South Korea



Country report card - children

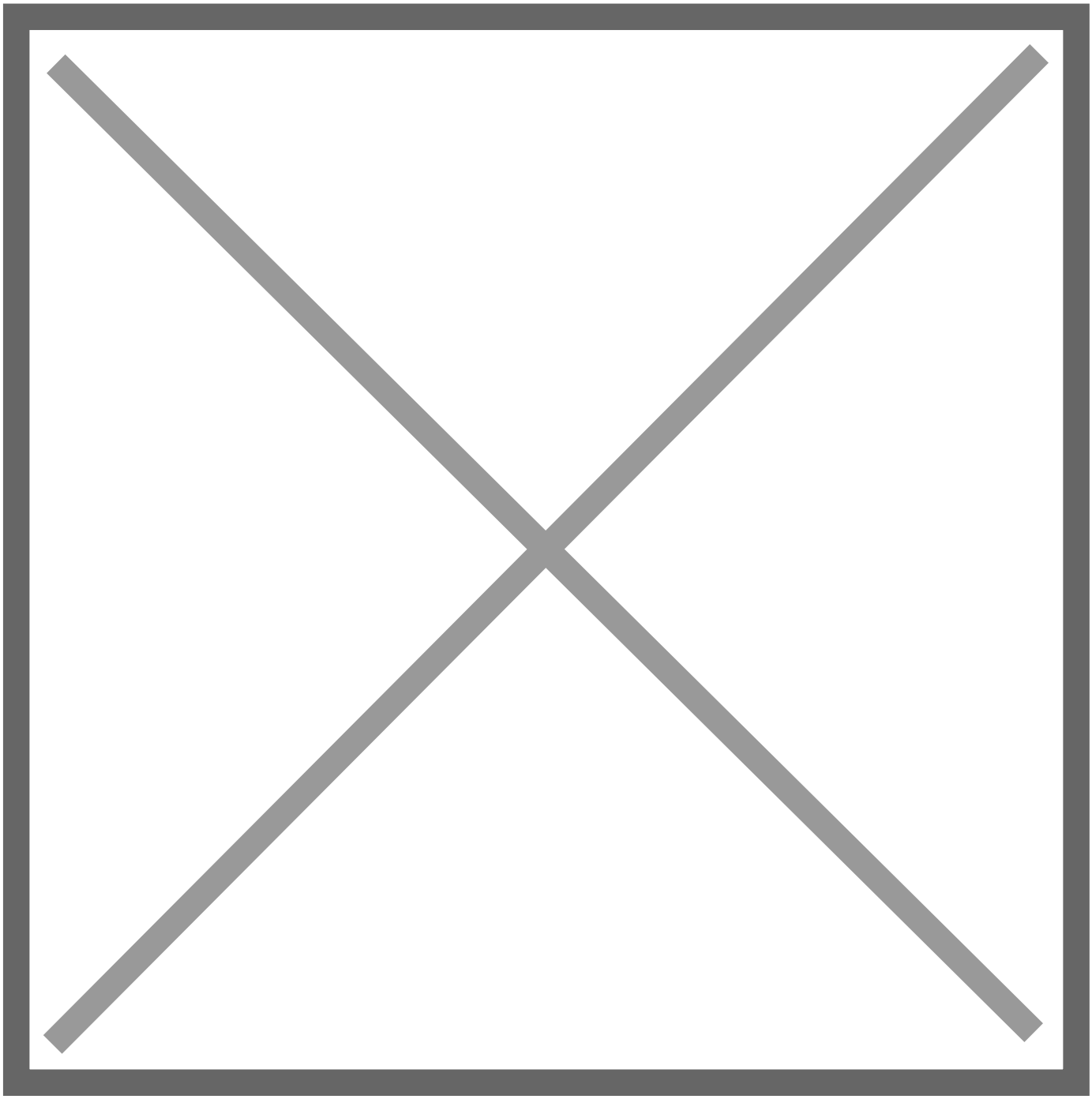
This report card contains the latest data available on the Global Obesity Observatory on overweight and obesity for children, including adolescents (aged 5 to 18 years). Where available, data on common and relevant obesity drivers and comorbidities are also presented.

View the latest version of this report on the Global Obesity Observatory at https://data.worldobesity.org/country/south-korea-114/.

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Obesity prevalence

Children, 2023

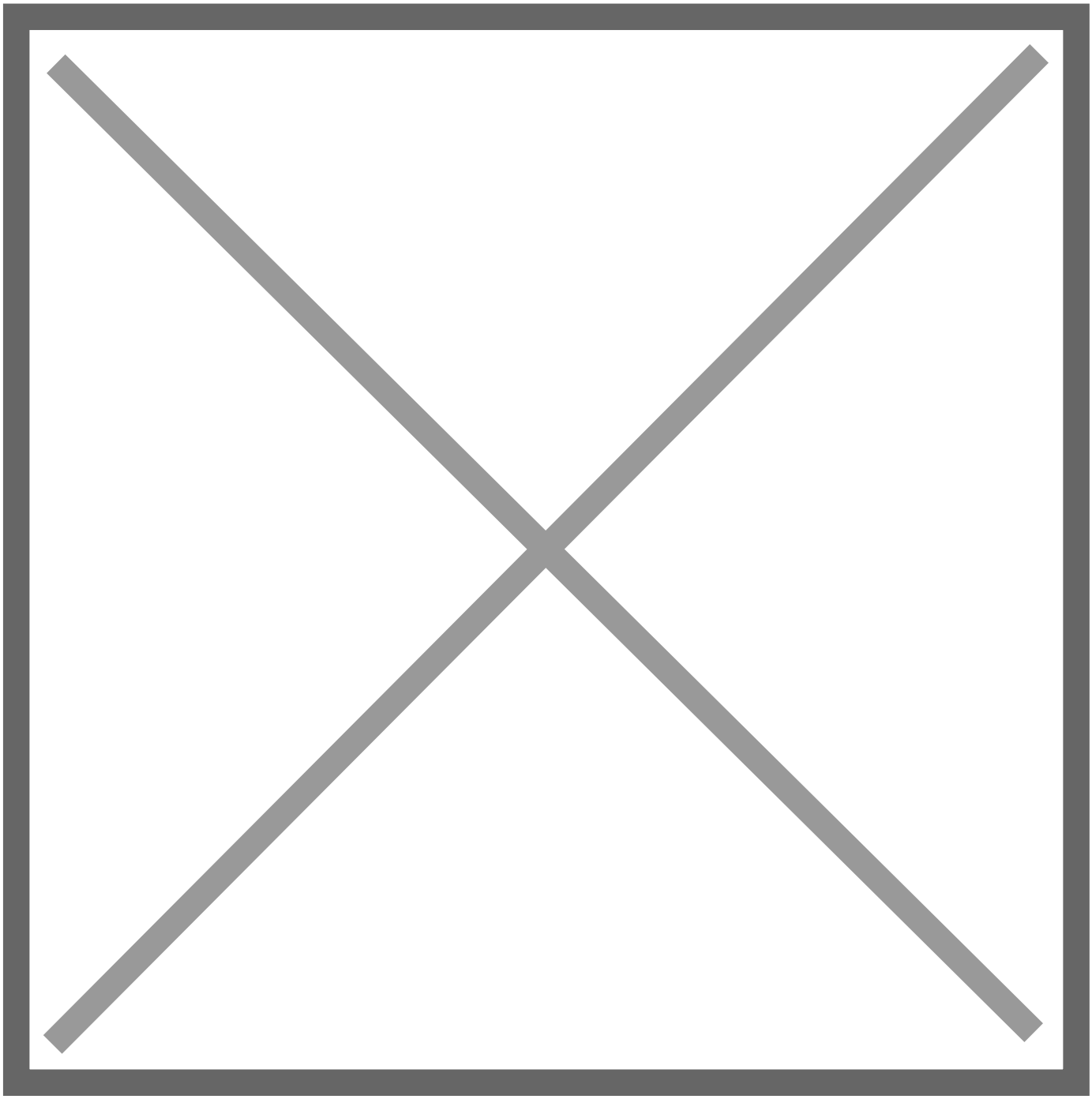


Survey type:	Measured
Age:	6-18
Area covered:	National
References:	Korean Society for the Study of Obesity. 2025 Obesity Fact Sheet. https://general.kosso.or.kr/html/user/core/view/reaction/main/kosso/inc/data/2025_Obesity_Fact_sheet_web_eng.pdf [Accessed 29.09.25]

Notes:	Data from the Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (KNHANES)
Definitions:	Overweight and obesity in children and adolescents: Using sex and age-specific BMI percentiles based on the 2017 Korean growth chart for children and adolescents, with overweight defined as BMI between the 85th and 94th percentile and obesity defined as BMI above the 95th percentile
Cutoffs:	Other

