China

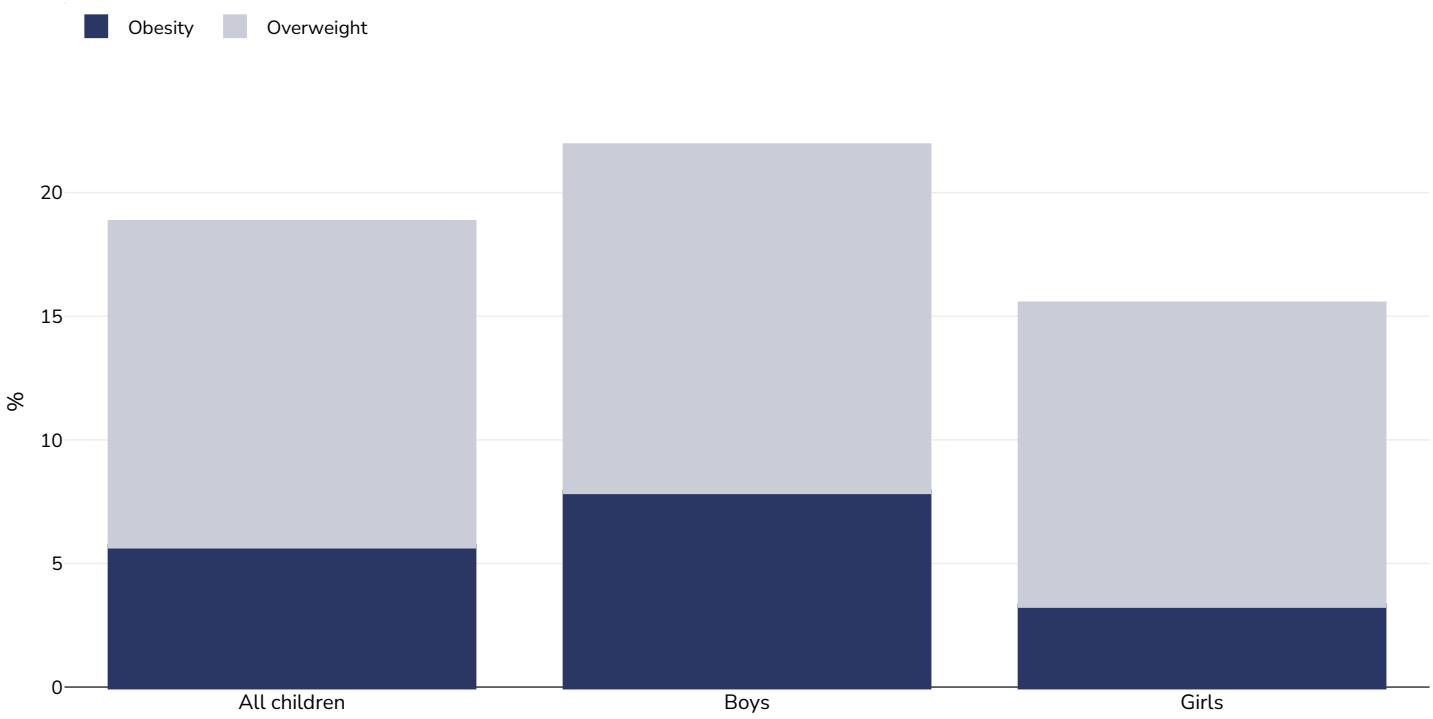
Country report card - children

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/.

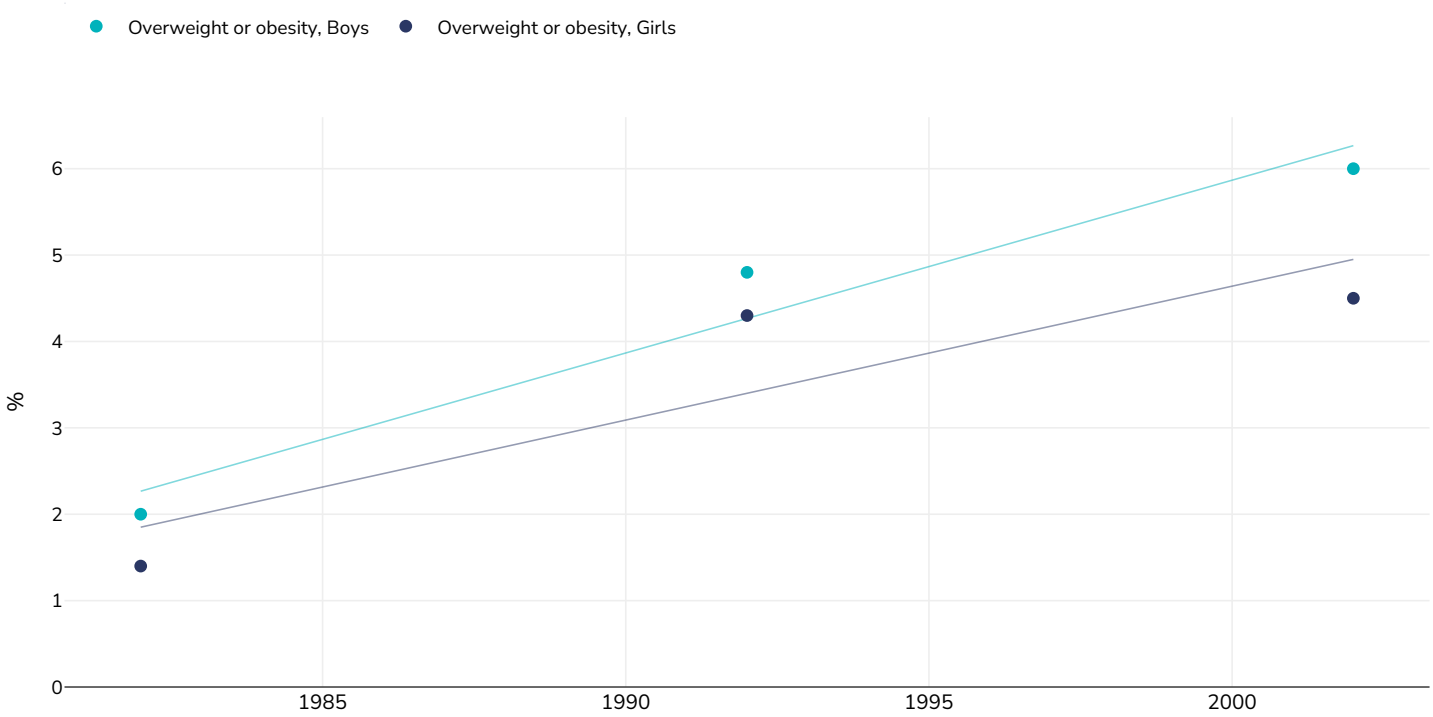
Obesity prevalence

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

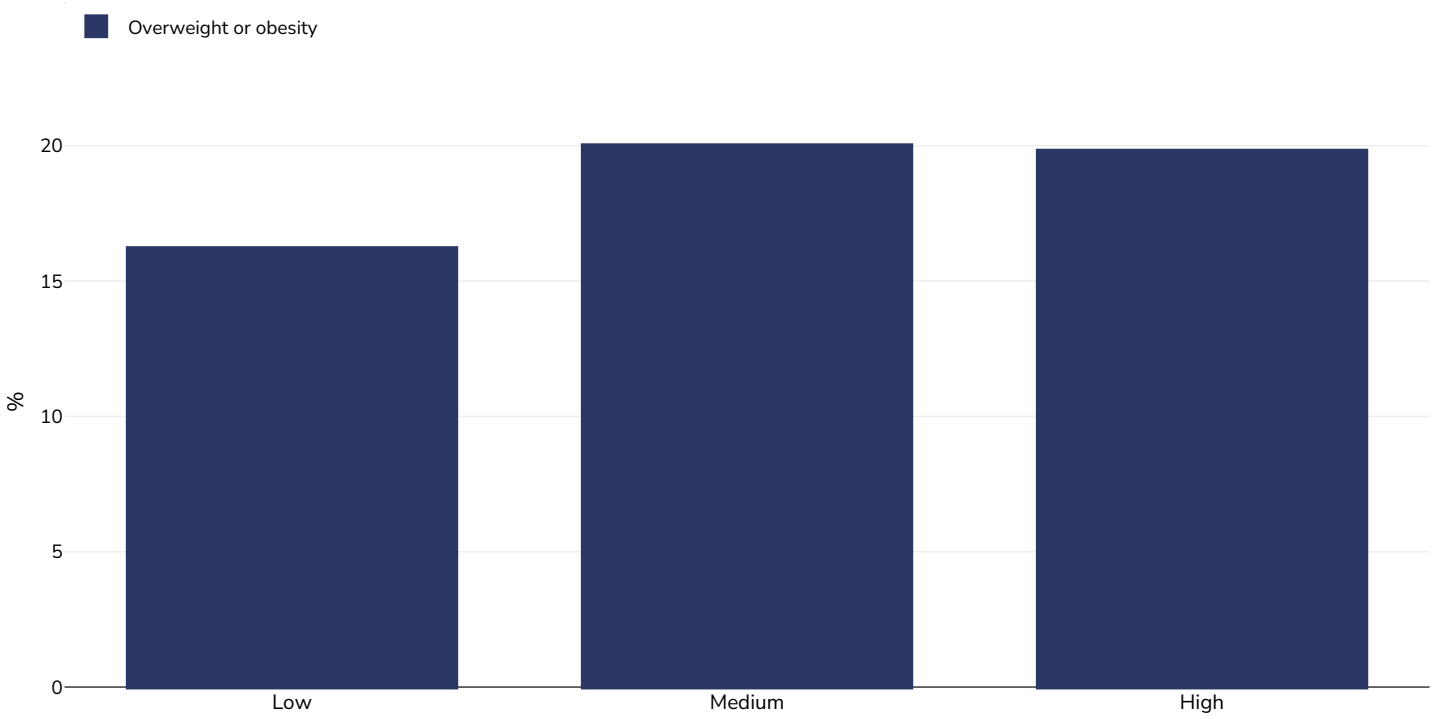


Survey type:	Measured
References:	1982: Li Y,, Schouten EG, Hu X et al. Obesity prevalence and time trend among youngsters in China, 1982-2002. Published in Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Our version from Book - Li Y. Childhood Obesity in China: prevalence, determinants and health. 1992: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

