Social judgements in BPD during the Covid-19 pandemic in Germany (#59297)

1) Have any data been collected for this study already?
It’s complicated. We have already collected some data but explain in Question 8 why readers may consider this a valid pre-registration nevertheless.

2) What’s the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?
Q1: Do people with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) differ from healthy control participants (HC) in the effects of MNCs covering a facial stimulus depending on the type of social judgment (happiness, trustworthiness) in a) the evaluation of the intensity of the attribute ascribed to a face and b) the confidence participants pose in their judgments?
H1a: MNCs impair social judgments to a higher extent in the BPD group compared with the HC group resulting in a lower intensity of happiness and trustworthiness ascribed to faces covered in MNCs than faces without MNC. Due to the higher relevance of the mouth region of the face for happiness ratings, we expect this effect to be particularly pronounced for judging happiness.
H1b: Confidence in both social judgments (happiness and trustworthiness) is reduced to a higher extent in the BPD compared with the HC group for faces covered in MNCs than faces without MNC.
Q2: Do people with a diagnosis of BPD differ from HC in the extent to which the experienced intensity of a positive emotional expression predicts the assessment of trustworthiness?
H2: The intensity of a positive emotional state ascribed to a facial stimulus predicts the judgment of trustworthiness in the HC group to a higher extent compared with BPD group.
Q3: Does the severity of childhood traumatization moderate the effects of MNC and type of social judgment in the group of patients with BPD i) for the evaluation of the facial stimuli and ii) the confidence participants experience regarding these judgements?
H3a, b: The severity of childhood traumatization moderates both the effects of the MNC, the type of the social judgment as well as the interplay between both experimental factors in BPD patients: We expect that a higher severity of adverse childhood events results in more pronounced effects for a) the evaluation of the attribute ascribed to a face and c) the confidence in these social judgments.
Q4: Do participants of the BPD group differ from HC in the burden experienced during real live social encounters through MNCs and is the level of this burden associated with the changes in social-cognitive processing induced by covering a face with a mask?
H4: Individuals of the BPD group experience a higher burden during real live social contacts through MNCs. The severity of this burden is higher when MNCs result in lower ratings of happiness, trustworthiness and a lower confidence in these judgments.

3) Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.
Face Ratings: Validated face database (IASLab) with regard to the expressed intensity of happiness and trustworthiness and the confidence in one's own assessment; each face presented once with and once without an MNC
Assessment of Adverse Childhood Events: German short form of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; German version: Klinitzke et al., 2012)
Burden caused by masks: 6-point Likert scale item (“How strong is the emotional burden you experience during a contact with someone wearing a face mask?” no burden at all – very severe burden)

4) How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?
Same experimental procedure for both groups; reactions to faces with and without MNC as within participants measures

5) Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.
H1a, b: 2x2x2 mixed-ANOVA with the repeated measurement factors ‘mask’ (without/with mask), type of social judgment (‘task’: happiness/trustworthiness) and the between factor ‘group’ (BPD/HC) will be performed separately for a) social judgments and b) the confidence of these evaluations.
H2: Linear regression analysis with ratings of the intensity of happiness as predictor and ratings of trustworthiness as outcome
H3: 2x2x2 ANCOVA with the repeated measurement factors ‘mask’ (without/with mask), type of social judgment (‘task’: happiness/trustworthiness) and the CTQ score as covariate will be performed separately for a) social judgments and b) the confidence of these evaluations for the BPD group.
H4: Mann-Whitney-U-Test; Spearman-correlation coefficient

6) Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.
Participants exhibiting scores ±2.5 SD from the mean and participants with exceptionally fast processing (less than 60% of the average duration)
7) How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

It is planned to recruit 80 healthy individuals and 80 individuals with BPD

8) Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

Due to the rapid and unpredictable changes in the course of the Corona pandemic and the corresponding measures we have started to collect data within a time period with relatively constant conditions, i.e. during a lockdown mandated by the German government. The lockdown conditions are still the same. However, we have neither inspected the already collected data nor started data analyses. Beyond the main research question, we will explore i) whether the participants of the BPD and HC group differ in the evaluation of different aspects of MNCs (e.g. the ascribed protective function, the strain through wearing MNCs and the compliance to meet Corona-related recommendations to wear MNCs) and ii) whether these evaluations are related to the outcome measures of the experimental task. Additionally, we are interested in whether self-reported general trustworthiness (KUSIV 3) is lower in the BPD group compared with the HC group and whether it predicts the trustworthiness ratings in the experimental task beyond the ratings of the positive emotional state of the presented facial stimuli.