

# The prevalence of eating difficulties and eating disorders in secondary school students in England

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# Background

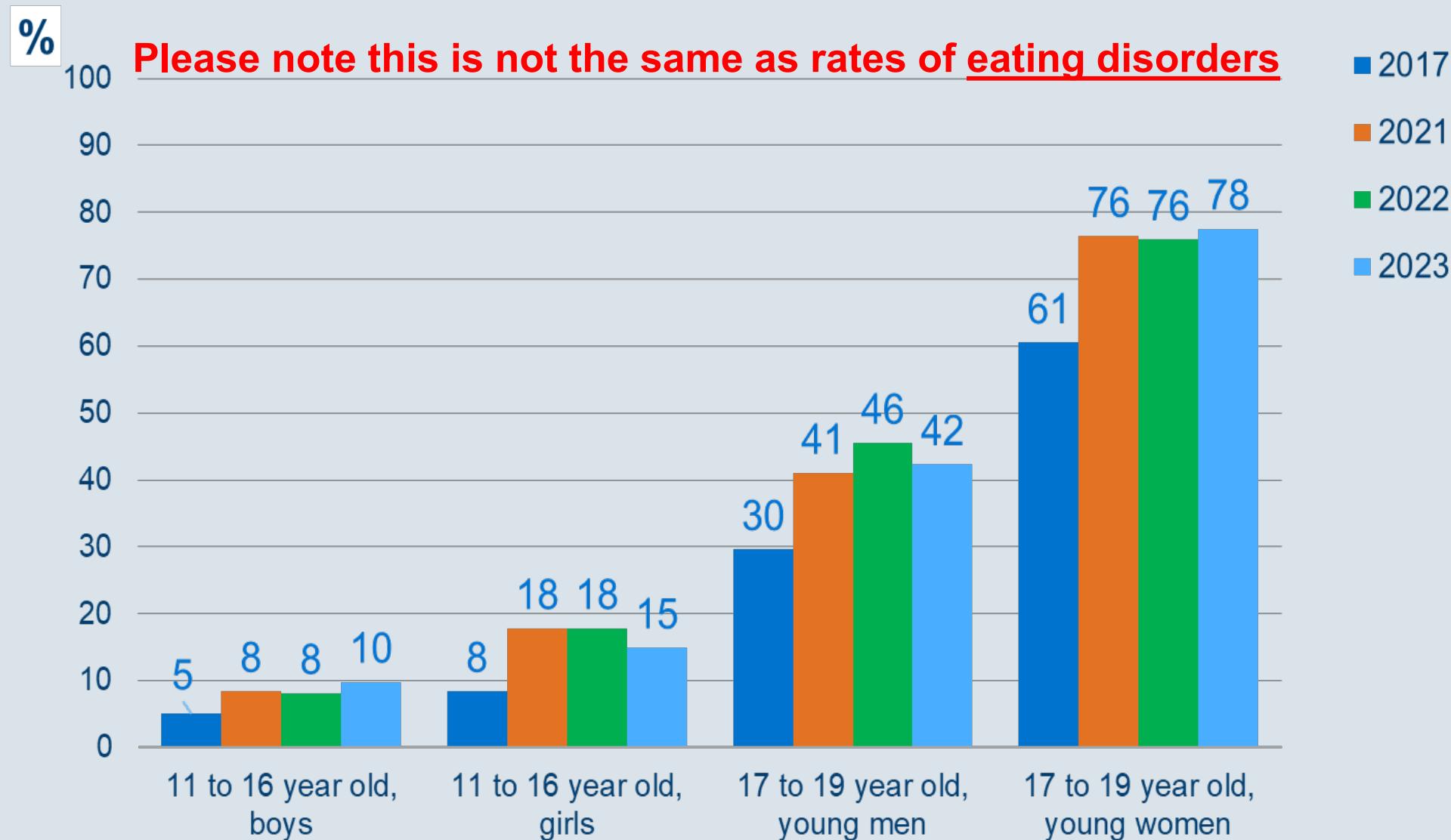


Eating difficulties /  
Disordered eating



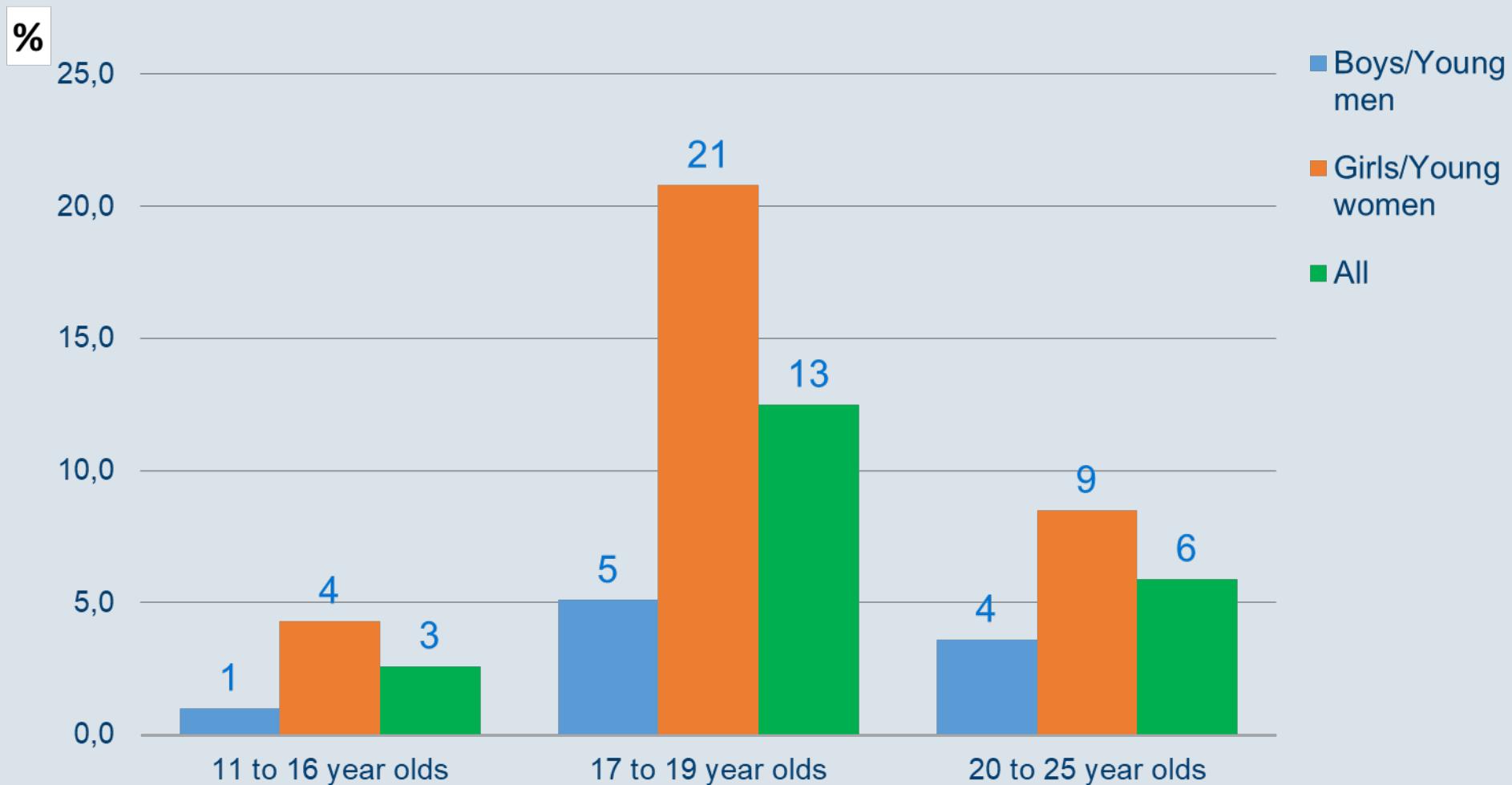
Eating disorder

# Eating difficulties according to DAWBA screen



Source: NHS England. 11 to 19 year olds, England, 2023. Figure 5.1 in the report.

# Eating disorder DAWBA module 2023



Source: NHS England. 11 to 25 year olds, England, 2023. Figure 5.4 in the report.

# Background

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Original article

## Associations Between Gender Dysphoria, Eating Disorders, and Mental Health Diagnoses Among Adolescents



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*Keywords:* Adolescent; Depression; Eating disorders; Gender diverse; Mental health; Suicide; Transgender

Youth identifying as gender diverse had 3.7 times the odds of having an ED [CI]: 2.98–4.64 (n = 57,353) (Abernathy et al., 2024)



# Eating difficulties (DAWBA)

Have you ever thought you were fat even when other people told you were very thin?

Would you be ashamed if other people knew how much you eat?

Have you deliberately made yourself vomit (throw up)?

Do your worries about eating really interfere with your life?

If you eat too much, do you blame yourself a lot?