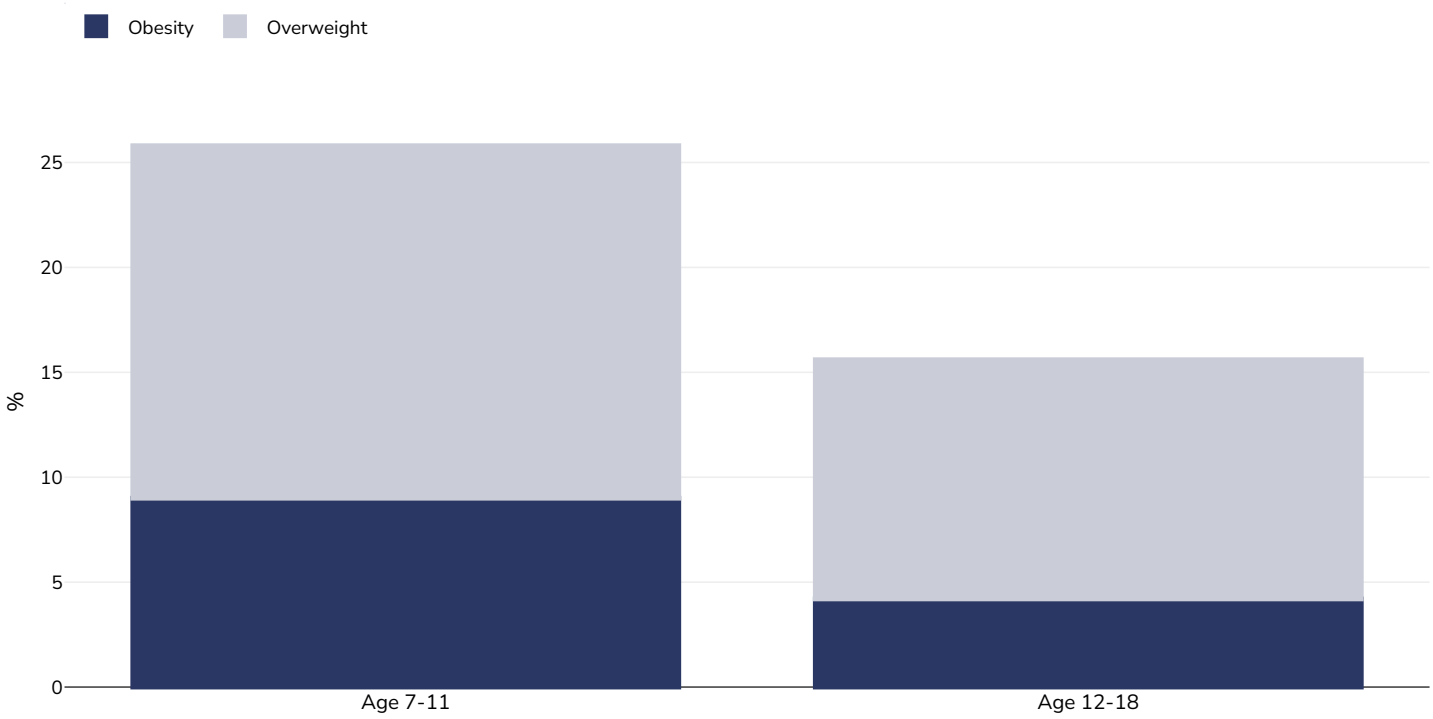
Children, 2014



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 (≤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



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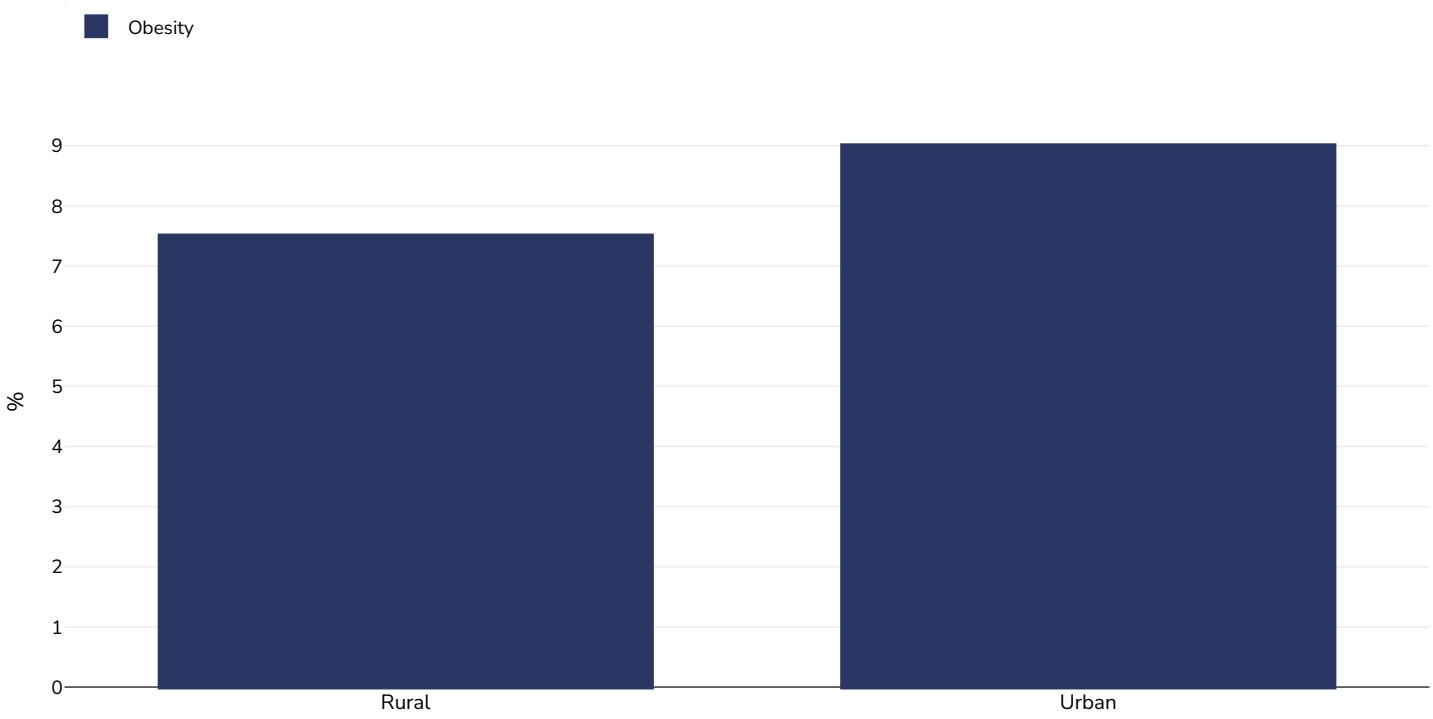
Area covered:	National
References:	Zhang J, Wang H, Wang Z, Du W, Su C, Zhang J, Jiang H, Jia X, Huang F, Ouyang Y, Wang Y, Zhang B.Prevalence and stabilizing trends in overweight and obesity among children and adolescents in China, 2011-2015. BMC Public Health. 2018 May 2;18(1):571. doi: 10.1186/s12889-018-5483-9.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

