Supplementary Figure S1: Screenshots of the two Online Interventions:

a) **Lucky Charm Intervention**
b) **Control Intervention**

a) Lucky Charm Intervention (German)



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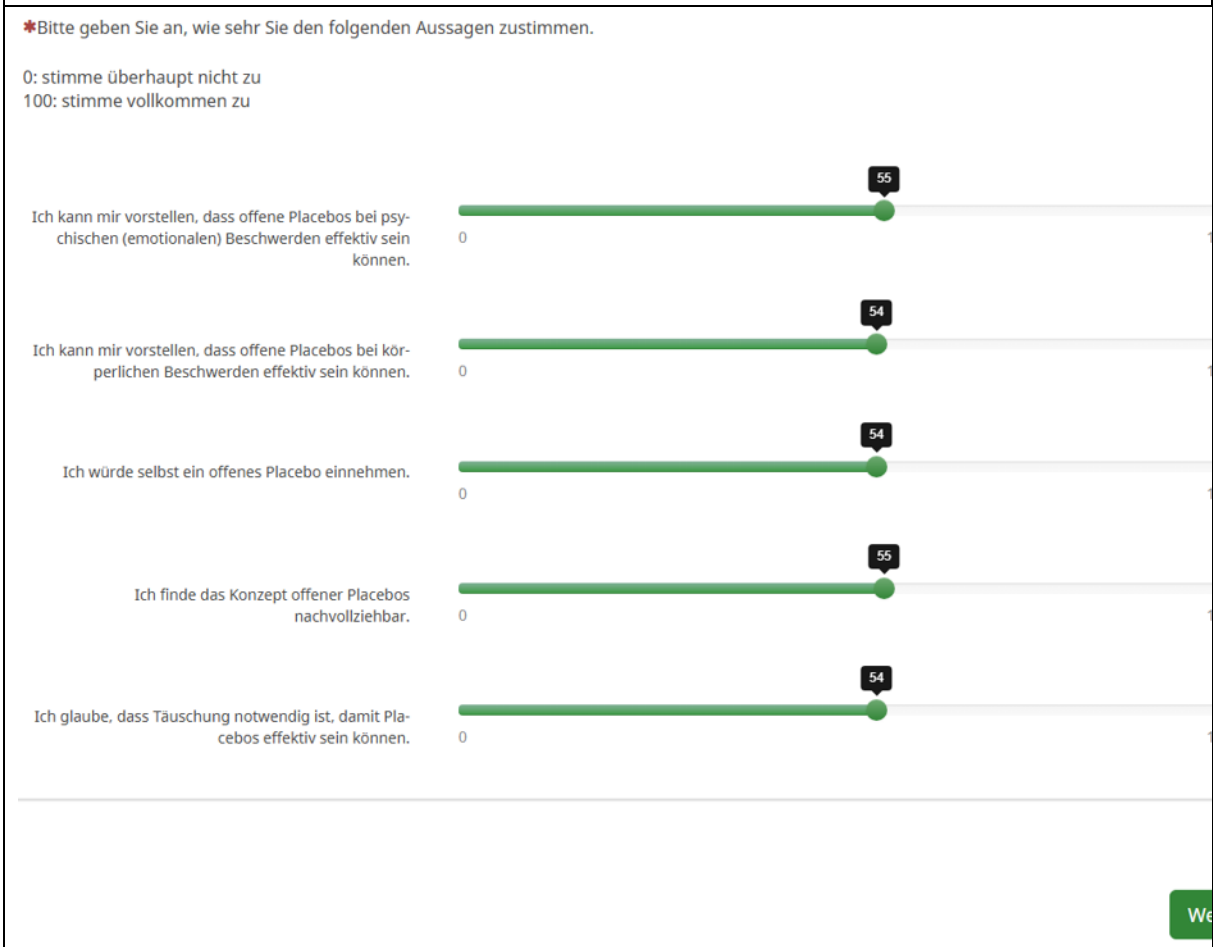
Da Placebos in der klinischen Praxis aus ethischen Gründen (Täuschung der Patient:innen) nicht eingesetzt werden dürfen, werden heute immer häufiger sogenannte **offene Placebos** eingesetzt. Dabei wird den Patient:innen mitgeteilt, dass sie ein Placebo (also ein Mittel ohne aktive Wirksubstanz) erhalten, das ihnen dabei helfen soll, ihre Beschwerden zu lindern. Außerdem wird auf die positiven Effekte von verdeckten Placebos verwiesen.

