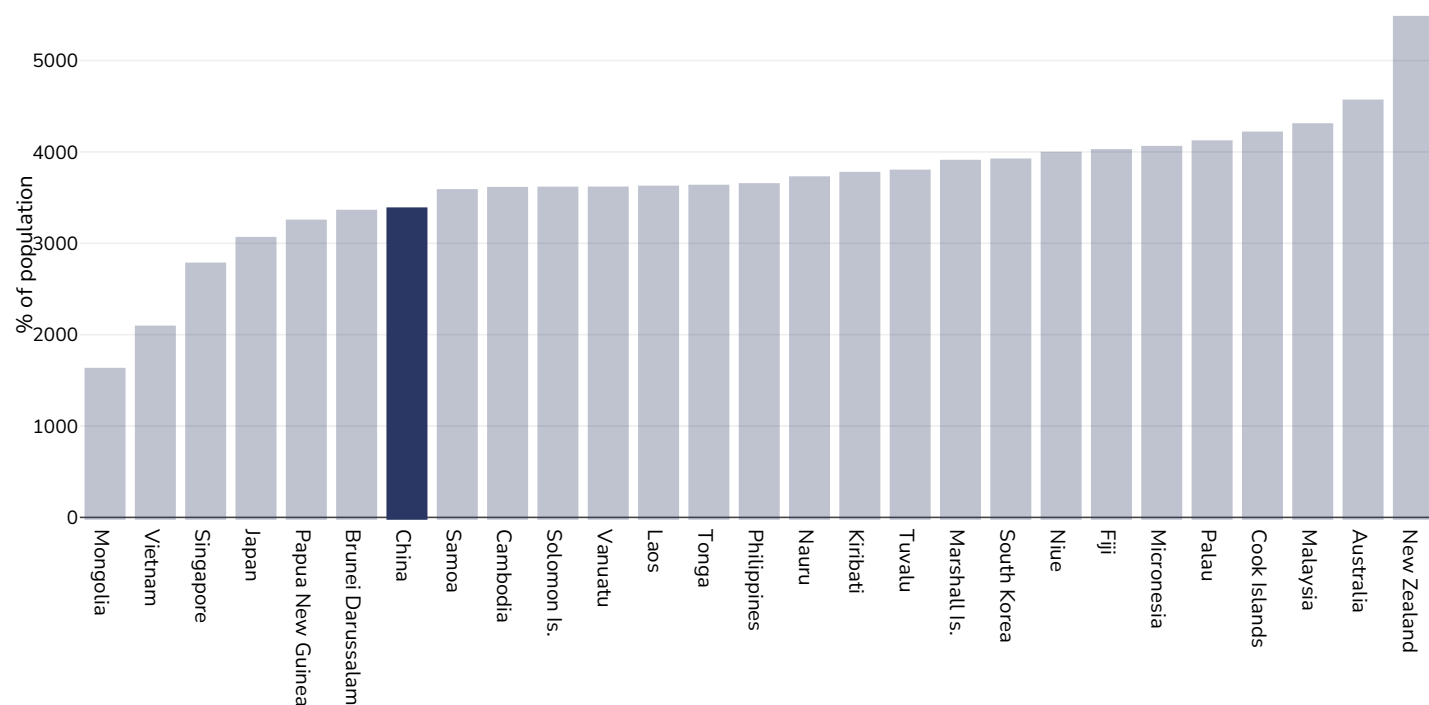
Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2023. Available from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare>. (Last accessed 23.04.25)

## Boys, 2021



**References:** Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2023. Available from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare>. (Last accessed 23.04.25)

## Girls, 2021



**References:** Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2021. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2023. Available from <http://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare>. (Last accessed 23.04.25)

*PDF created on July 14, 2025*