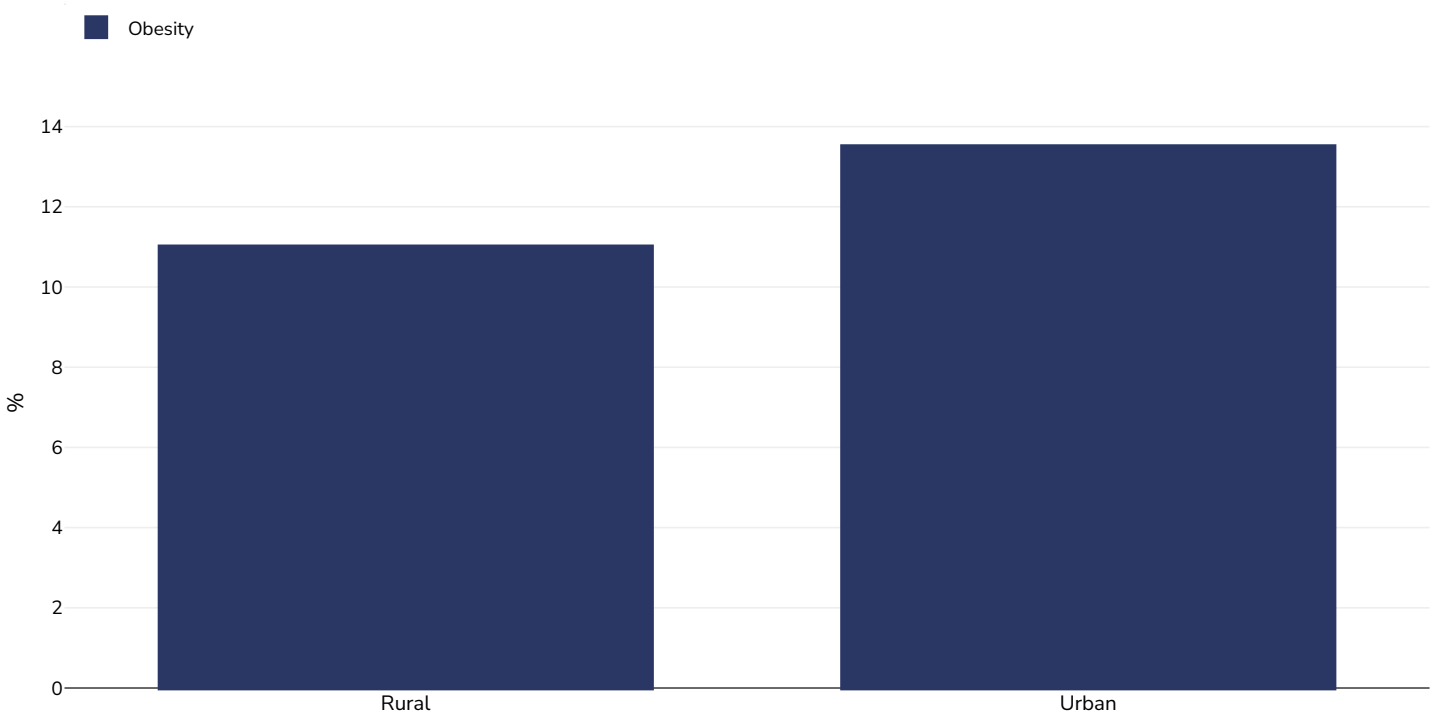
Overweight/obesity by region

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:https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1.
Cutoffs:	WHO 2007

Boys, 2019



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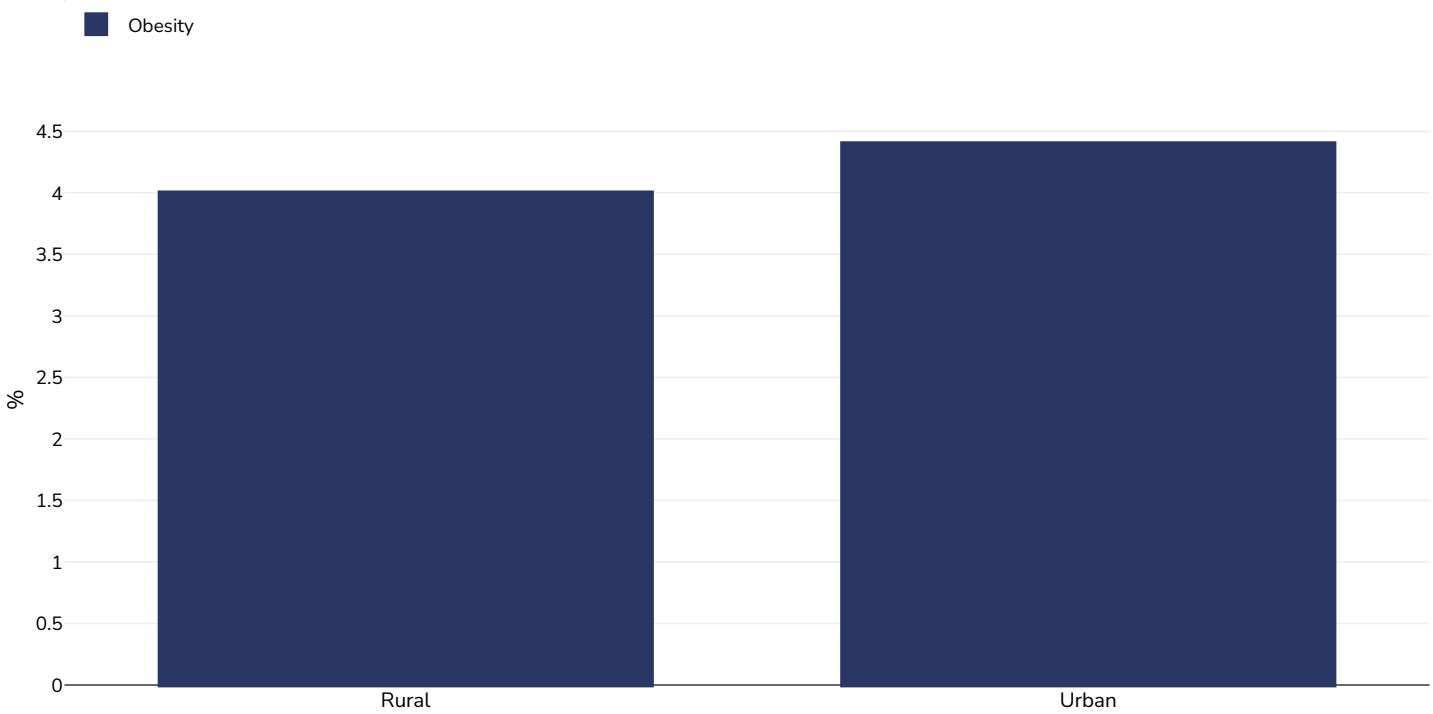
Area covered:	National
References:	Song, X. et al. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1.
Cutoffs:	WHO 2007

Girls, 2019



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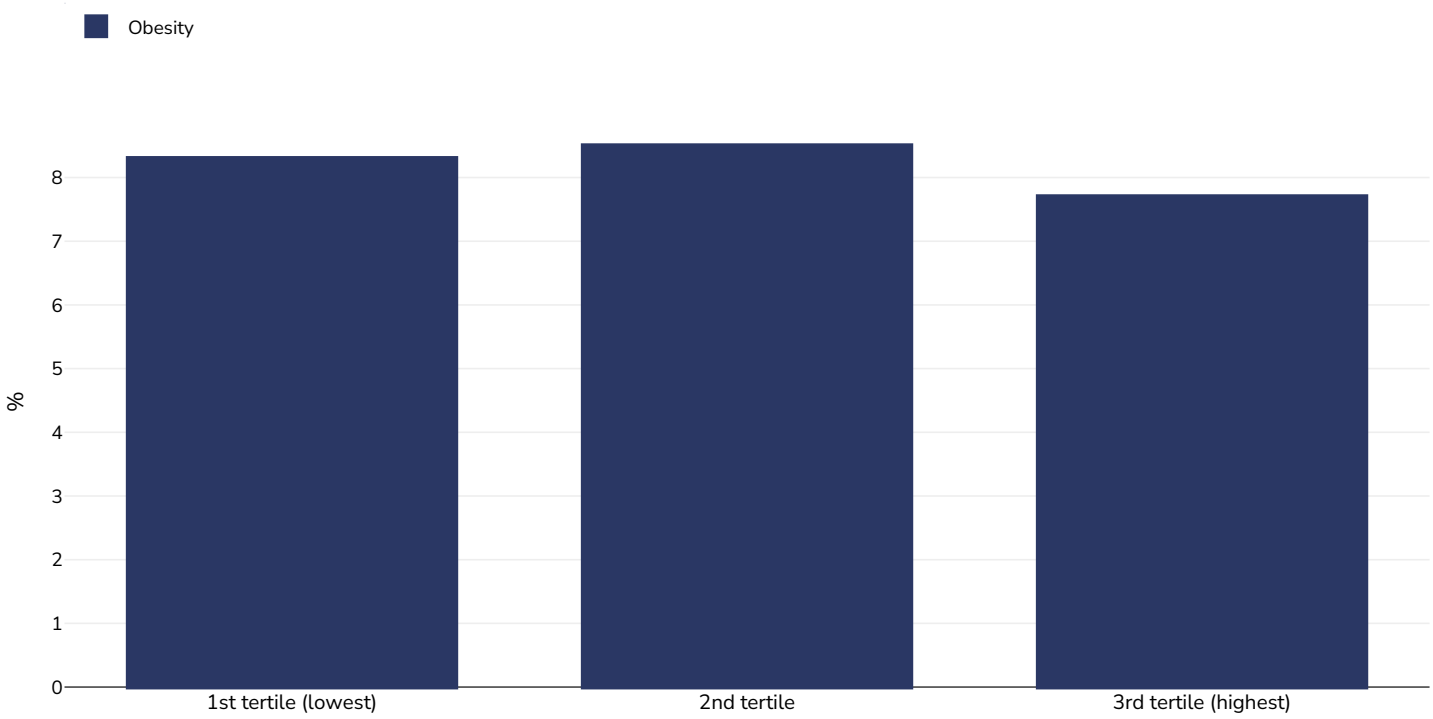
Cutoffs:	WHO 2007