Heute möchten wir gerne mehr zu Ihren Einstellungen und Erwartungen bezüglich offener Placebos erfahren.

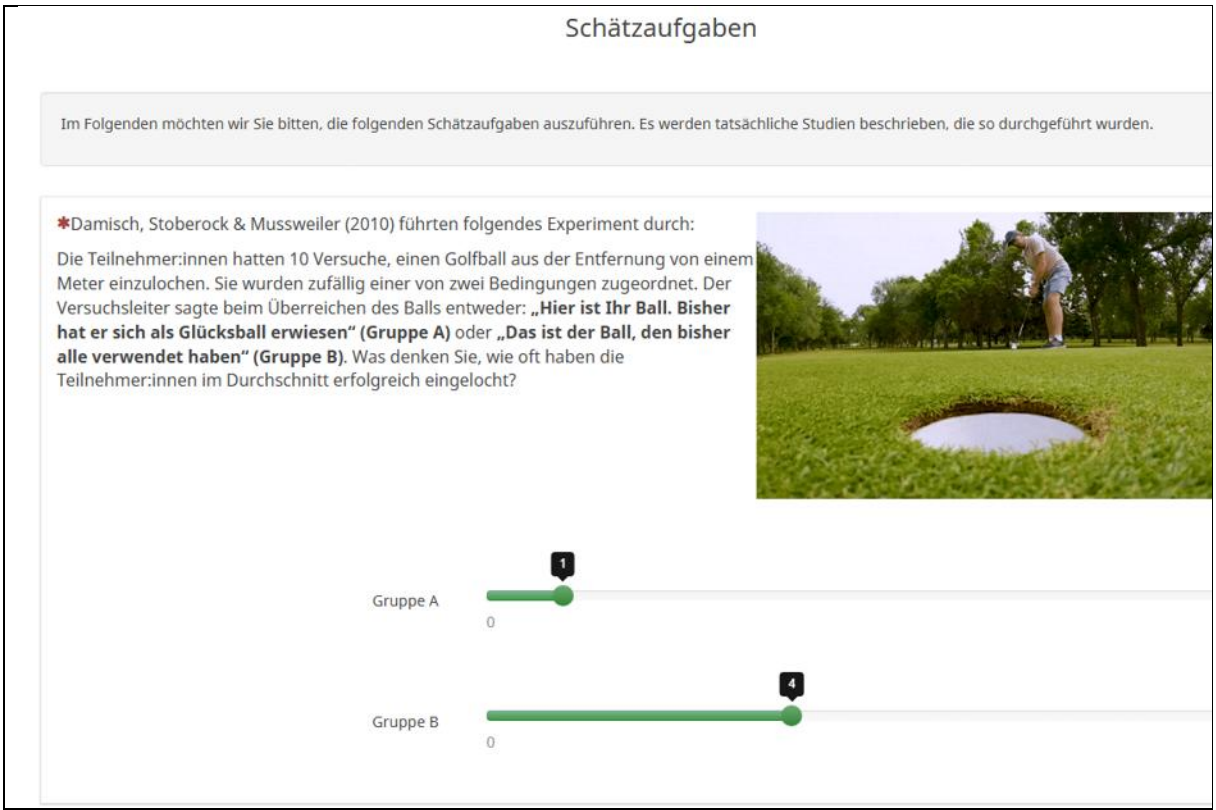
Weiter

Translation (GPT-6):
Concealed vs. open administration of placebos: „This is a medication [placebo] intended to alleviate your symptoms."
A placebo pill is a sham medication that contains no active ingredient but looks like a regular tablet. Patients are not informed that they are receiving a placebo; instead, they are told that they are being given a genuine medication. This is referred to as **covert placebo** administration.
Research has shown that covert placebos can produce substantial therapeutic effects, including reductions in pain and negative emotions.
Since placebos cannot be used in clinical practice for ethical reasons (deceiving patients), so-called **open-label placebos** are increasingly being used. In this approach, patients are informed that they are receiving a placebo (i.e., a tablet without an active ingredient) that may help alleviate their symptoms. In addition, they are told about the positive effects of covert placebos.
Today, we would like to learn more about your attitudes and expectations regarding open-

label placebos.