Overweight/obesity by education

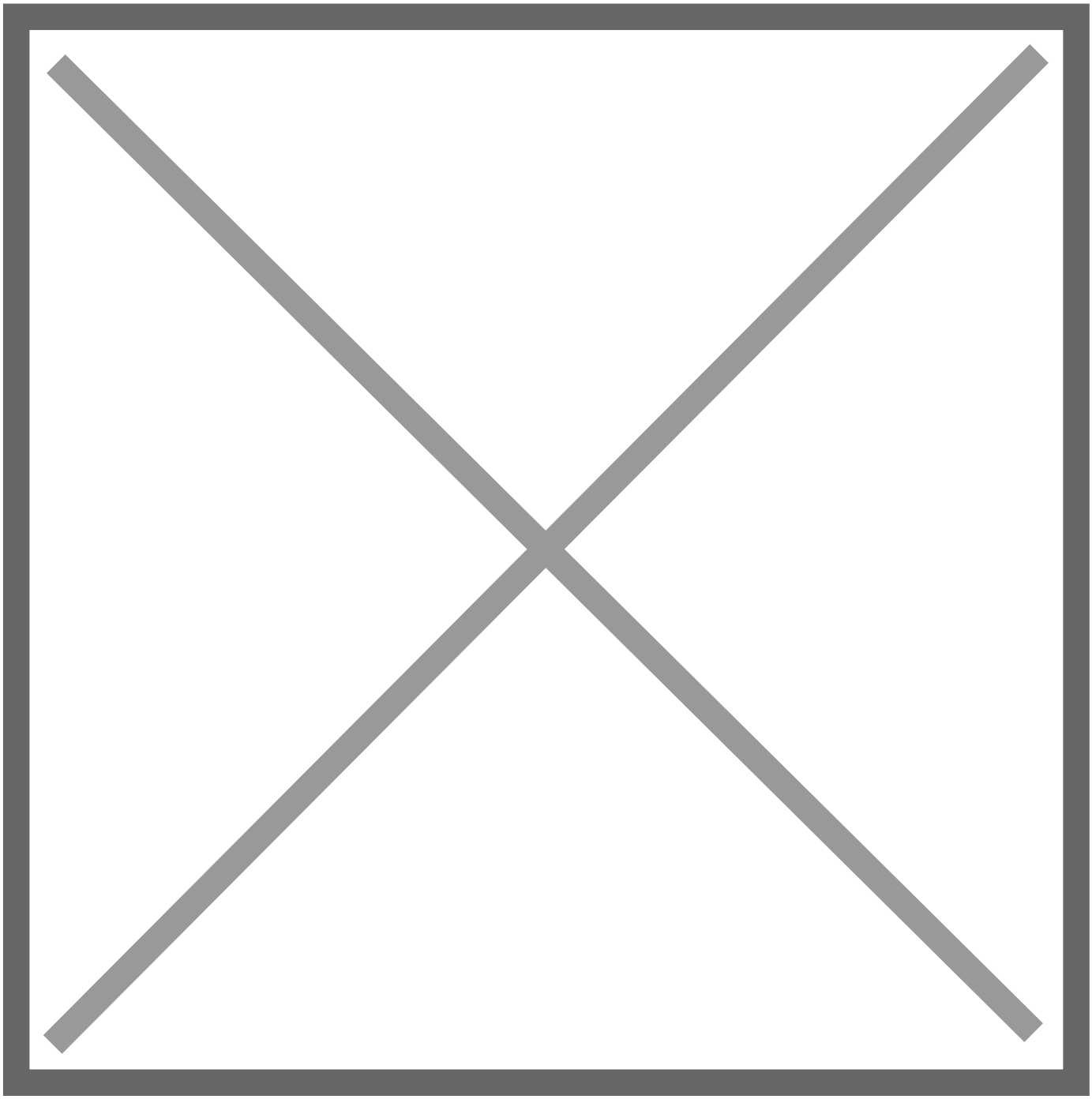
Children, 2020



Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	12-18
Sample size:	43,642
Area covered:	National

References:	Kim, E., Lee, G.B., Yon, D.K. and Kim, H.C. (2023). Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in obesity among Korean adolescents: the Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey (KYRBS) 2006 to 2020. Epidemiology and Health, [online] 45, pp.e2023033–e2023033. doi: https://doi.org/10.4178/epih.e2023033 [Accessed 07.01.25]
Notes:	Mother's education
Definitions:	Adolescent obesity was defined as a sex-specific BMI-for-age (in months) of the 95th percentile or greater based on the 2017 Korean National Growth Charts (KNGC)
Cutoffs:	Other

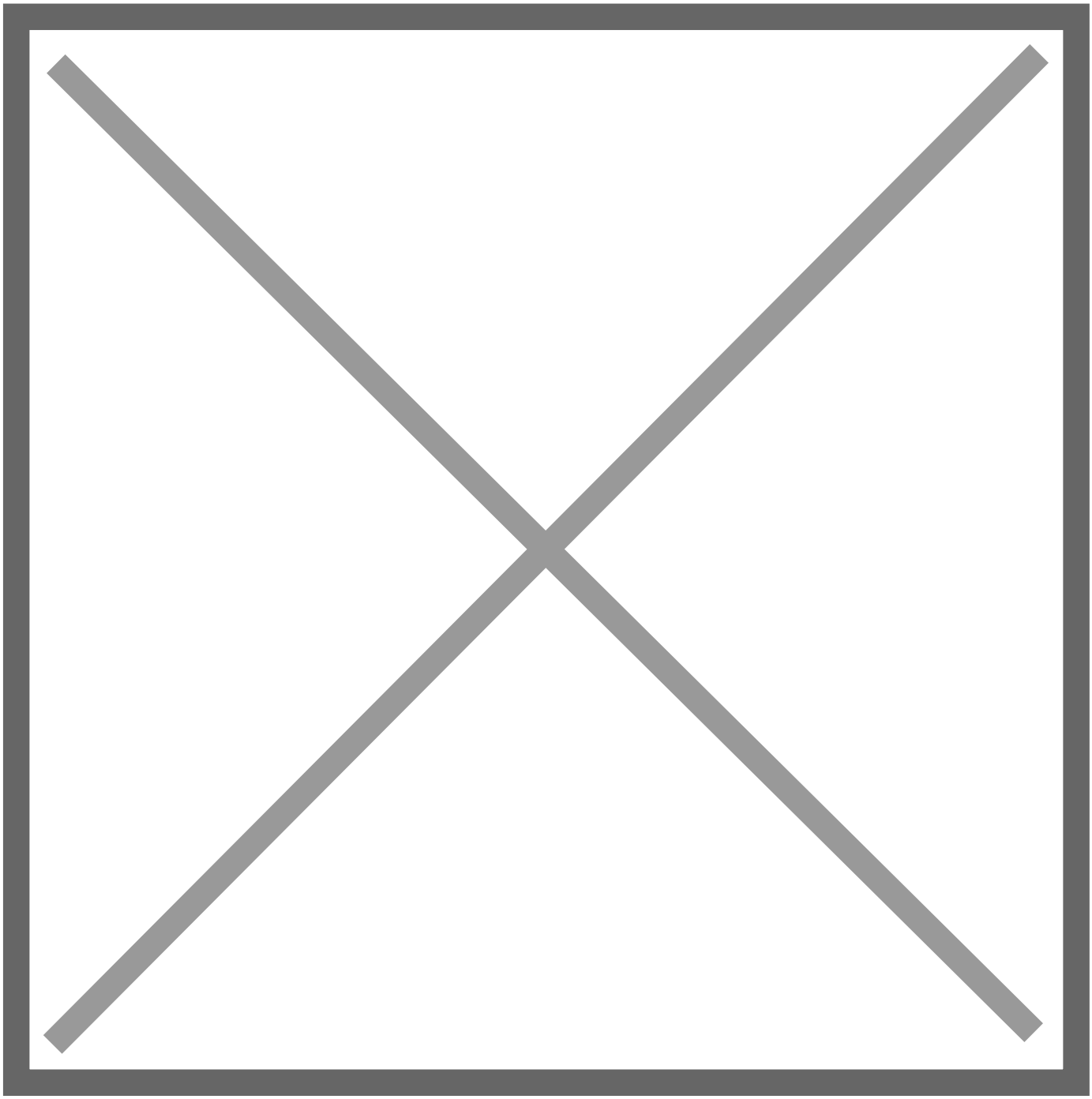
Boys, 2020



Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	12-18
Sample size:	43,642
Area covered:	National

References:	Kim, E., Lee, G.B., Yon, D.K. and Kim, H.C. (2023). Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in obesity among Korean adolescents: the Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey (KYRBS) 2006 to 2020. Epidemiology and Health, [online] 45, pp.e2023033–e2023033. doi: https://doi.org/10.4178/epih.e2023033 [Accessed 07.01.25]
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Cutoffs:	Other