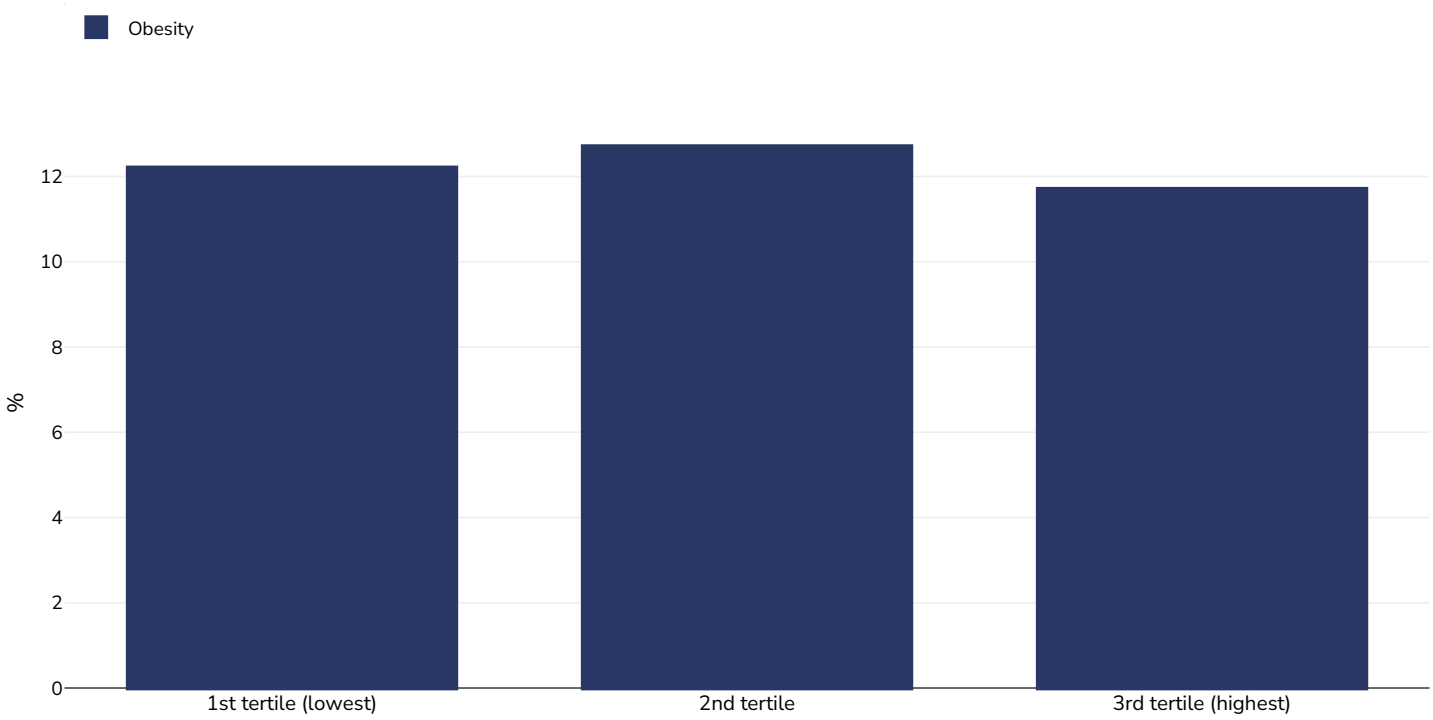
Overweight/obesity by socio-economic group

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: https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1
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



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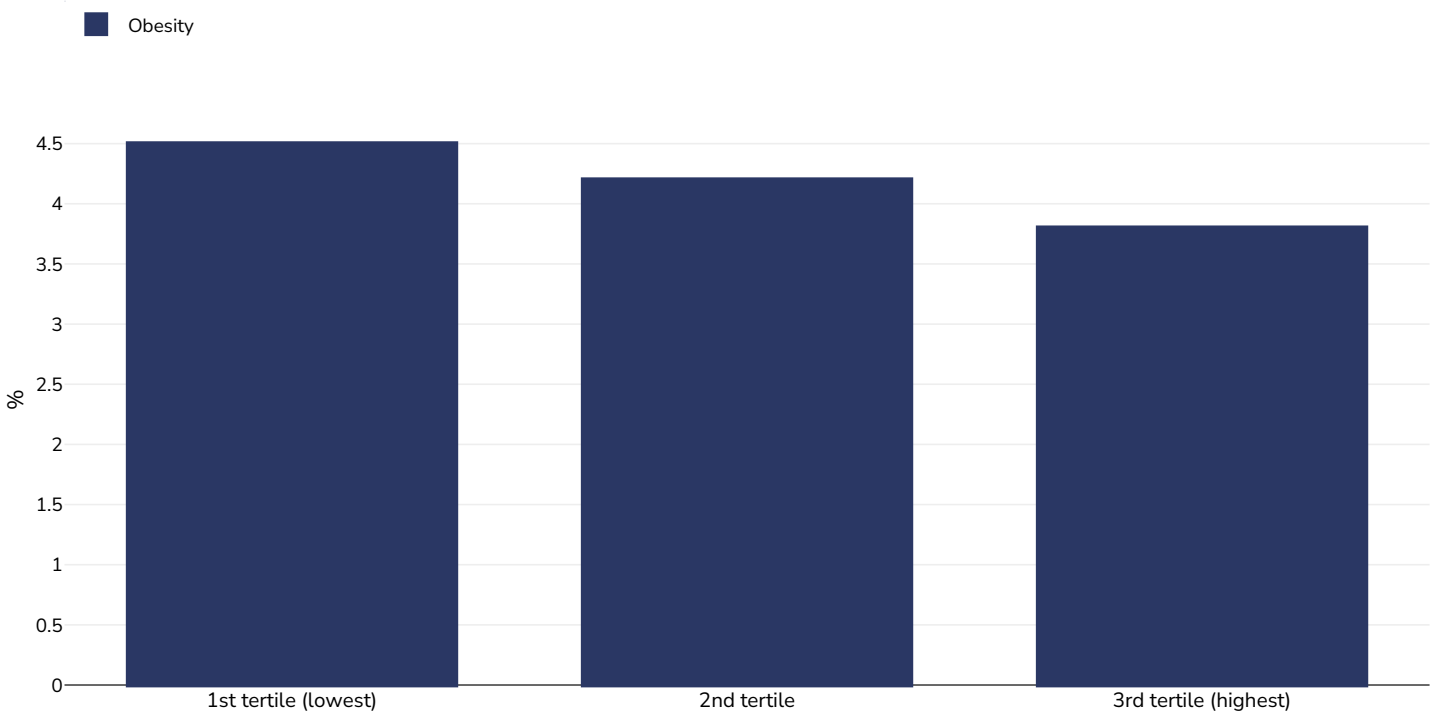
Girls, 2019