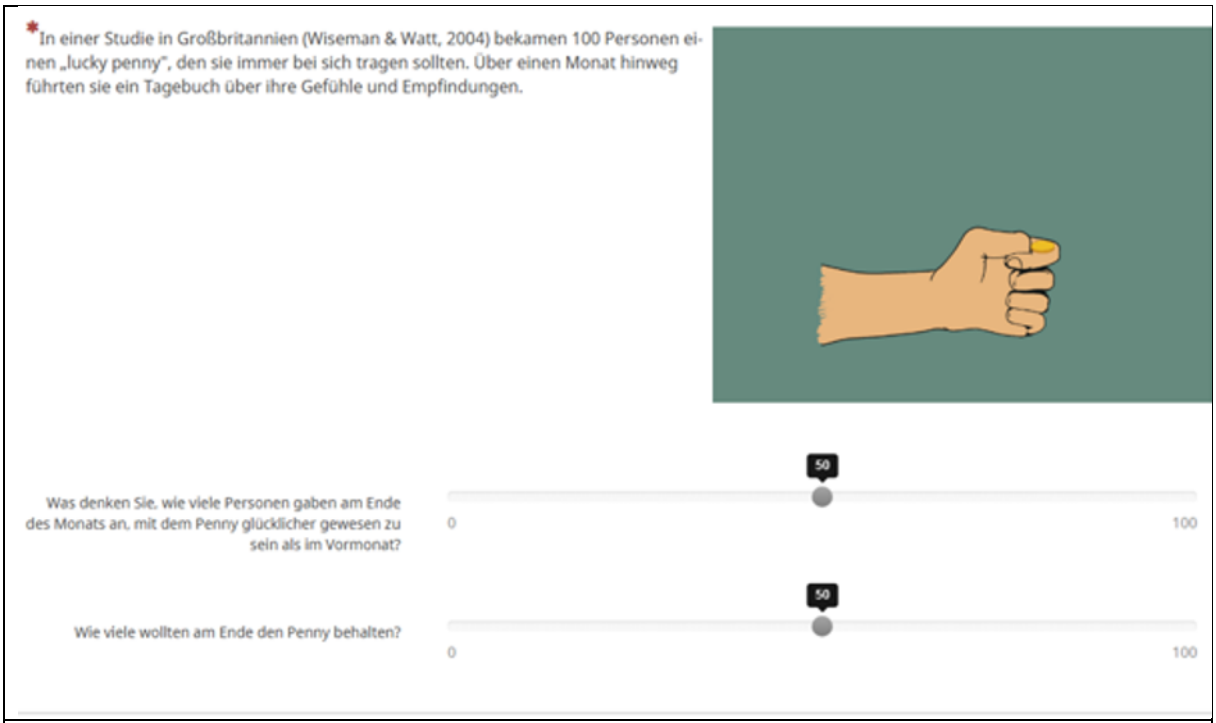


Translation:
Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements.
0: Strongly disagree
100: Strongly agree
1. I can imagine that open-label placebos can be effective in alleviating psychological (emotional) complaints.
2. I can imagine that open-label placebos can be effective in alleviating physical complaints.
3. I would take an open-label placebo myself.
4. I find the concept of open-label placebos understandable.
5. I believe that deception is necessary for placebos to be effective.



Translation:
Estimation tasks
In the following, we would like you to complete the estimation tasks presented below. Actual studies that were conducted are described.

Damisch, Stoberock, & Mussweiler (2010) conducted the following experiment: Participants had 10 attempts to hole a golf ball from a distance of one metre. They were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. When handing them the ball, the experimenter said either: "Here is your ball. So far, it has served as a lucky ball" (Group A) or "Here is the ball that everyone has used so far" (Group B).
In your estimation, how many successful putts did participants achieve on average?