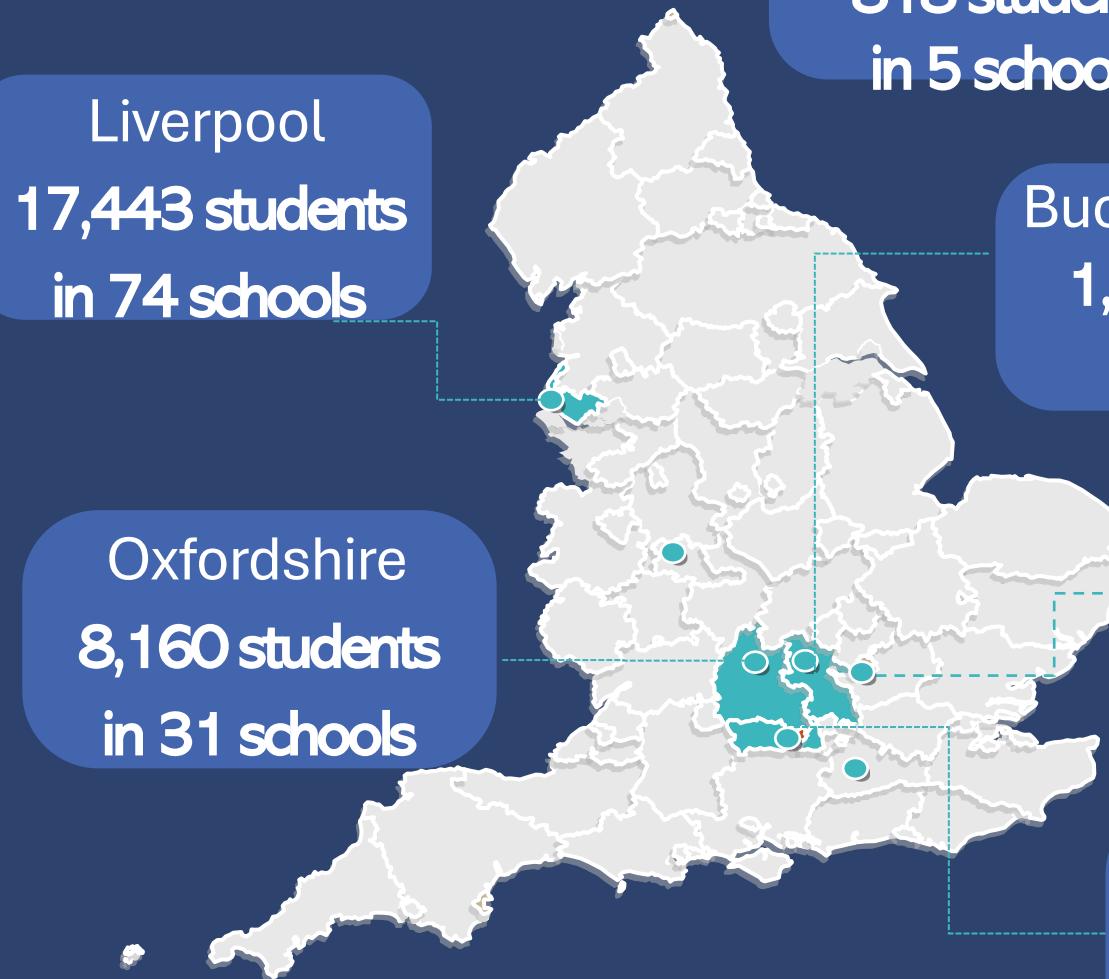
# Aims

- (I) To estimate the prevalence of eating difficulties and Eating Disorders in secondary school students in England adopting a gender inclusive approach
  