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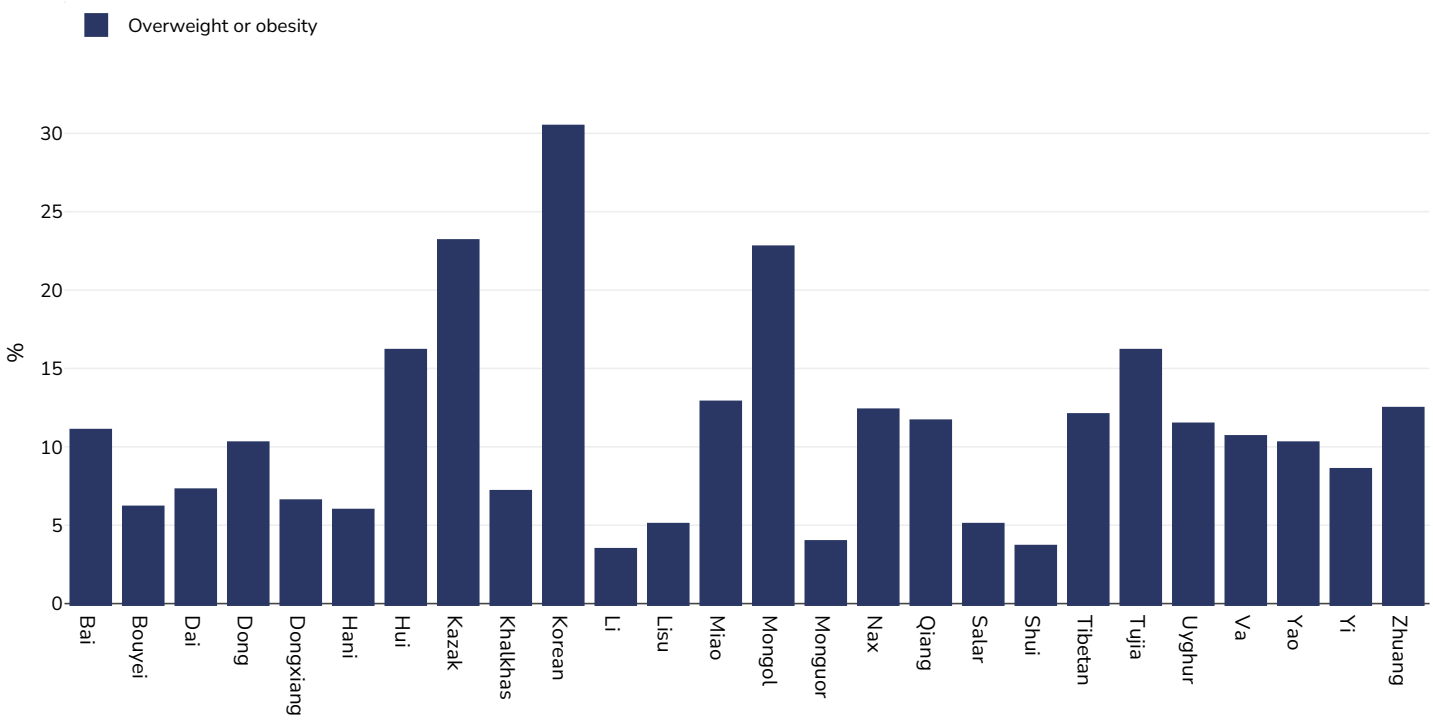
References:	Song, X., Zhou, B., Baird, S., Lu, C., Majid Ezzati, Chen, L., Liu, J., Zhang, Y., Wang, R., Ma, Q., Jiang, J., Qin, Y., Dong, Z., Yuan, W., Guo, T., Song, Z., Liu, Y., Dang, J., Hu, P. and Dong, Y. 2024. Trends and inequalities in thinness and obesity among Chinese children and adolescents: evidence from seven national school surveys between 1985 and 2019. The Lancet Public Health. [online] doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(24)00211-1
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.

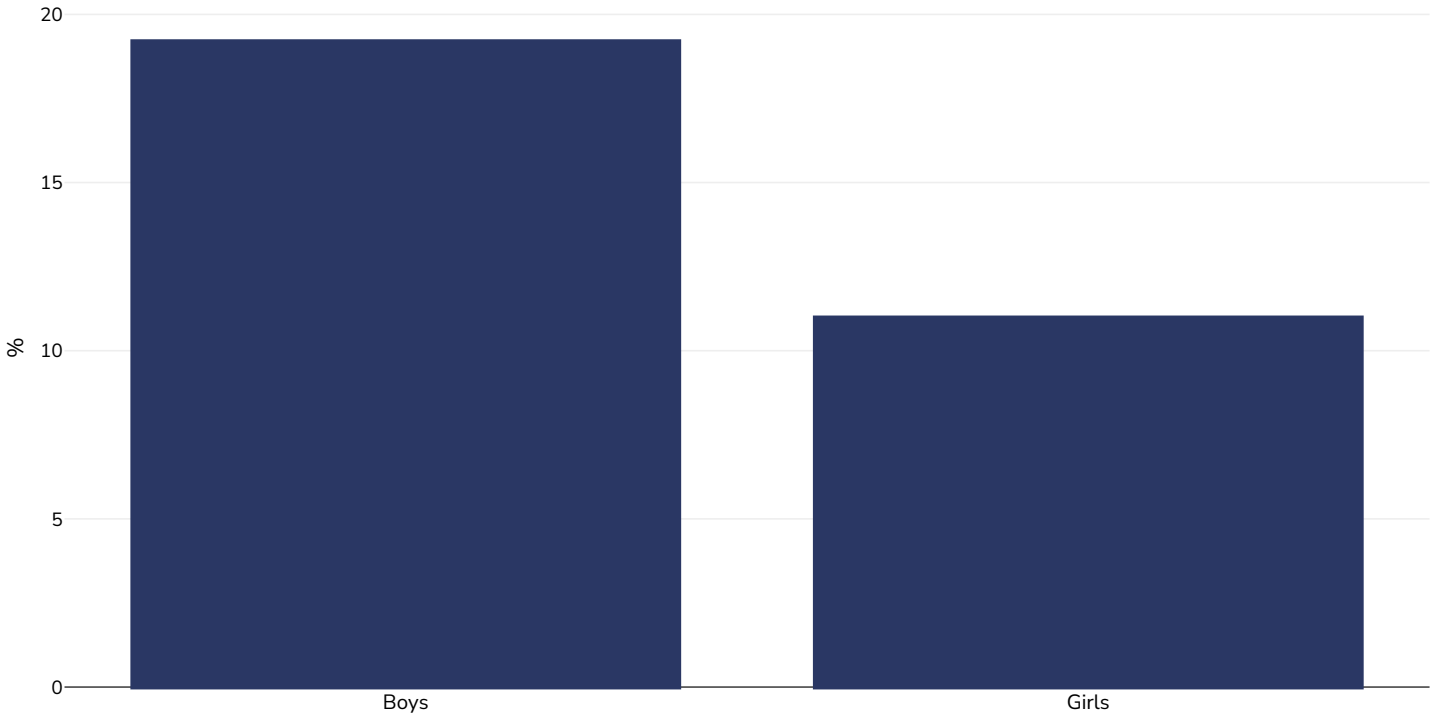
Children, 2014



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 ≥ 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

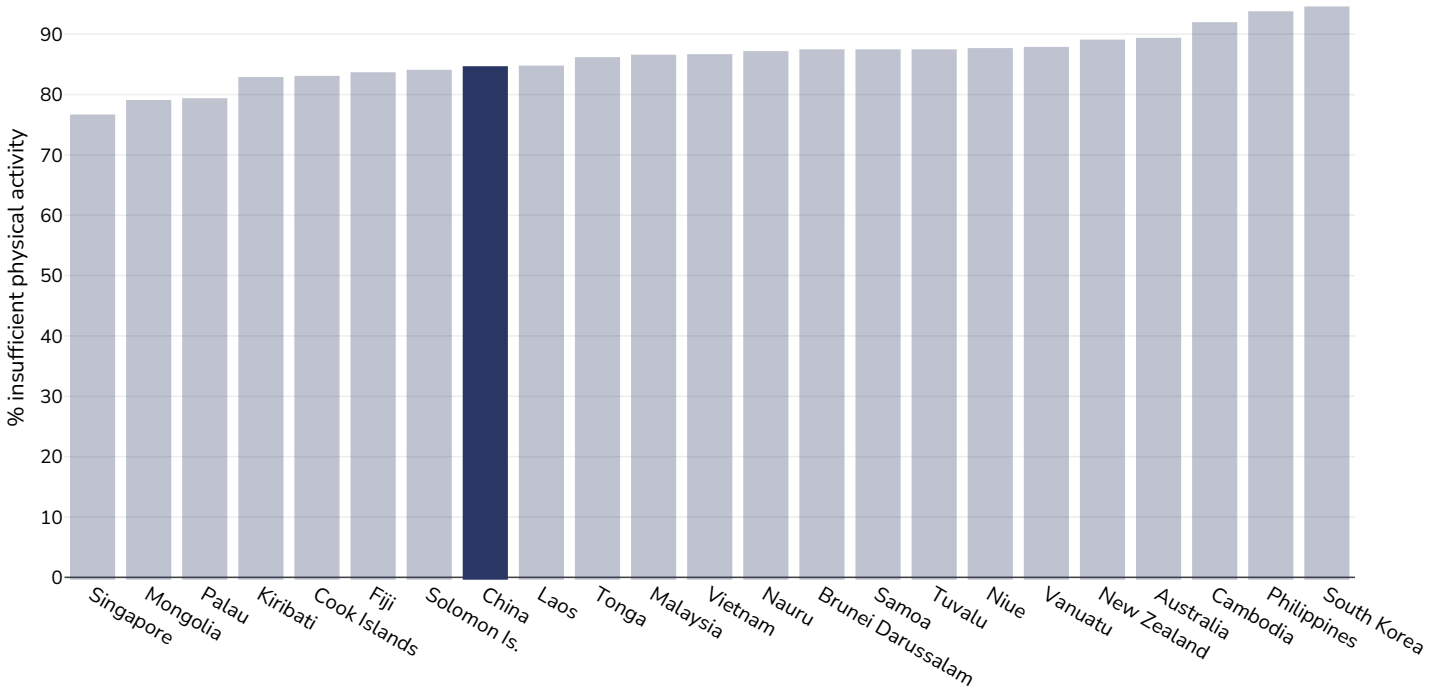
Children, 2022



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. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02750-2.
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