Translation: In a study conducted in Great Britain (Wiseman & Watt, 2004), 100 participants were given a “lucky penny” to carry with them. Over the course of one month, they kept a diary in which they recorded their feelings and experiences.

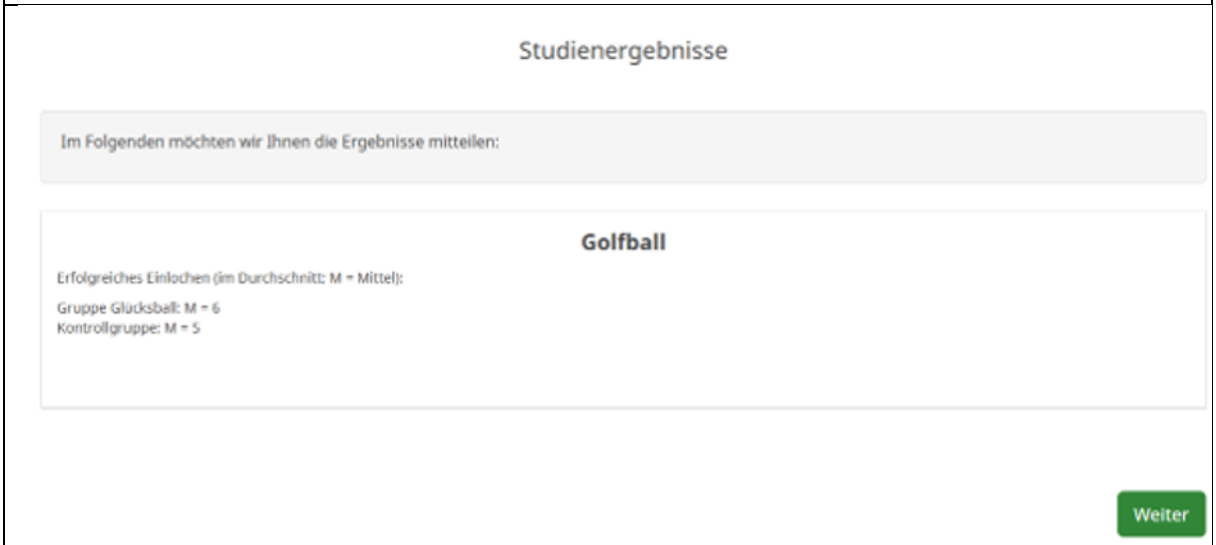
What do you think, how many people indicated at the end of the month to be happier with the penny than in the month before?

How many people wantet to keep the penny?

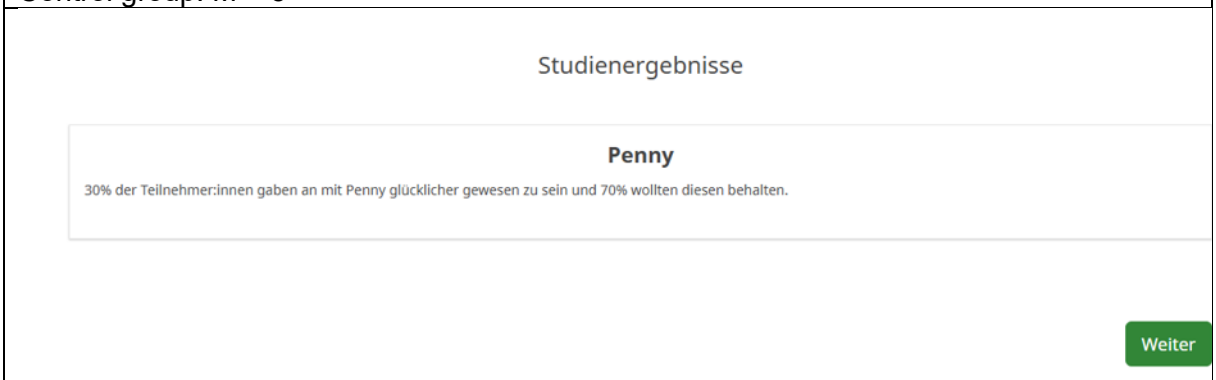


Translation:
In a study by Schienle et al. (2025), female participants were asked to view disgusting pictures and rate how unpleasant they found them (1 = not at all unpleasant; 10 =