Girls, 2020

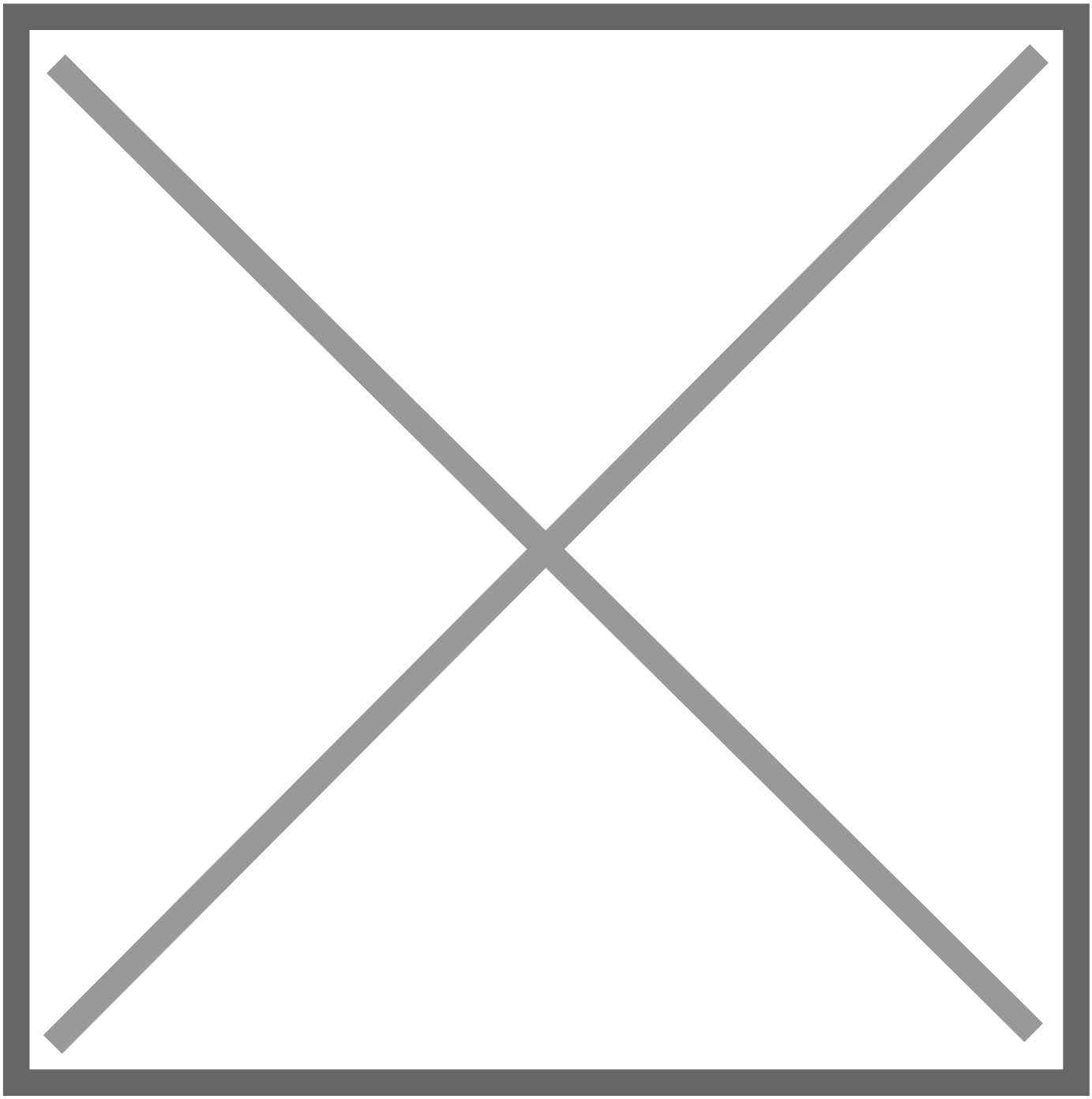


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Cutoffs:	Other

Overweight/obesity by age

Children, 2023

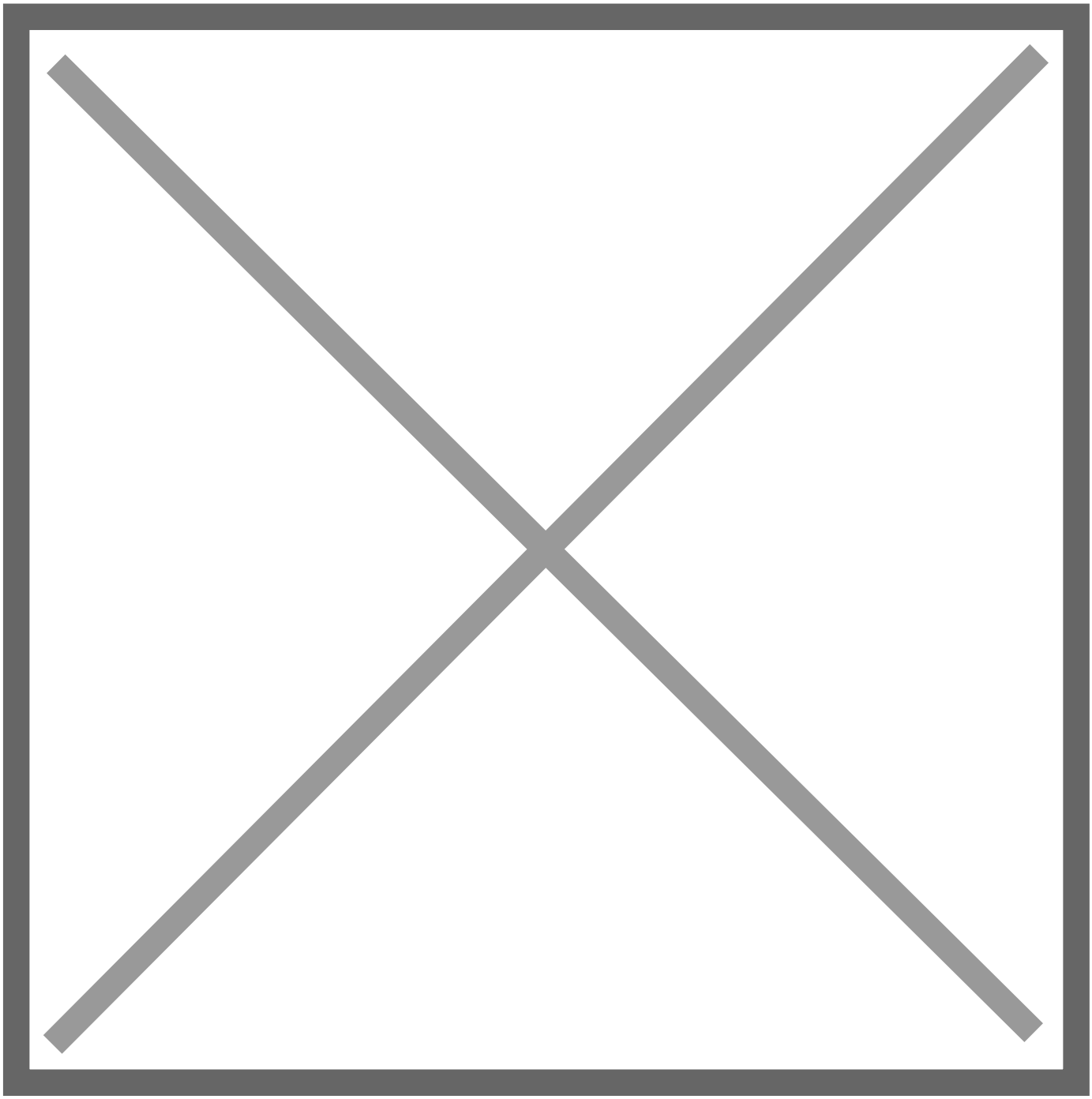


Survey type:	Measured
Area covered:	National
References:	Korean Society for the Study of Obesity. 2025 Obesity Fact Sheet. https://general.kosso.or.kr/html/user/core/view/reaction/main/kosso/inc/data/2025_Obesity_Fact_sheet_web_eng.pdf [Accessed 29.09.25]
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Cutoffs:	Other

Overweight/obesity by region

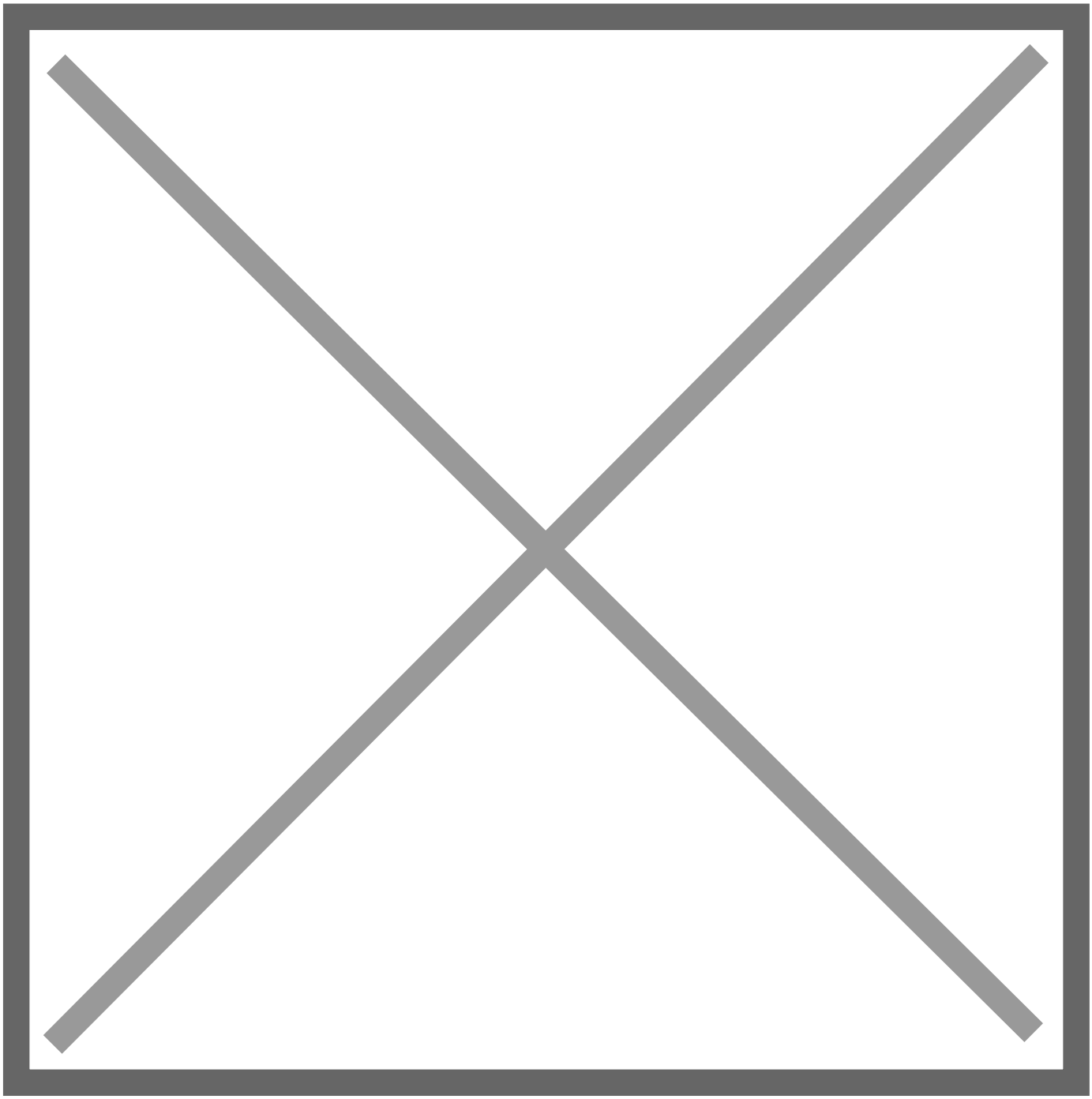
Children, 2020



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Age:	12-18
Sample size:	43,642
Area covered:	National

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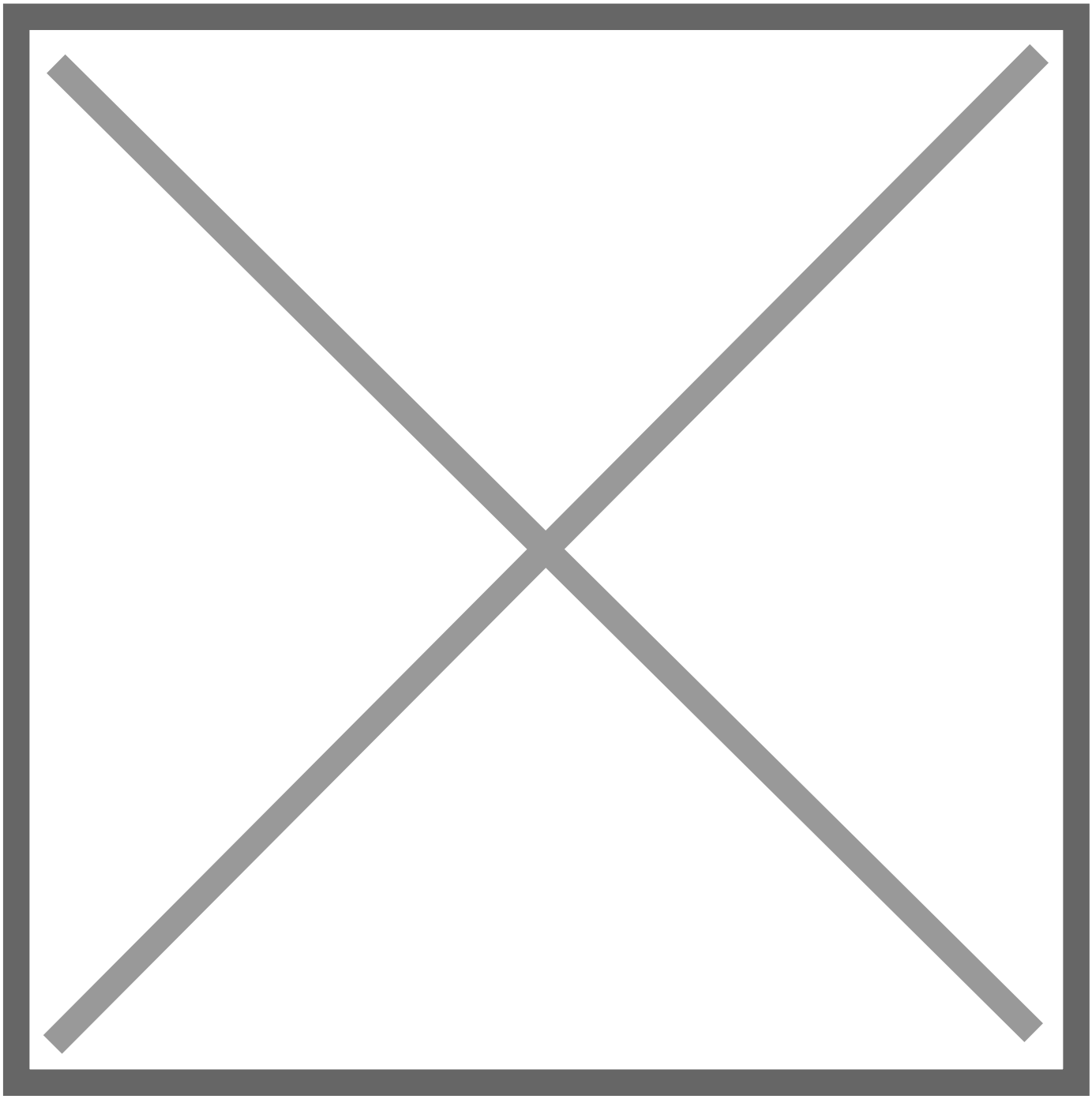
Boys, 2020



Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	12-18
Sample size:	43,642
Area covered:	National

References:	Kim, E., Lee, G.B., Yon, D.K. and Kim, H.C. (2023). Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in obesity among Korean adolescents: the Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey (KYRBS) 2006 to 2020. Epidemiology and Health, [online] 45, pp.e2023033–e2023033. doi: https://doi.org/10.4178/epih.e2023033 [Accessed 07.01.25]
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Cutoffs:	Other

Girls, 2020

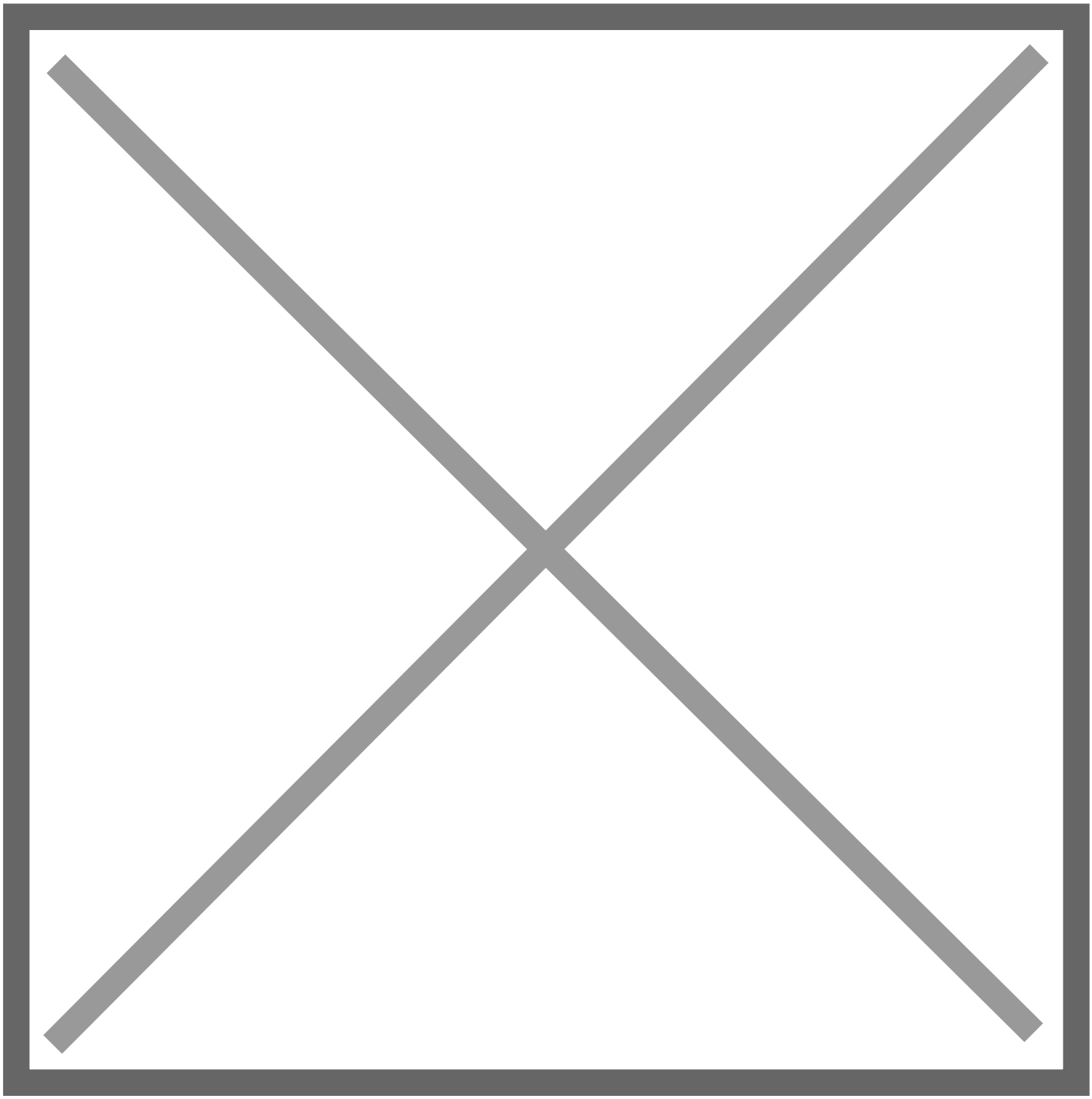


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Cutoffs:	Other

Overweight/obesity by socio-economic group

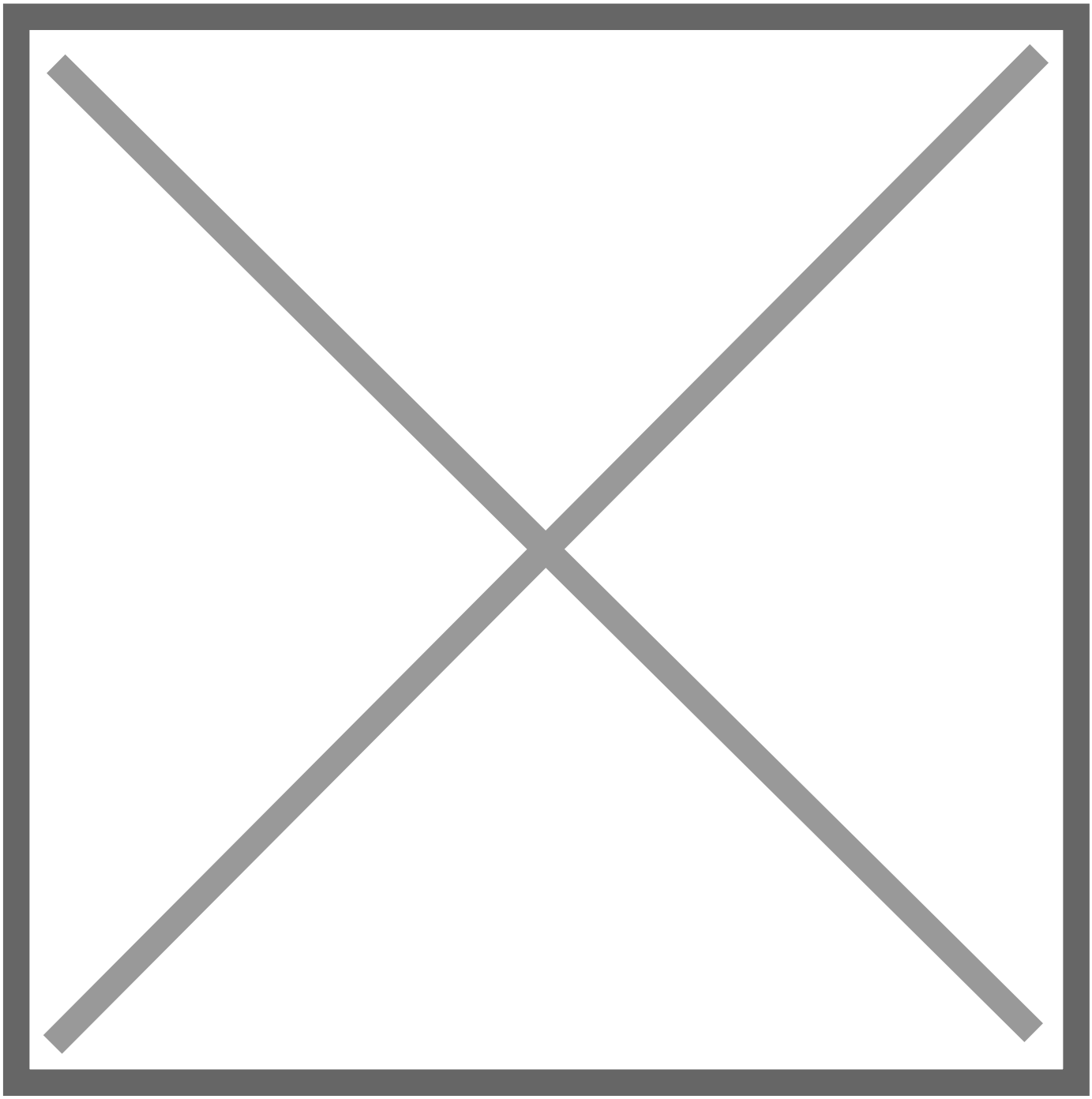
Children, 2020



Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	12-18
Sample size:	43,642
Area covered:	National

References:	Kim, E., Lee, G.B., Yon, D.K. and Kim, H.C. (2023). Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in obesity among Korean adolescents: the Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey (KYRBS) 2006 to 2020. Epidemiology and Health, [online] 45, pp.e2023033–e2023033. doi: https://doi.org/10.4178/epih.e2023033 [Accessed 07.01.25]
Notes:	Household income
Definitions:	Adolescent obesity was defined as a sex-specific BMI-for-age (in months) of the 95th percentile or greater based on the 2017 Korean National Growth Charts (KNGC)
Cutoffs:	Other