- (II) Analyse factors associated with increased odds of eating difficulties

# Methods

Liverpool  
17,443 students  
in 74 schools

Oxfordshire  
8,160 students  
in 31 schools



Sandwell &  
Surrey  
818 students  
in 5 schools

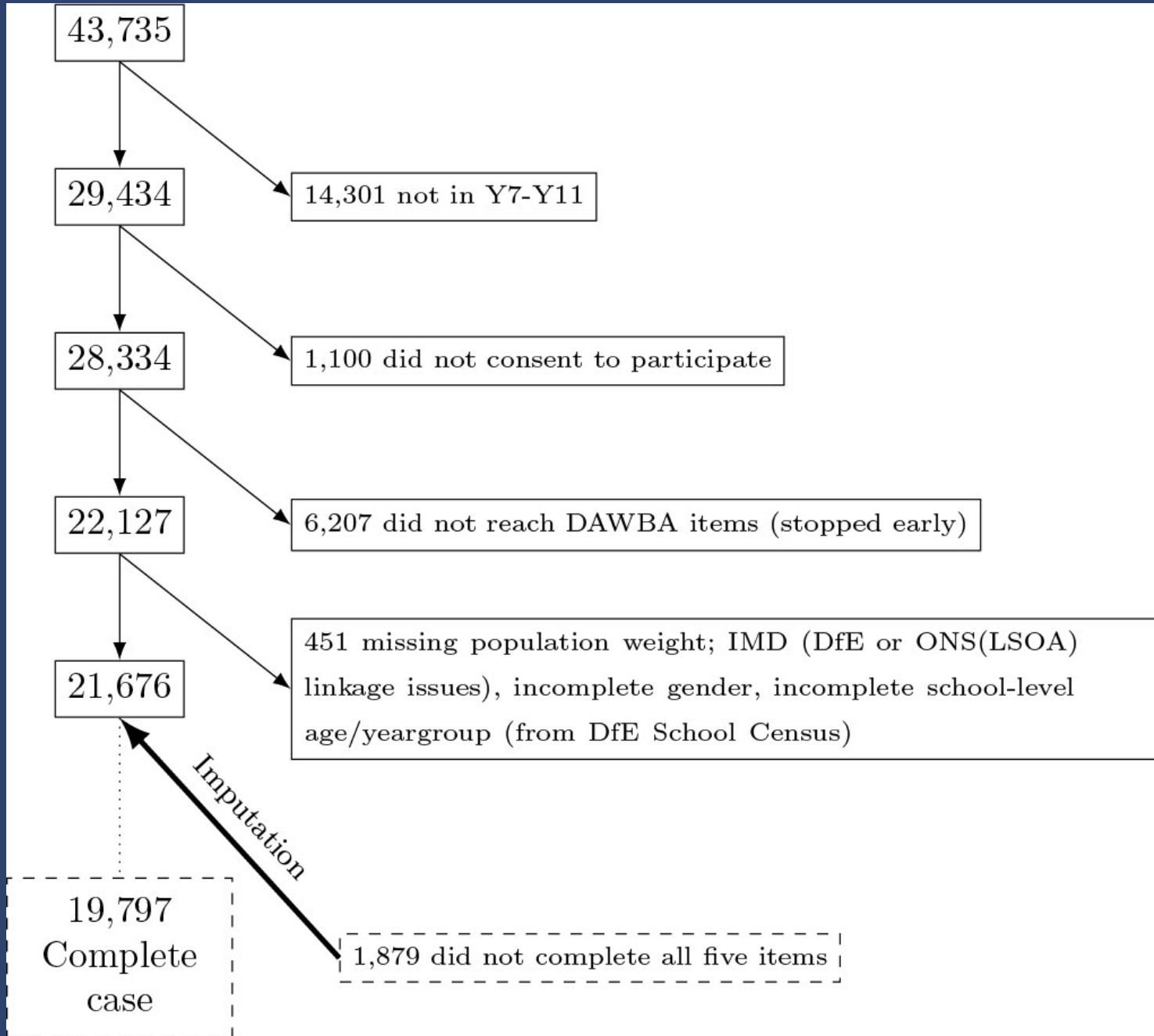
Buckinghamshire  
1,458 students  
in 3 schools