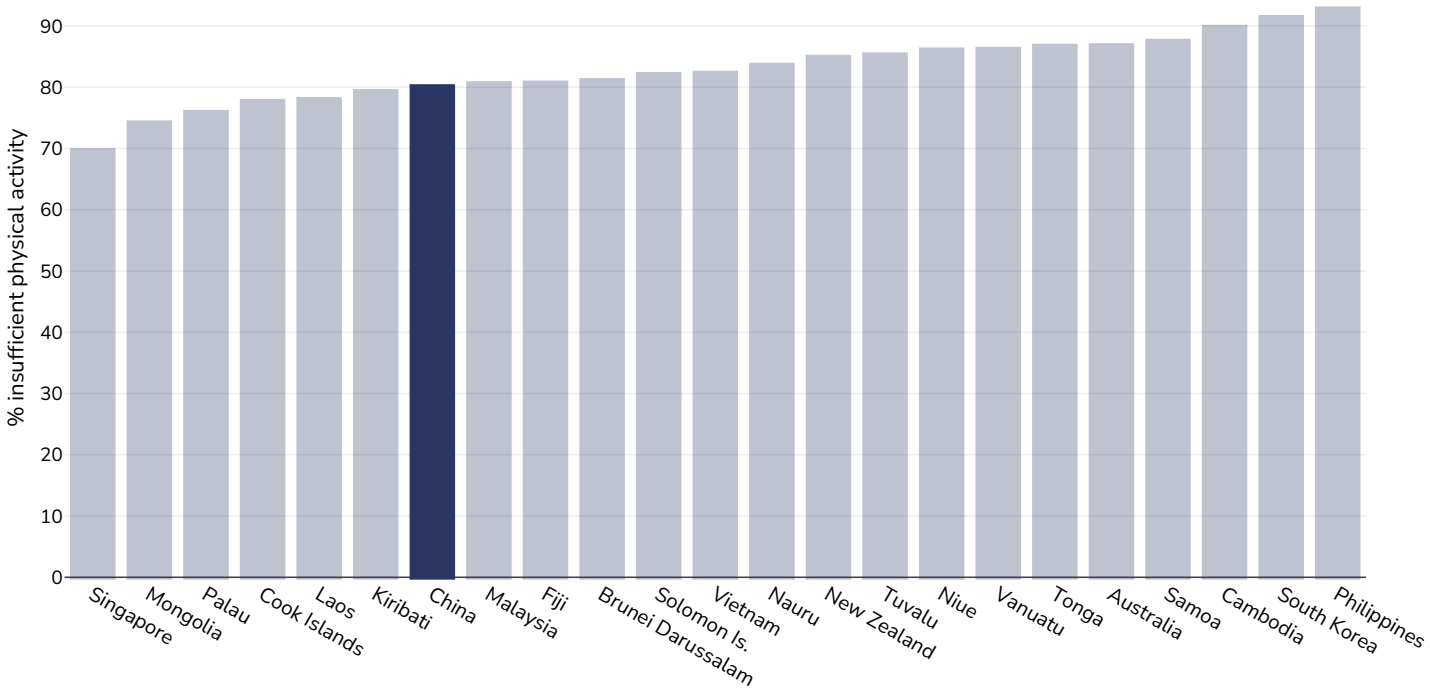
Insufficient physical activity

Children, 2016



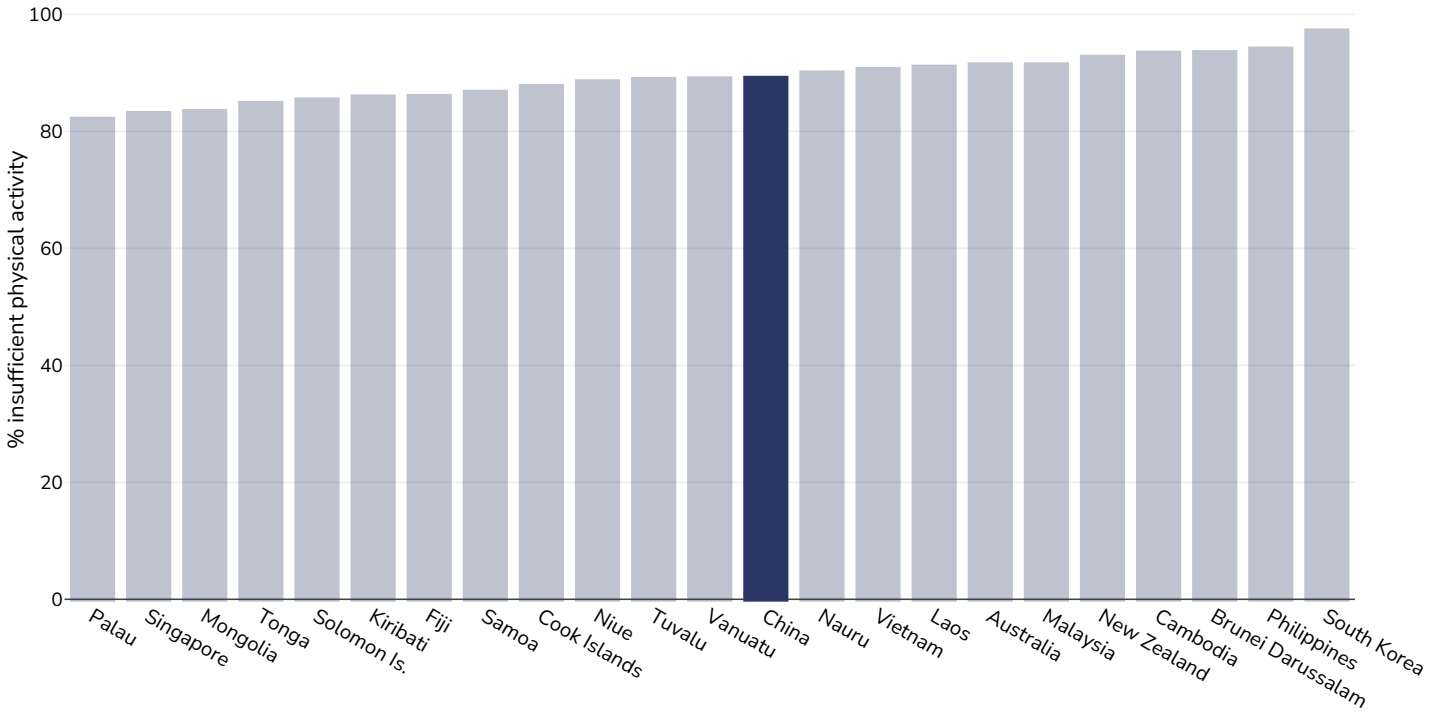
Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	11-17
References:	Global Health Observatory data repository, World Health Organisation, https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en (last accessed 16.03.21)
Notes:	% of school going adolescents not meeting WHO recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, 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, https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en (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



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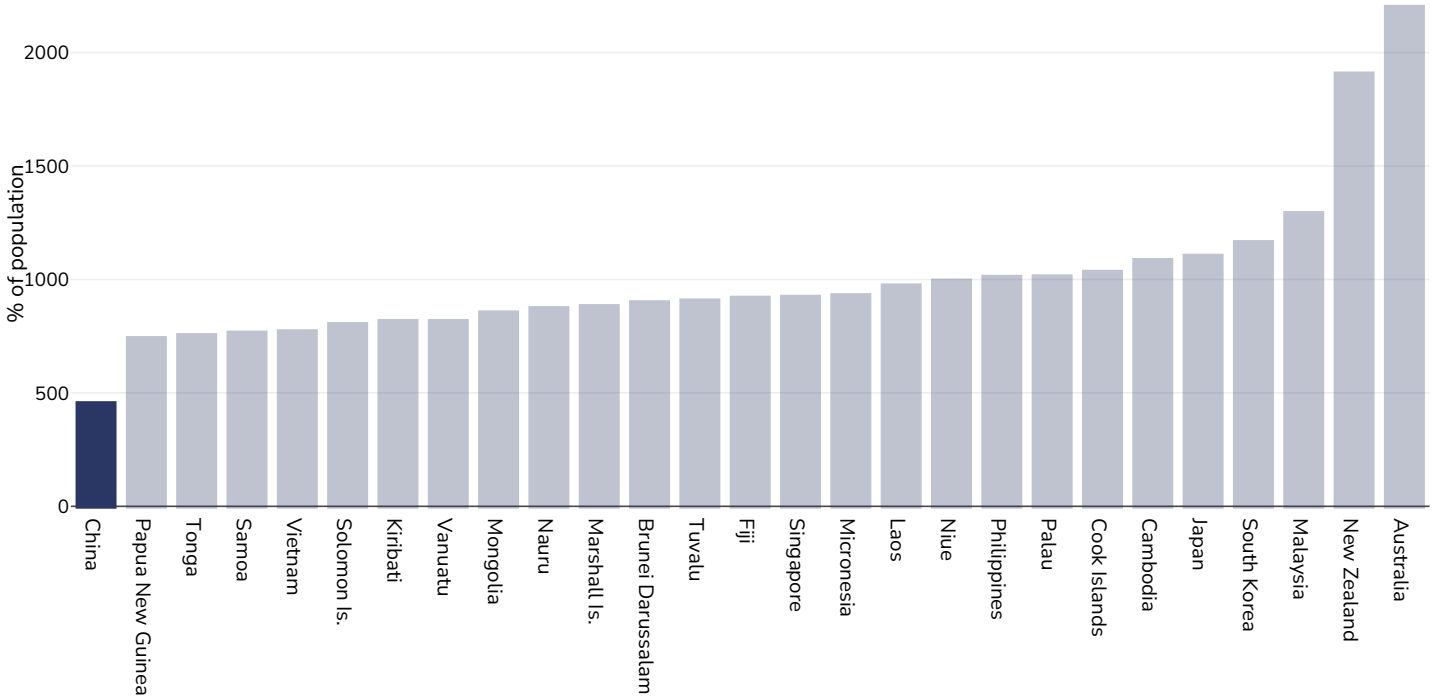
References:	Global Health Observatory data repository, World Health Organisation, https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en (last accessed 16.03.21)
Notes:	% of school going adolescents not meeting WHO recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, i.e. doing less than 60 minutes of moderate-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