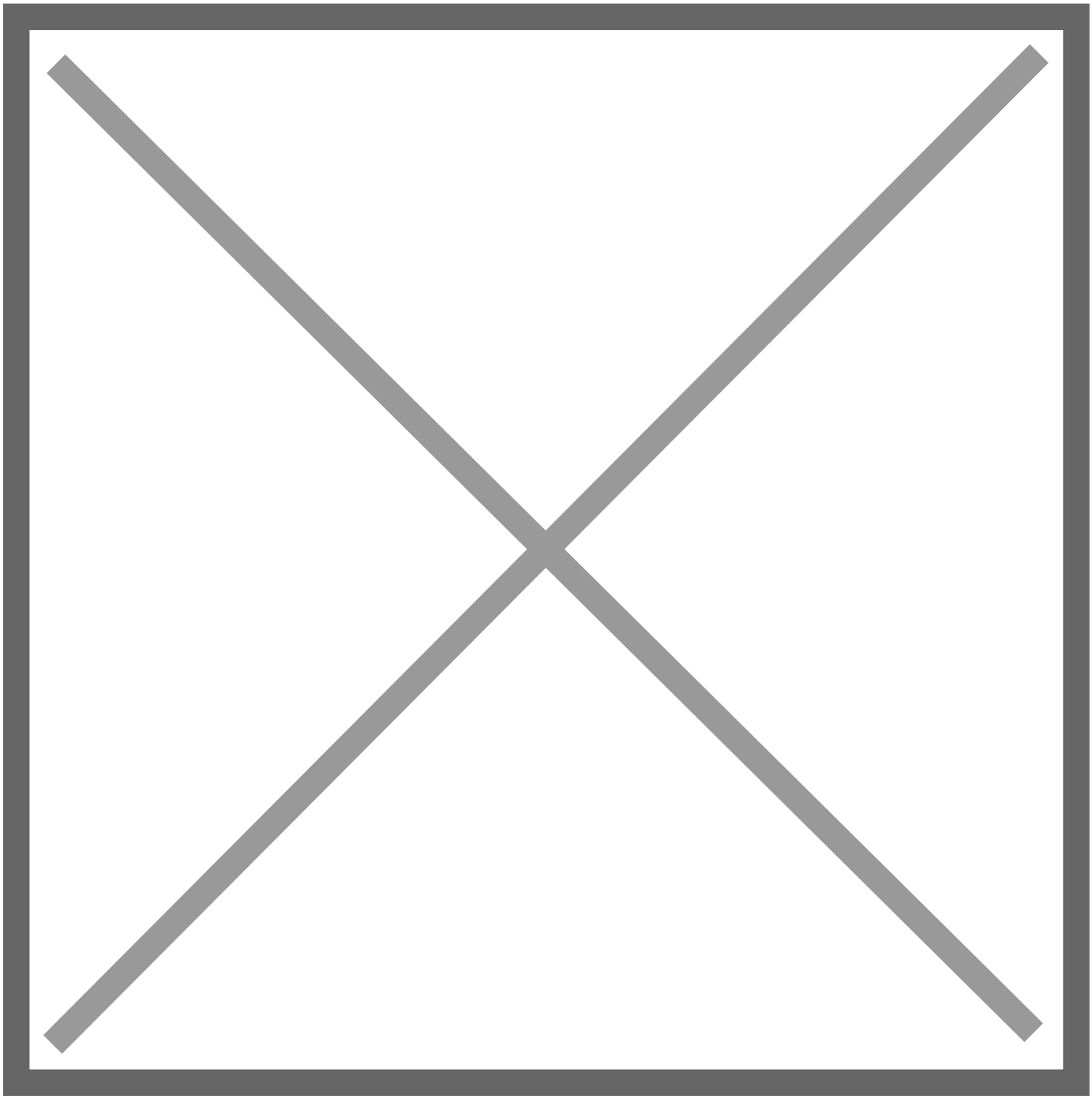
Boys, 2020



Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	12-18
Sample size:	43,642
Area covered:	National

References:	Kim, E., Lee, G.B., Yon, D.K. and Kim, H.C. (2023). Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in obesity among Korean adolescents: the Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey (KYRBS) 2006 to 2020. Epidemiology and Health, [online] 45, pp.e2023033–e2023033. doi: https://doi.org/10.4178/epih.e2023033 [Accessed 07.01.25]
Notes:	Household income
Definitions:	Adolescent obesity was defined as a sex-specific BMI-for-age (in months) of the 95th percentile or greater based on the 2017 Korean National Growth Charts (KNGC)
Cutoffs:	Other

Girls, 2020

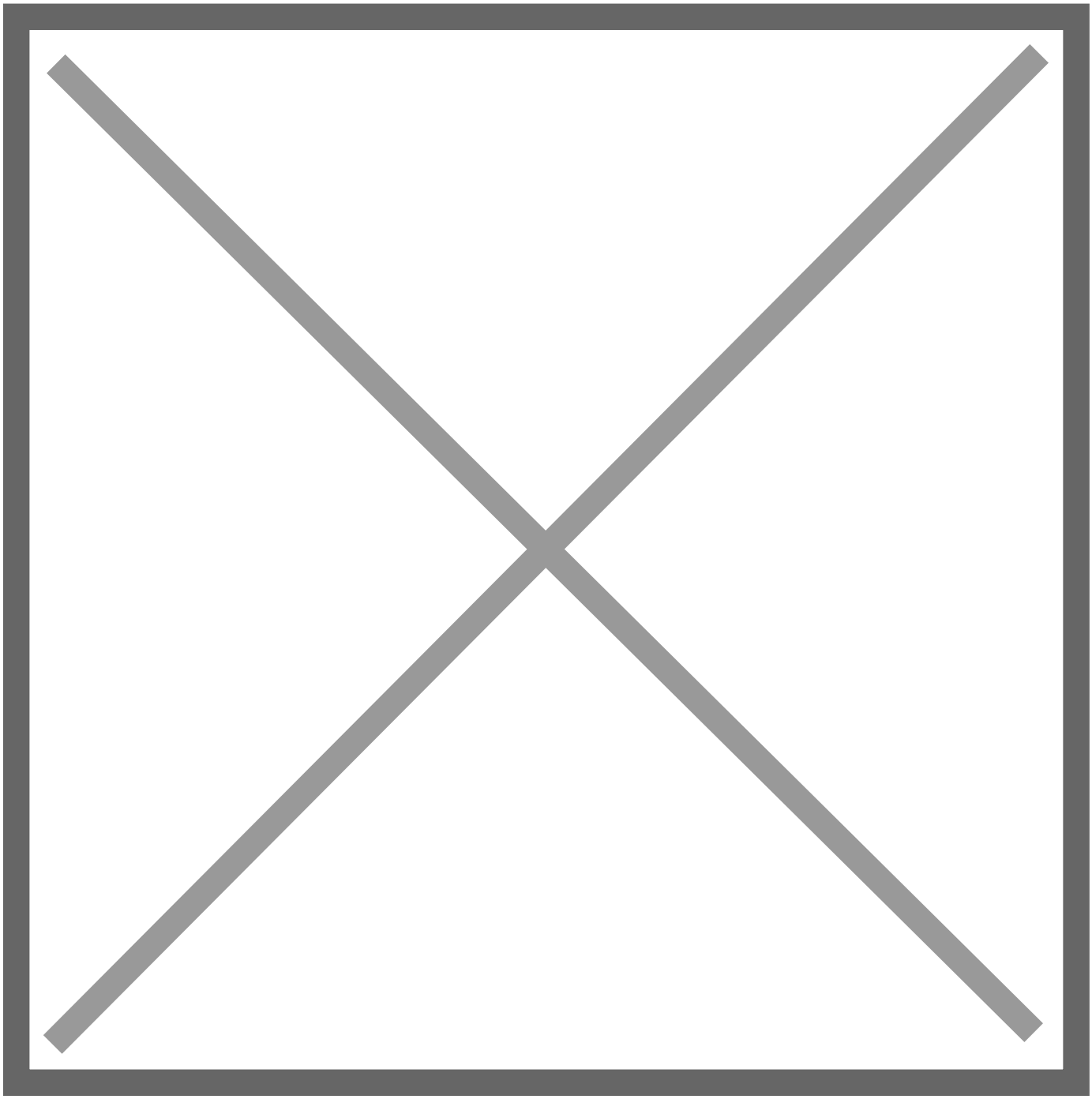


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Notes:	Household income
Definitions:	Adolescent obesity was defined as a sex-specific BMI-for-age (in months) of the 95th percentile or greater based on the 2017 Korean National Growth Charts (KNGC)
Cutoffs:	Other

Double burden of underweight & obesity

Children, 2022

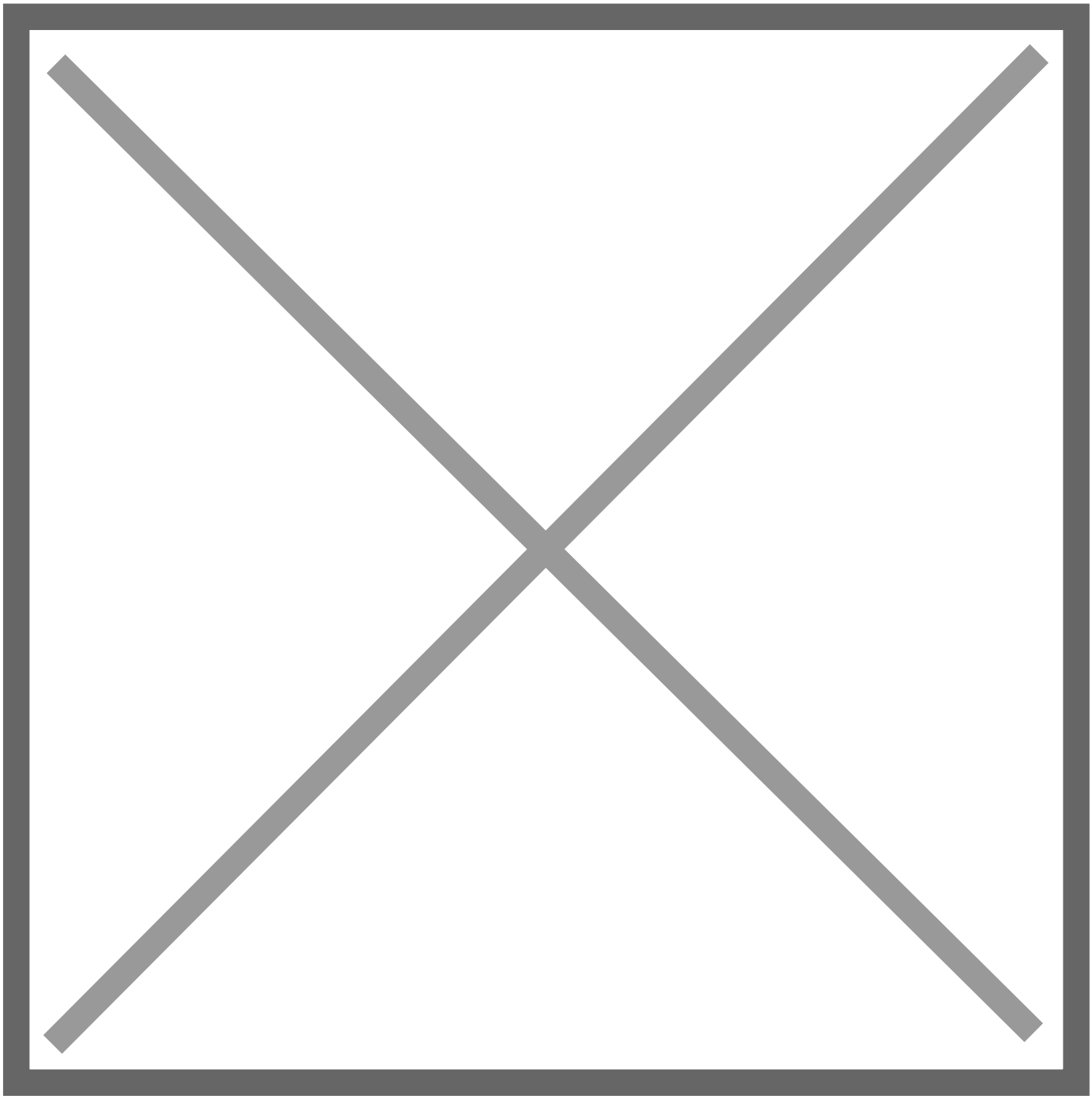


Survey type:	Measured
Age:	5-19
References:	NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC). Worldwide trends in underweight and obesity from 1990 to 2022: a pooled analysis of 3663 population representative studies with 222 million children, adolescents, and adults. Lancet 2024; published online Feb 29. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02750-2.
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