Milton Keynes  
2,879 students  
in 10 schools

Berkshire  
12,976 students  
in 62 schools

$n = 21,676^*$

\*secondary  
school pupils  
with eating difficulties data



# Methods



Gender



Ethnic Group



Logistic  
Regressions



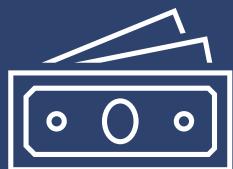
Year Group



Eating  
Difficulties

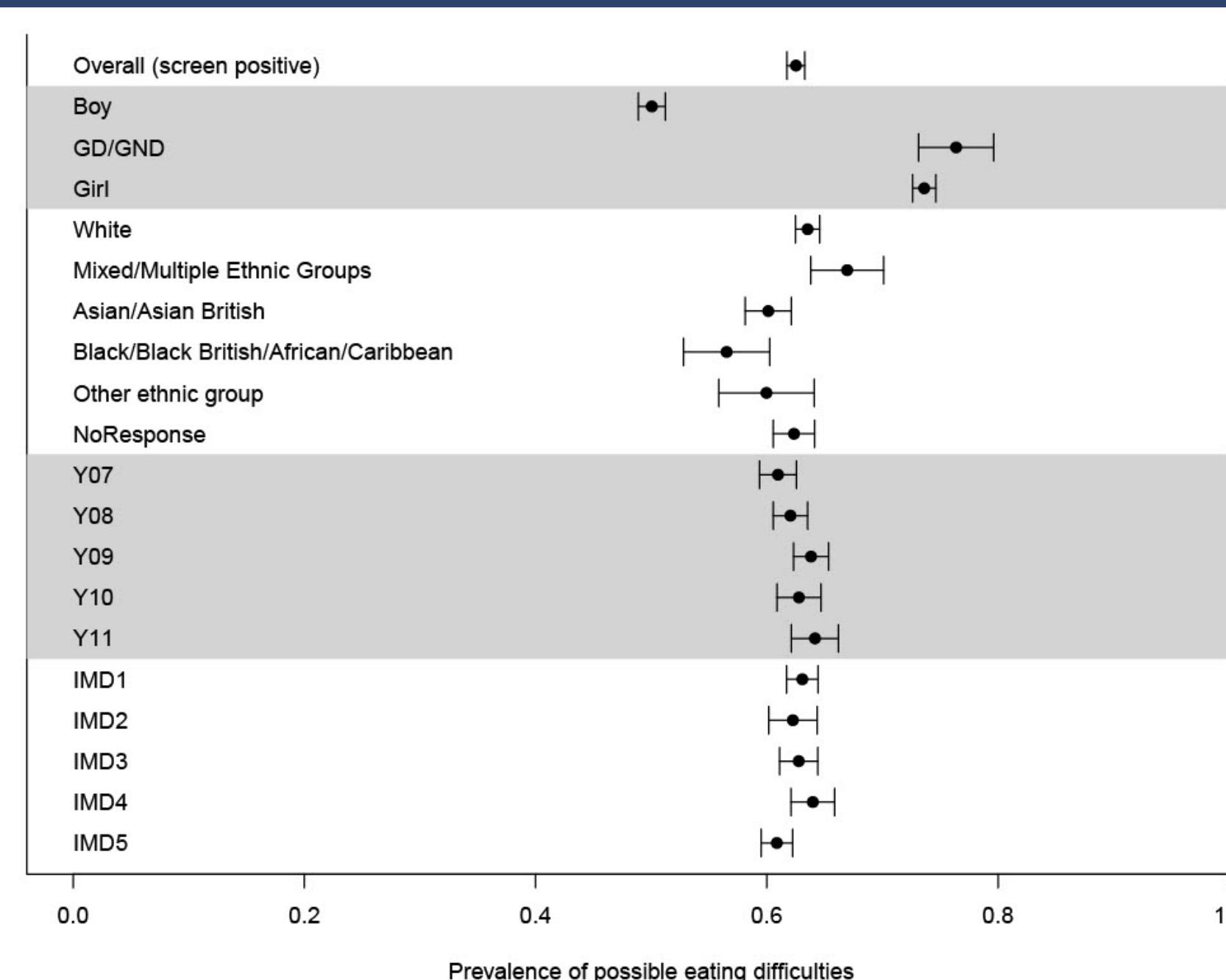


Weights

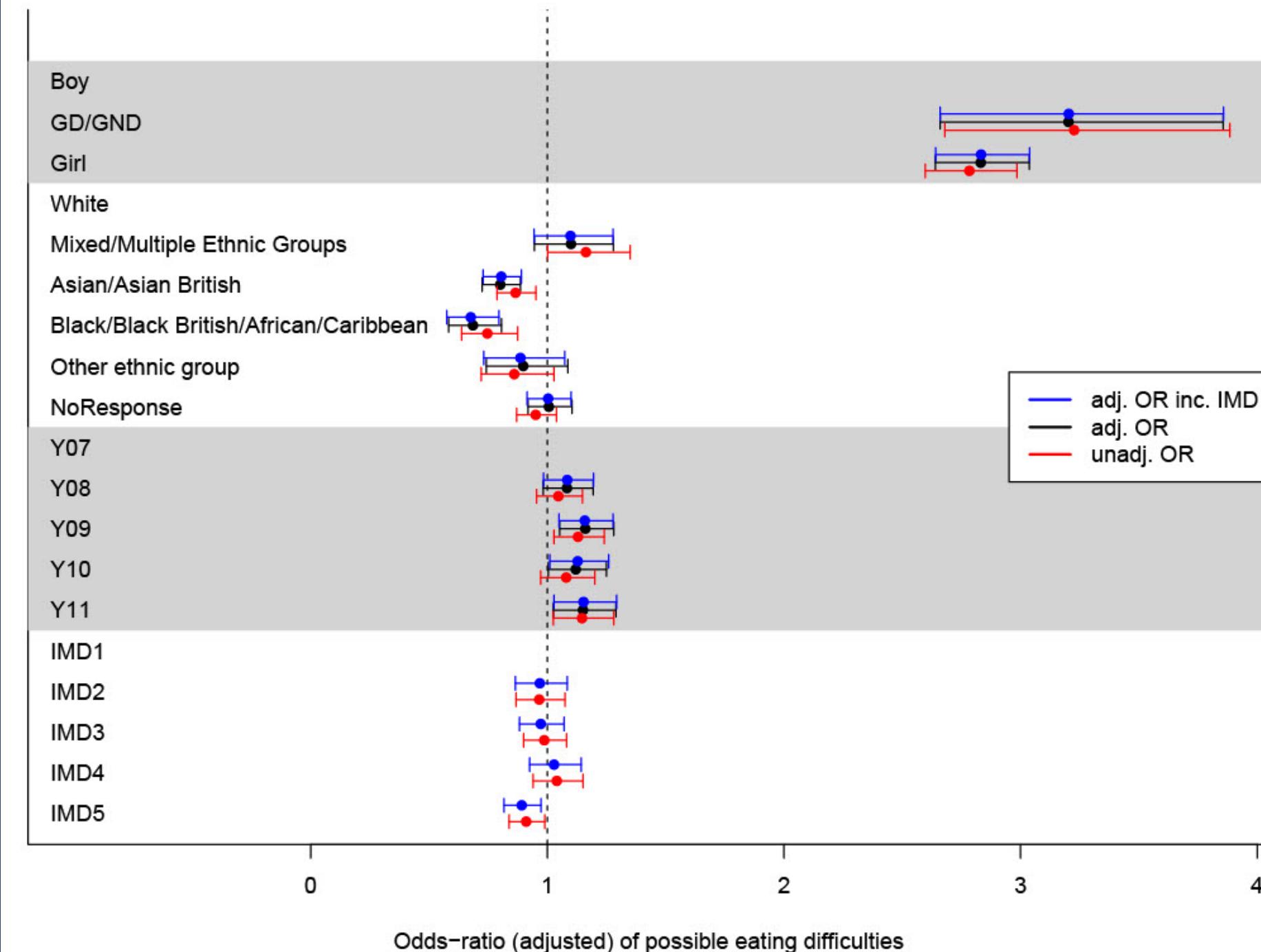


Deprivation

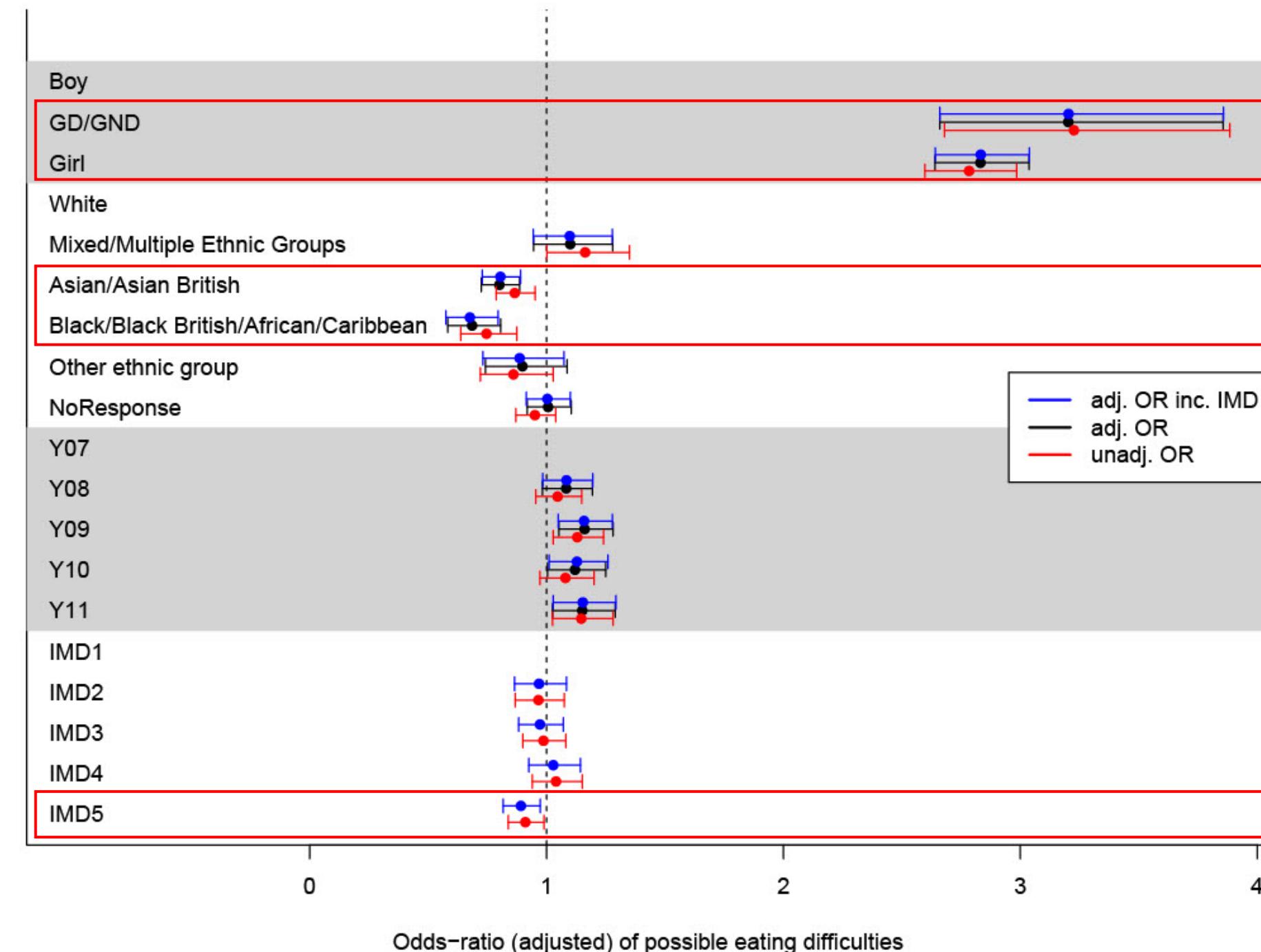
# Survey weighted prevalence of possible eating difficulties