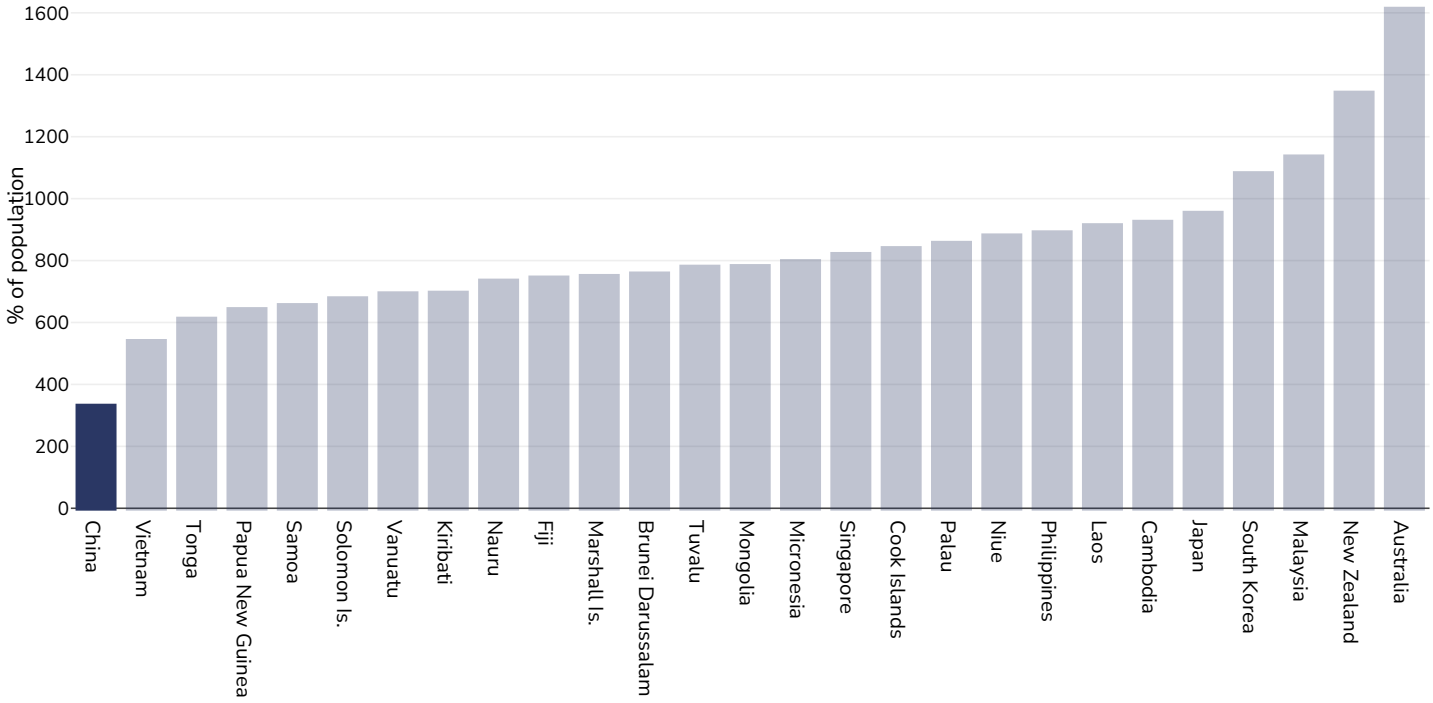
Mental health - depression disorders

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



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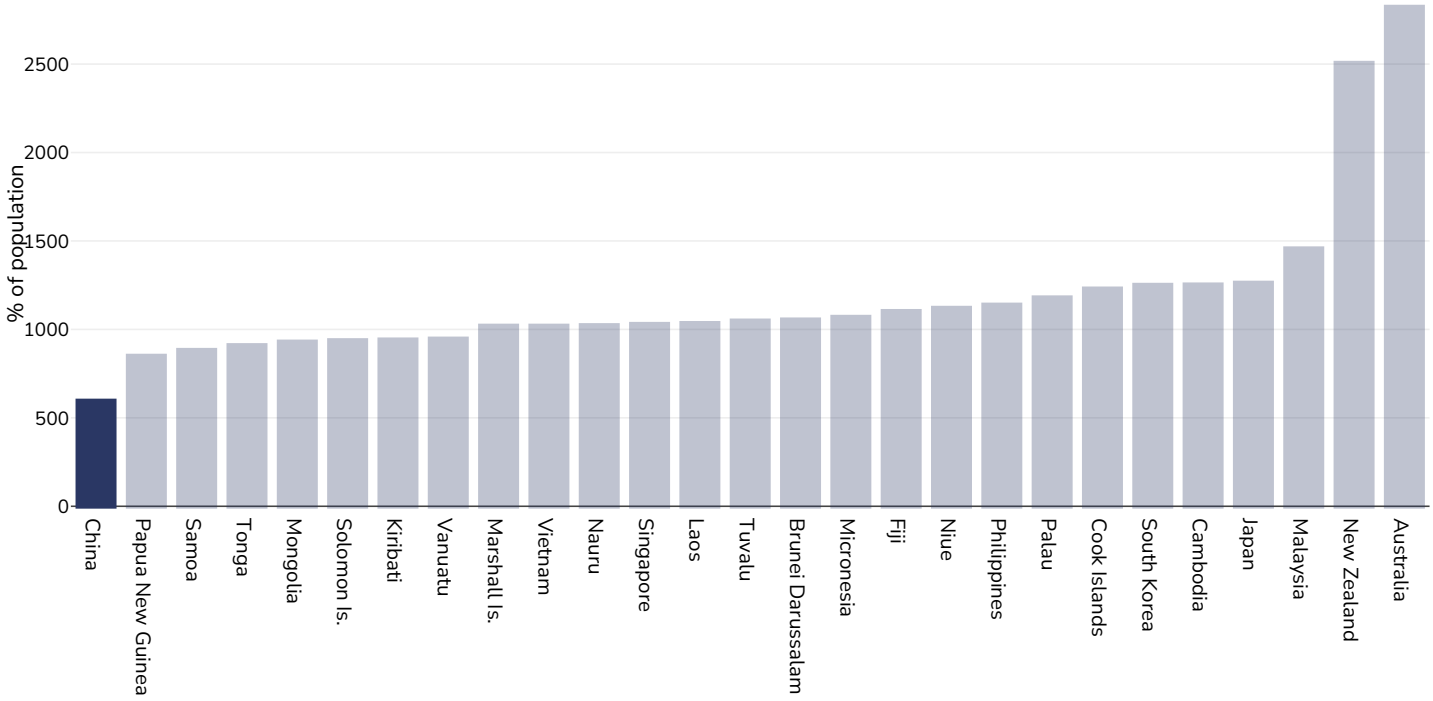
Girls, 2021