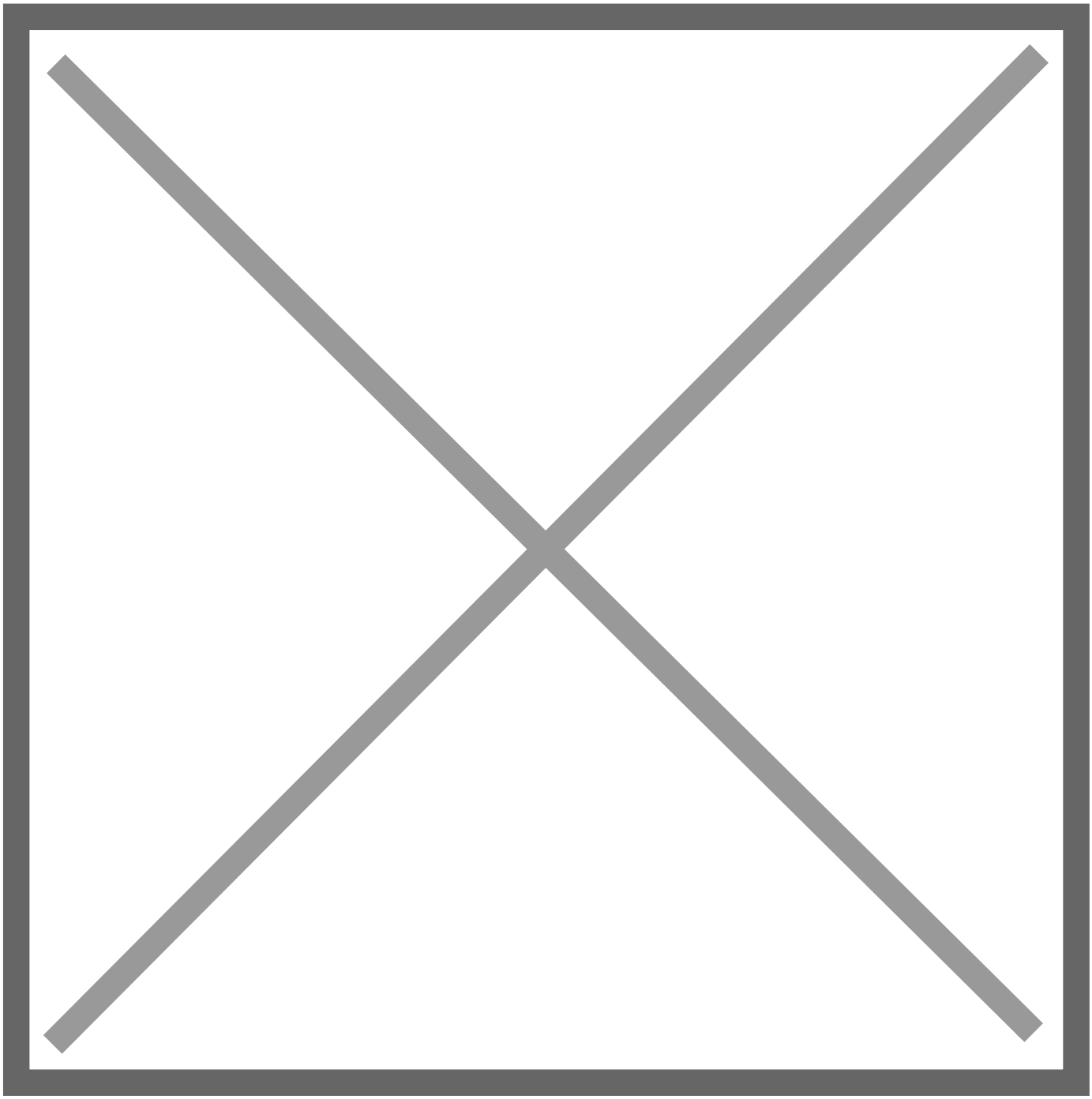
Children, 2016



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)