# Variables associated with eating difficulties

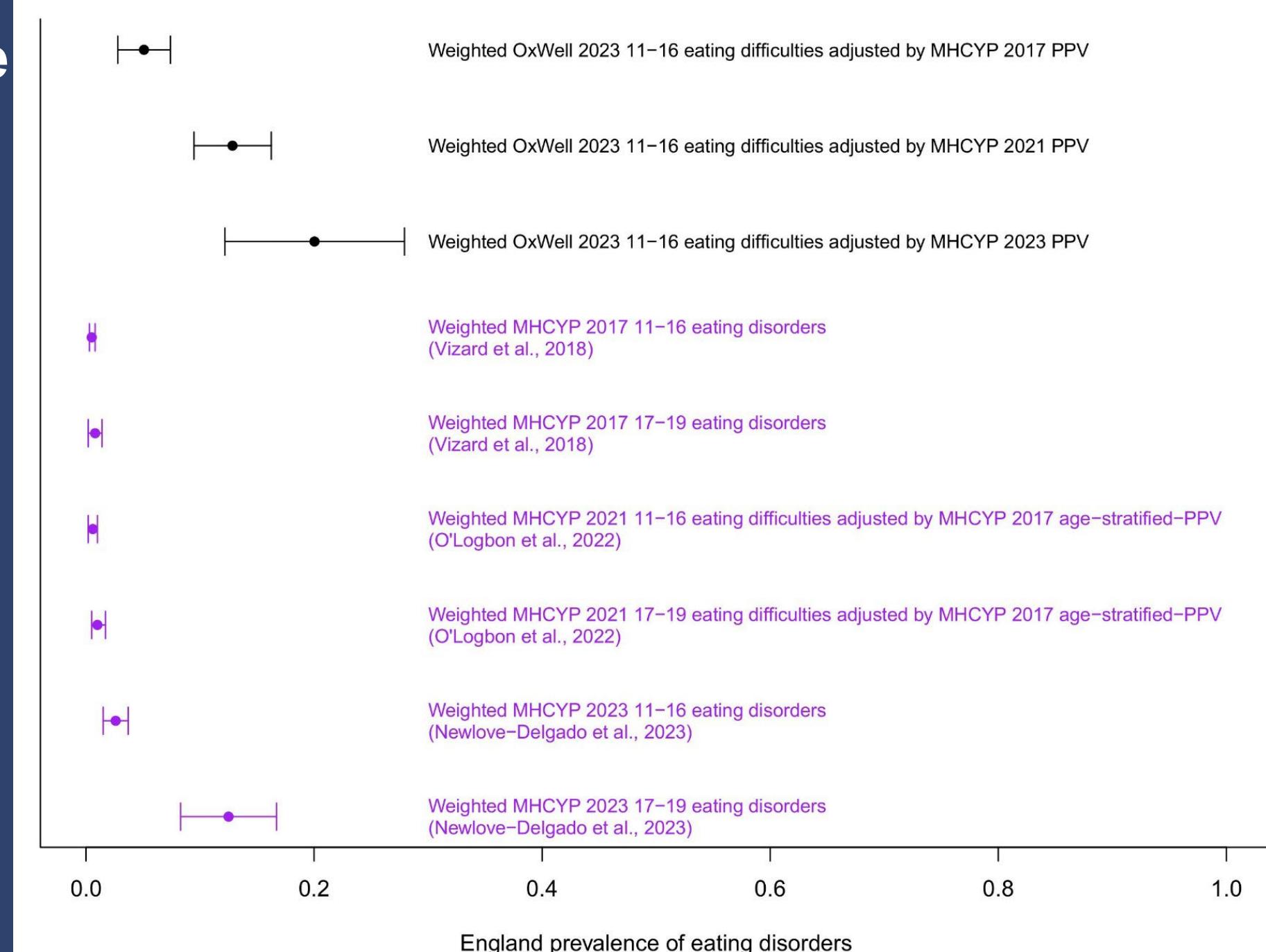


# Variables associated with eating difficulties



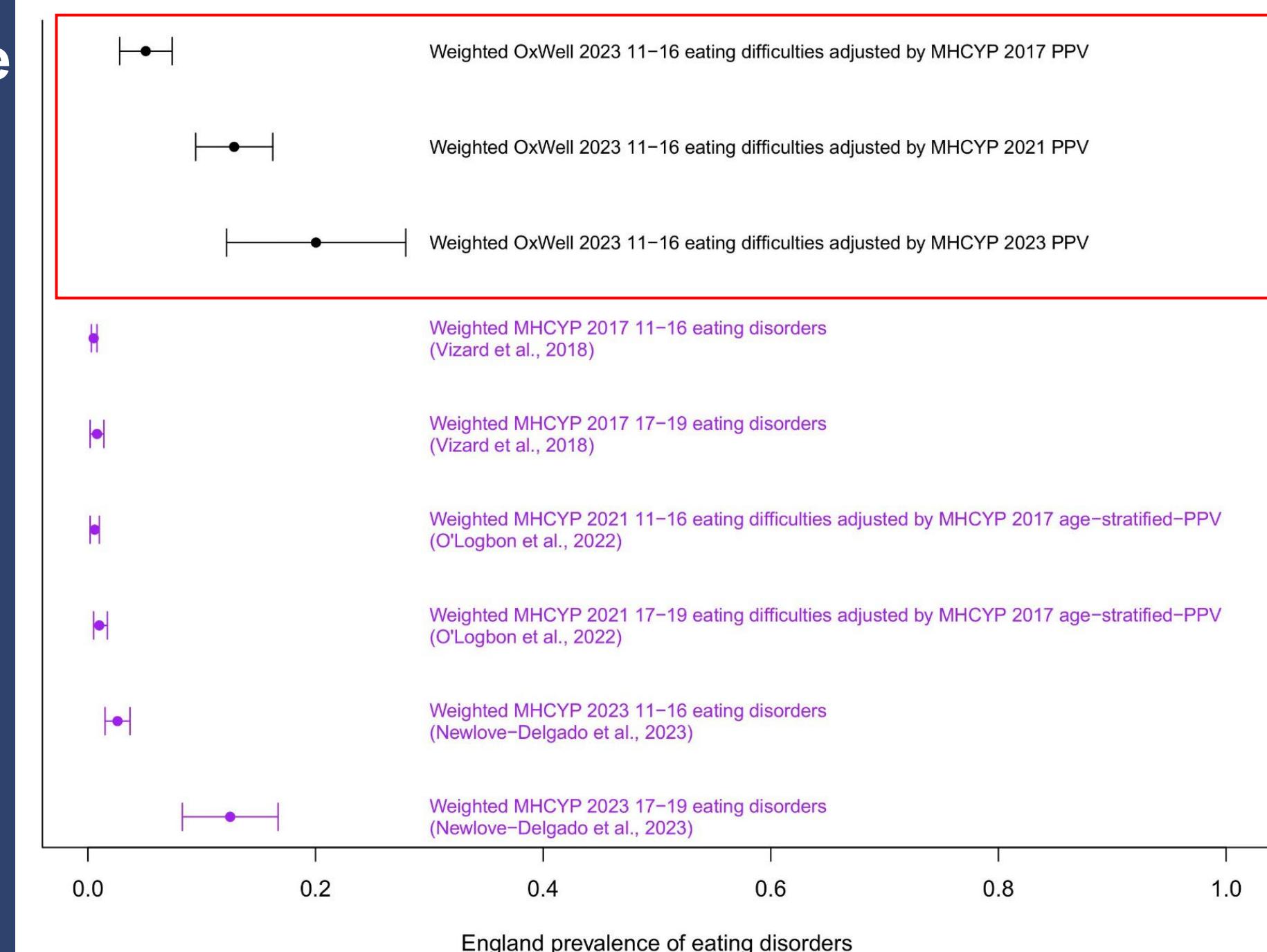
# Prevalence range of eating disorders

*Unpublished data, please  
do not share*



# Prevalence range of eating disorders in England

*Unpublished data, please  
do not share*



# Take home messages

- Gender diverse, girls and being in higher year groups are significant risk factors for presenting with disordered eating in secondary-school students
- Eating difficulties are common in children and young people
- Public health significance: potential for early interventions targeting disordered eating

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# Thank you!



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