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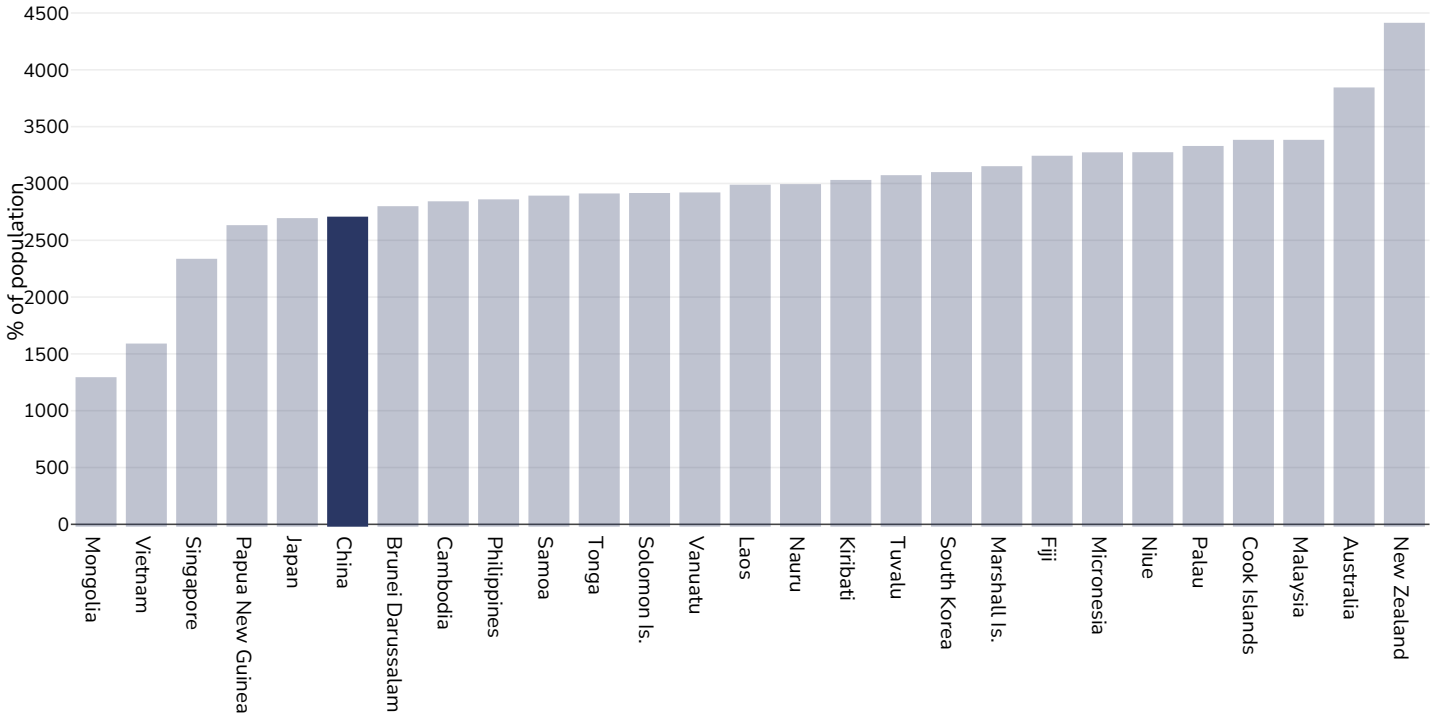
Definitions:	Number living with depressive disorder per 100,000 population (Under 20 years of age)

Mental health - anxiety disorders

Children, 2021



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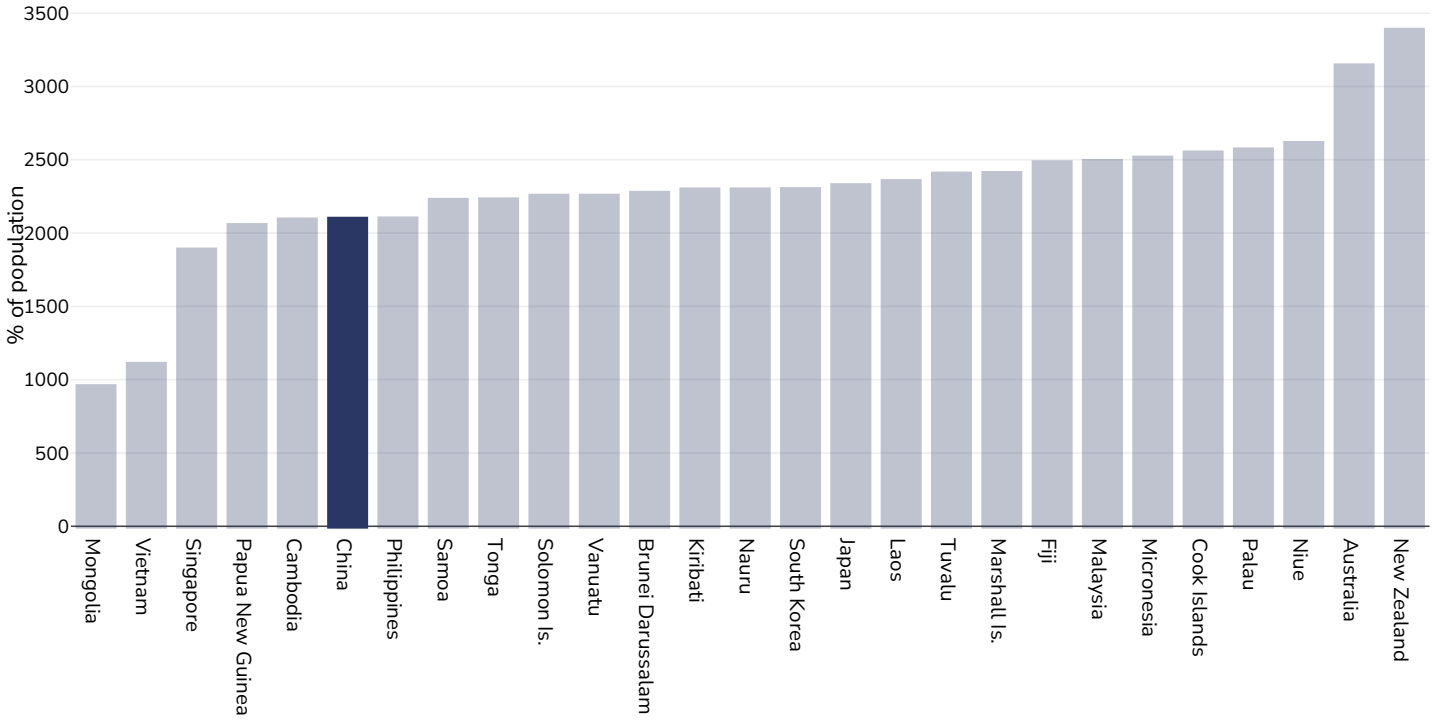
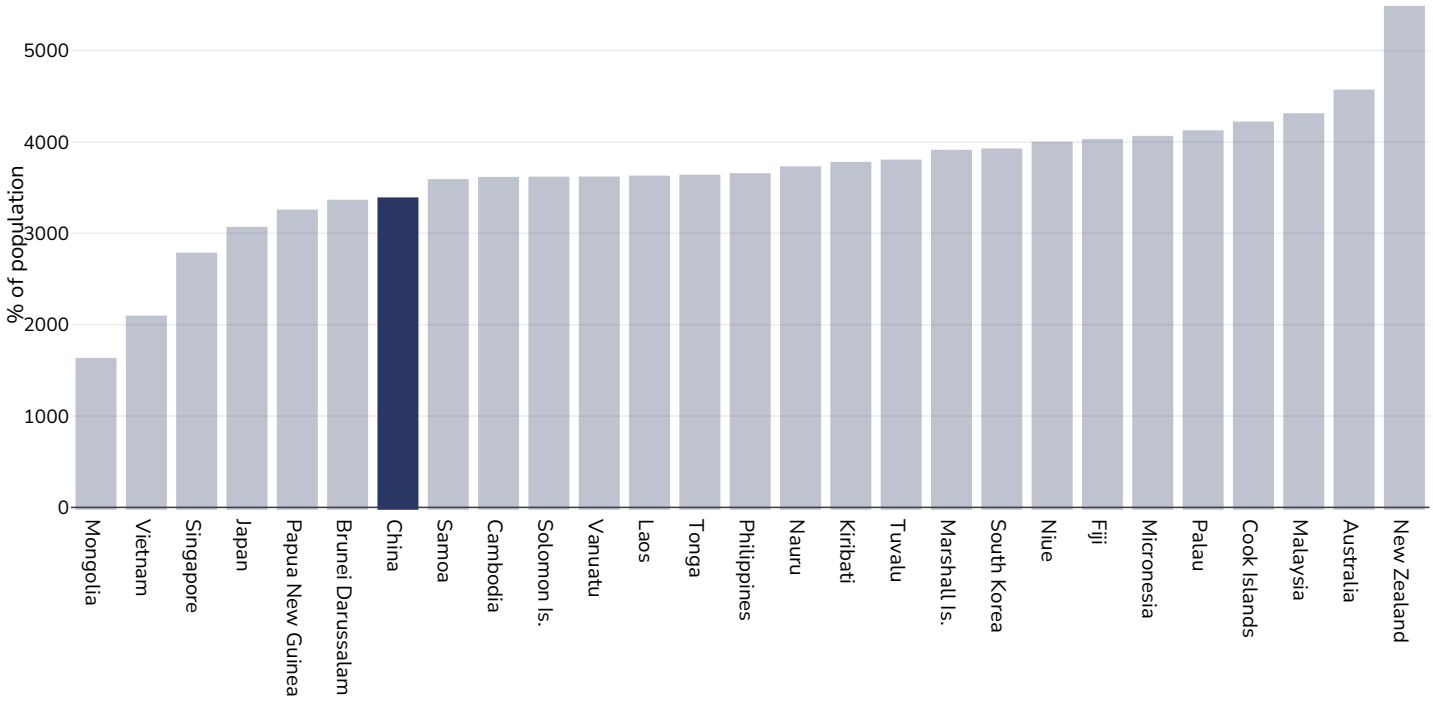
Boys, 2021



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



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