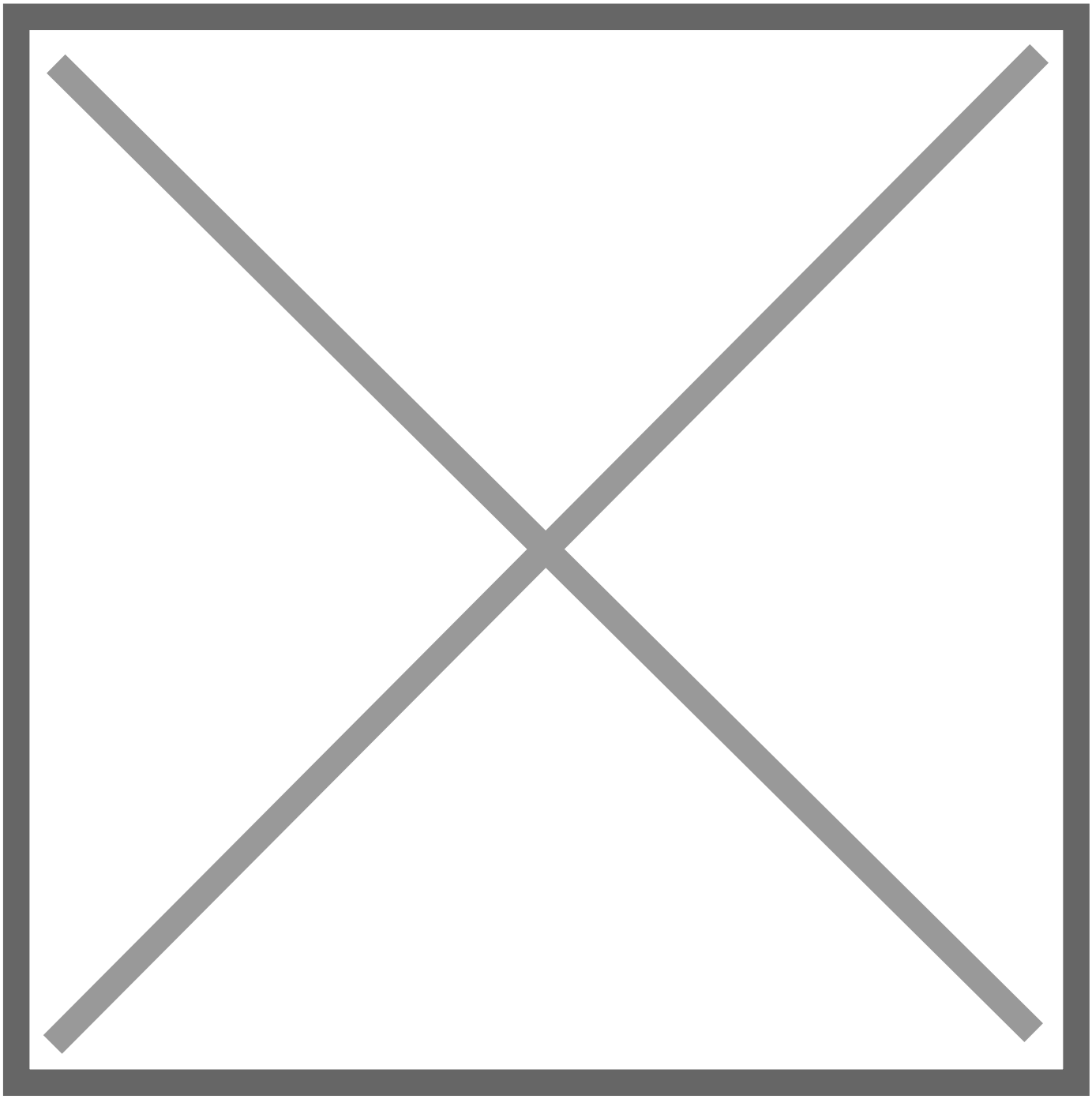
Boys, 2016



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

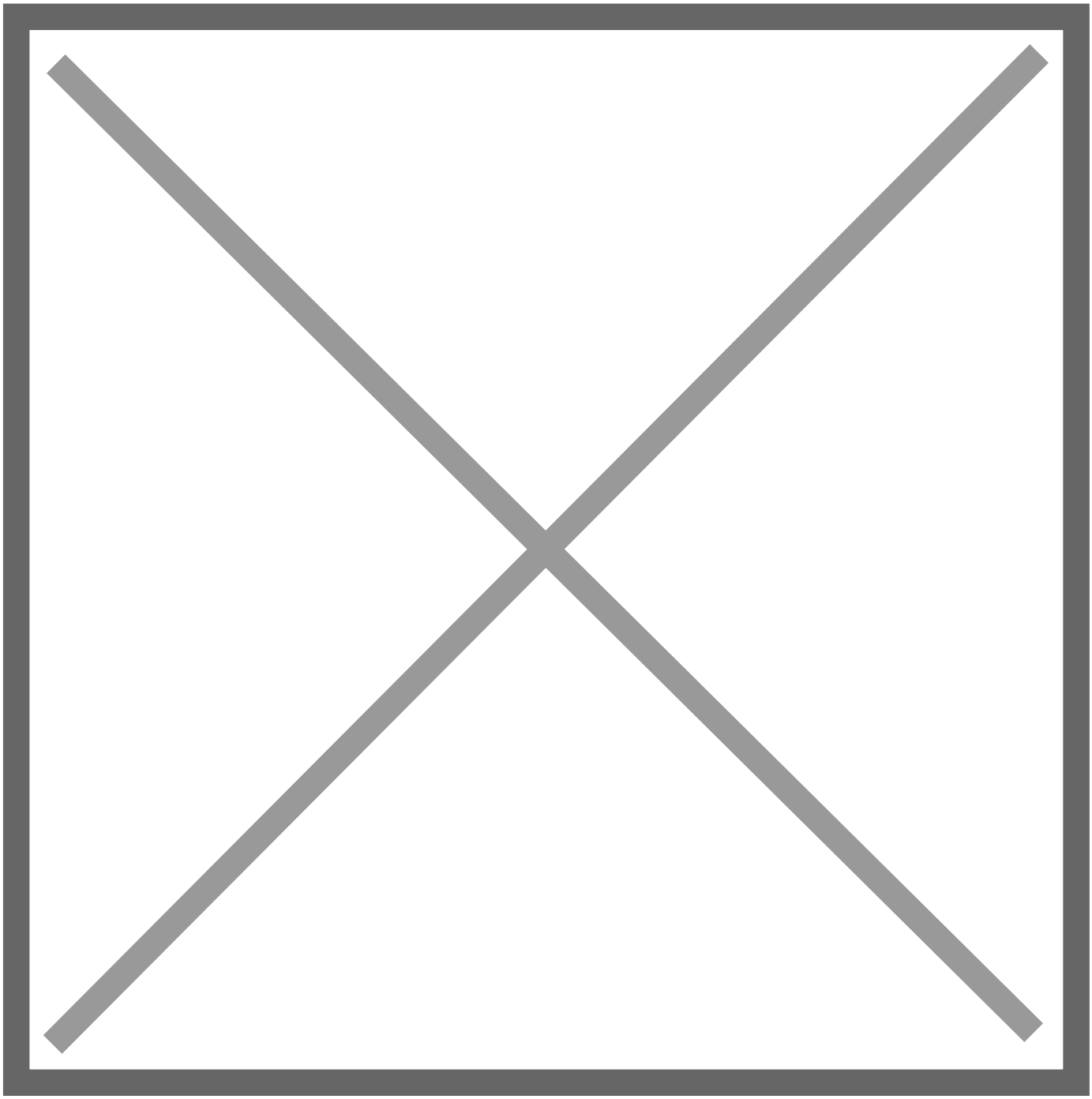


Survey type:	Self-reported
Age:	11-17
References:	Global Health Observatory data repository, World Health Organisation, https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A893ADO?lang=en (last accessed 16.03.21)
Notes:	% of school going adolescents not meeting WHO recommendations on Physical Activity for Health,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

Definitions:	% Adolescents insufficiently active (age standardised estimate)

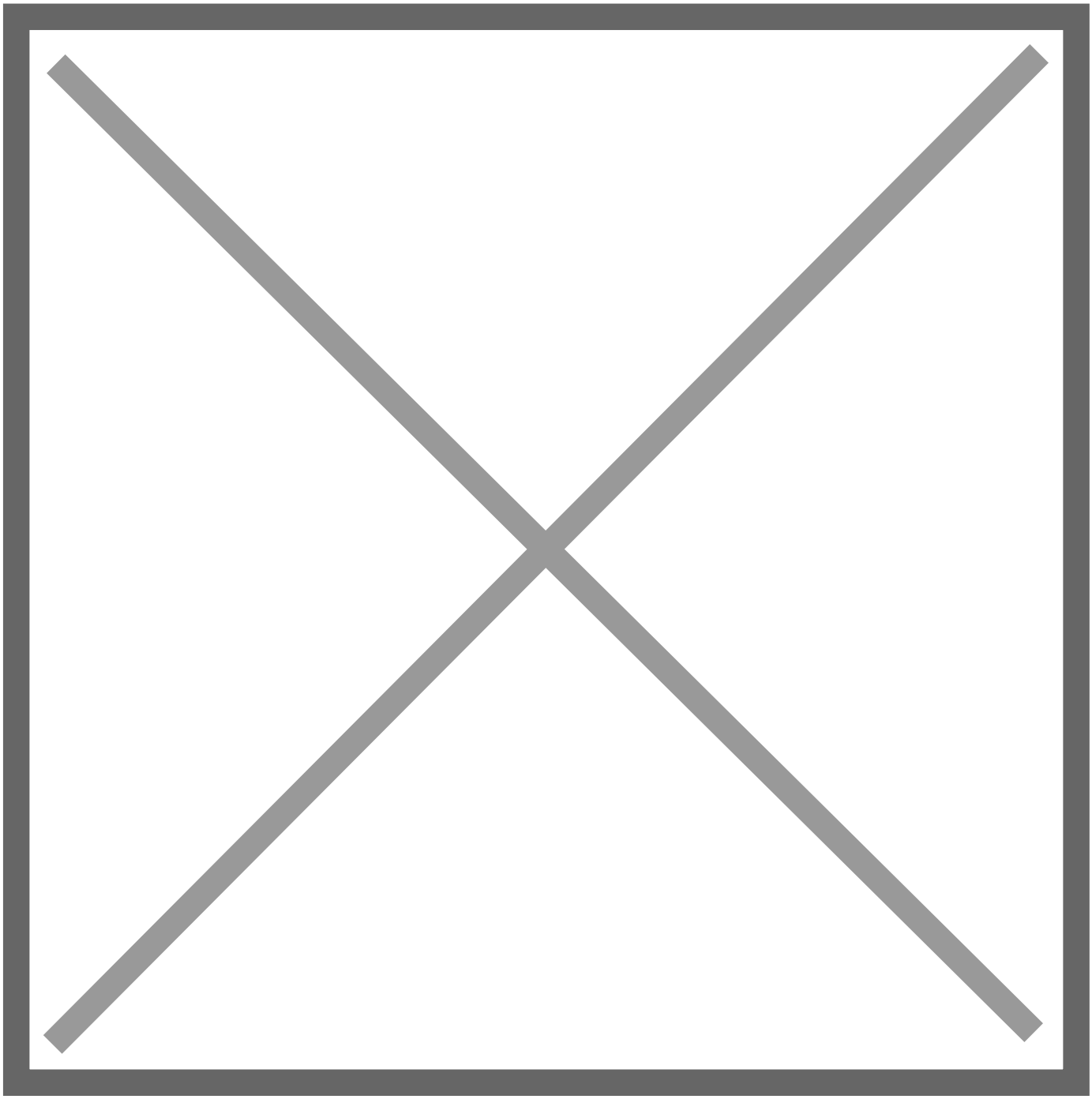
Mental health - depression disorders

Children, 2023



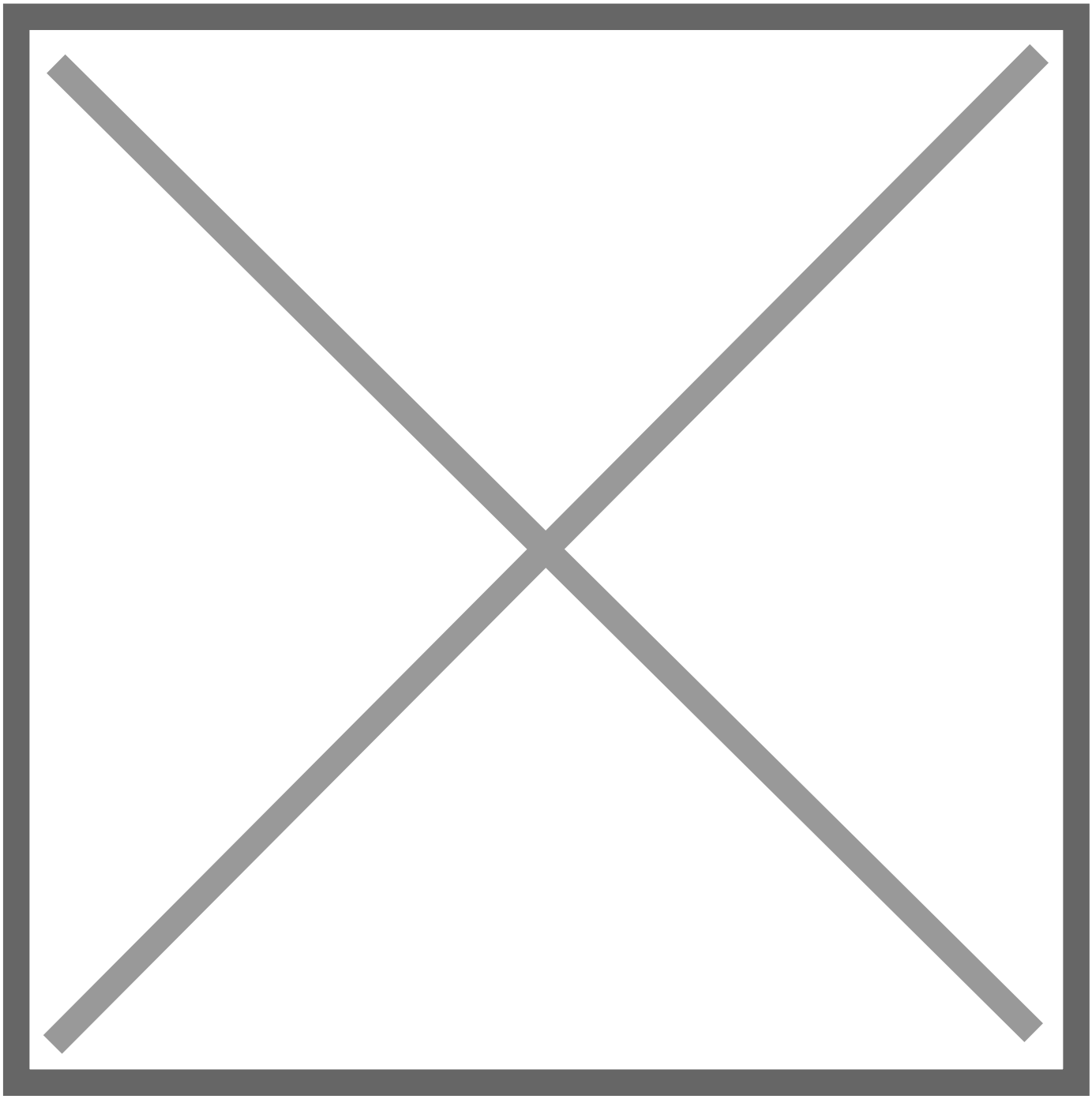
Area covered:	National
References:	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2025. Available from https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/ [Accessed 17.03.26]
Definitions:	Estimated number living with depressive disorders per 100,000 population (under 20 years of age)

Boys, 2023



Area covered:	National
References:	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2025. Available from https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/ [Accessed 17.03.26]
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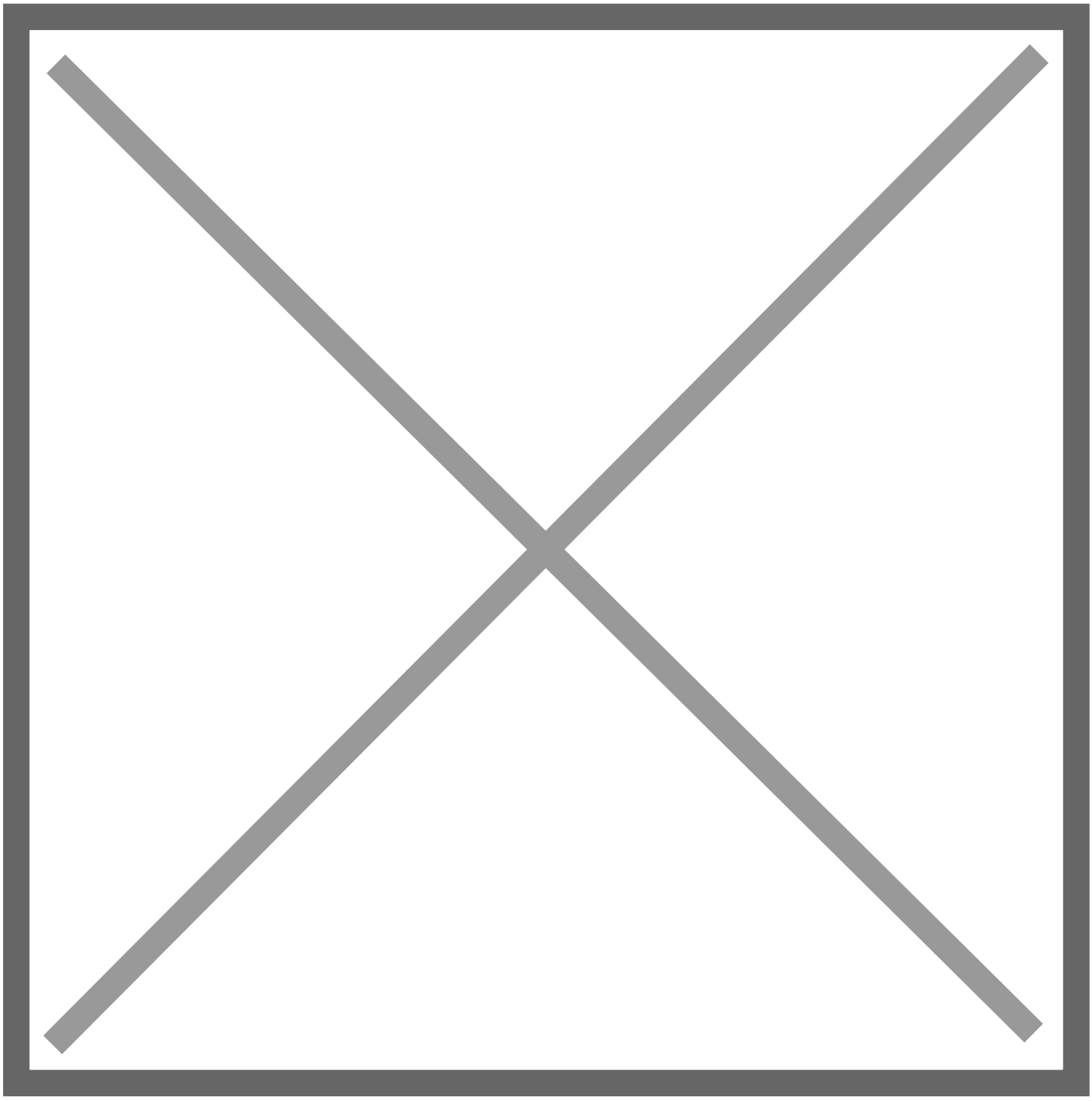
Girls, 2023



Area covered:	National
References:	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). GBD Compare Data Visualization. Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington, 2025. Available from https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-compare/ [Accessed 17.03.26]
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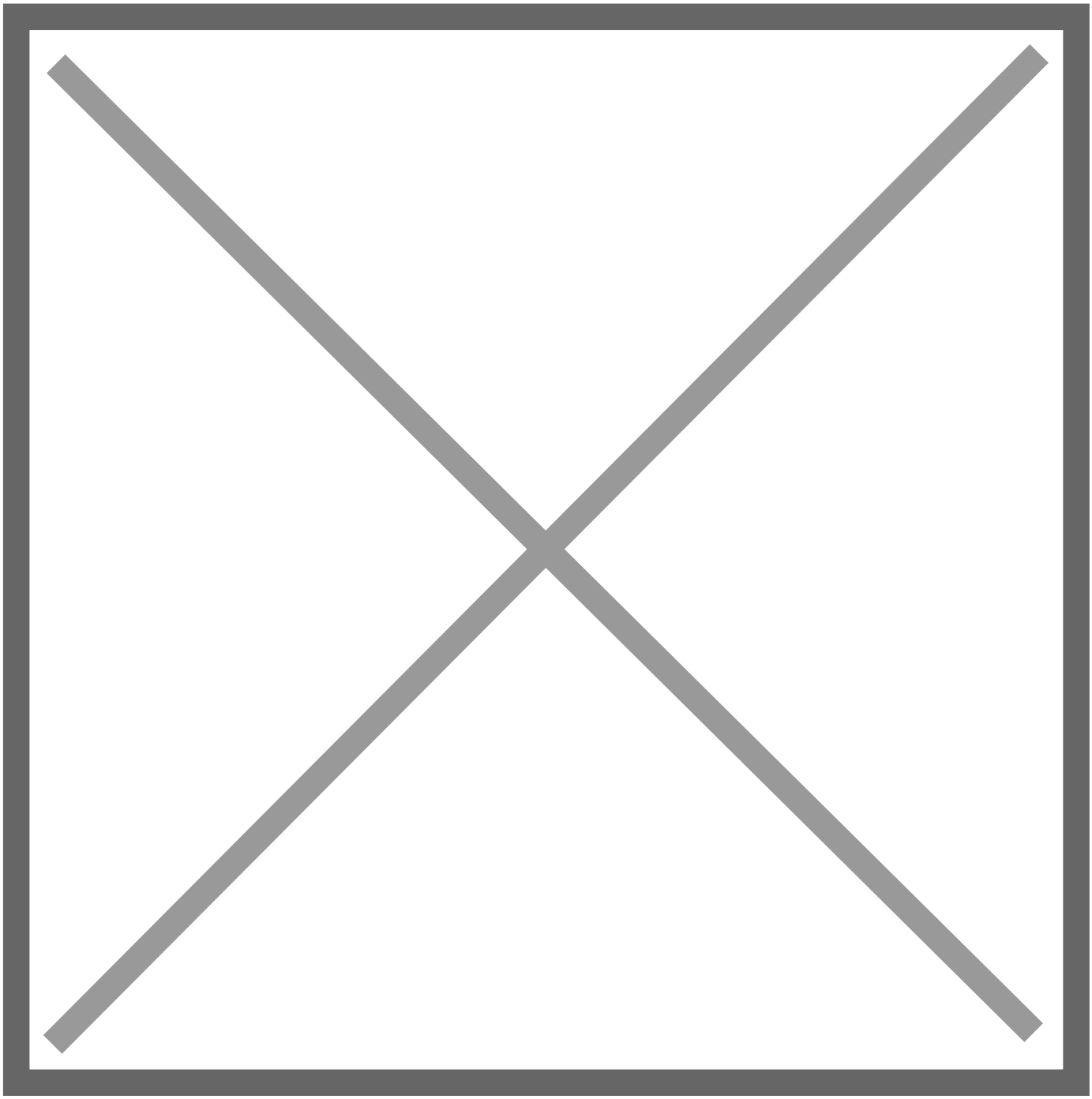
Mental health - anxiety disorders

Children, 2023



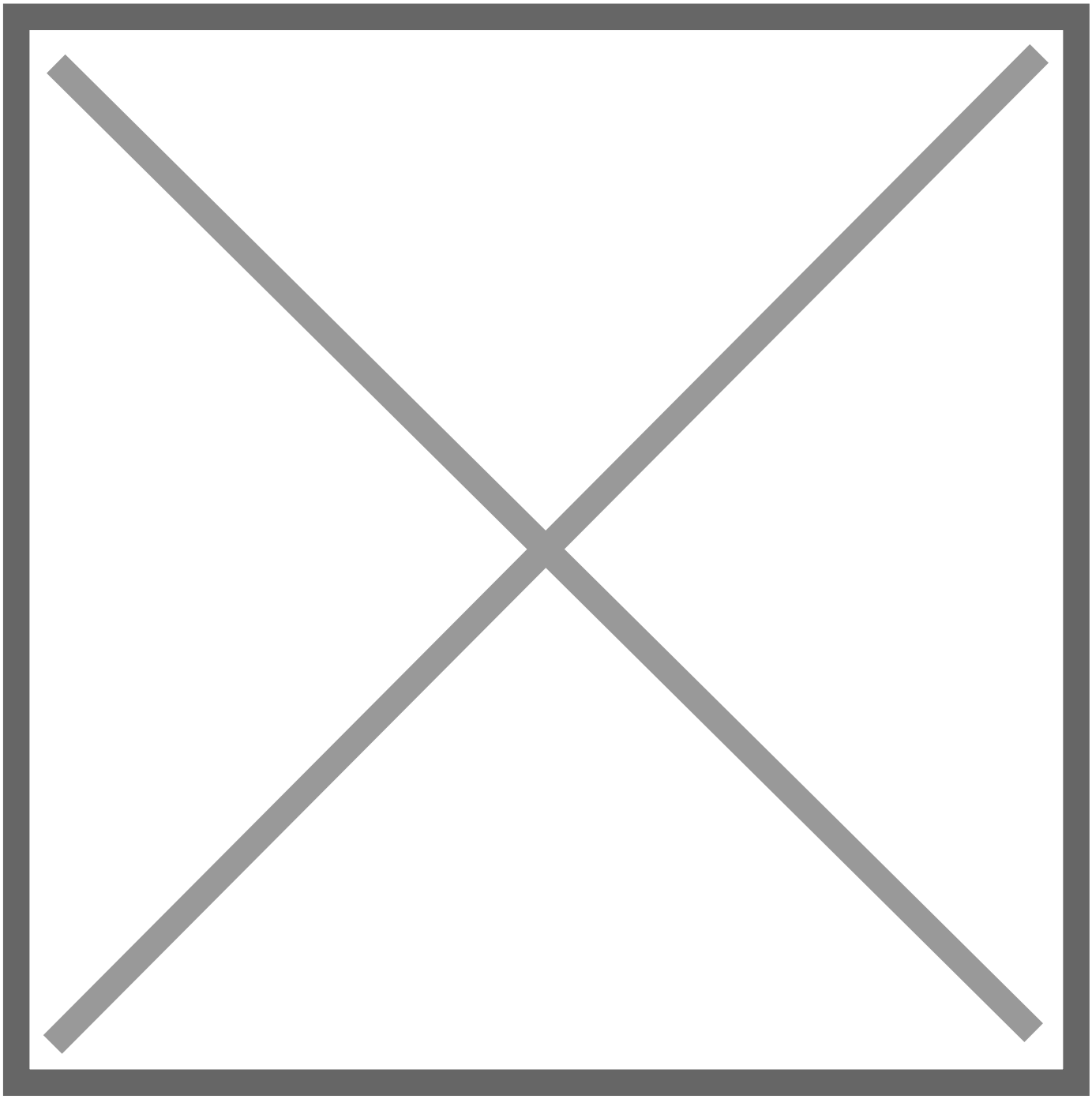
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Boys, 2023



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PDF created on November 3, 2026