extremely unpleasant). One group (50 participants) received a so-called "positive encouragement charm" before viewing the pictures. The small mascot held a sign saying: *"I know I'm small, but I believe in you. You can do it!"* A second group (50 participants) did not receive a mascot.
In your estimation, if the participants' picture ratings are sorted separately for each group from least unpleasant to most unpleasant, what percentage of participants who received the mascot rated the pictures as less unpleasant than the group that did not receive a mascot?



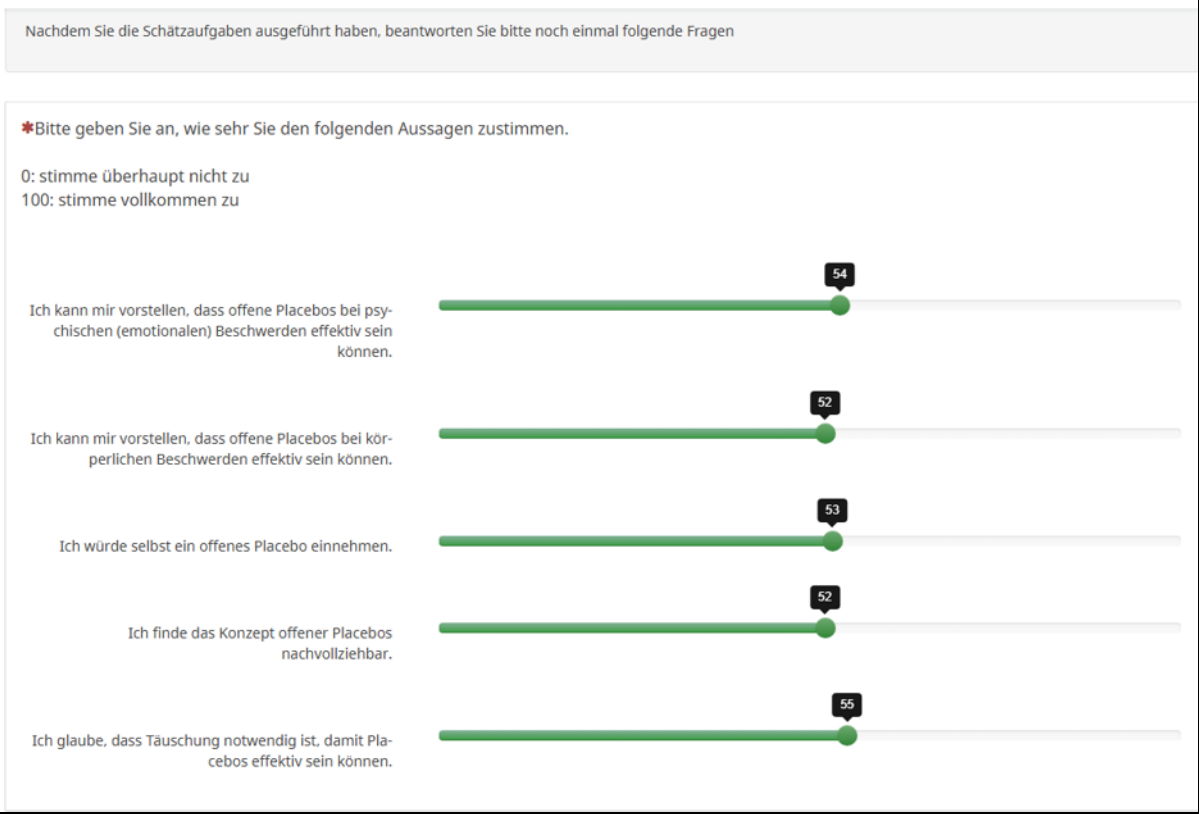
Translation:
Study Results
We would now like to inform you about the results:
Golf Putting
Successful putts (mean; M):
Lucky ball group: M = 6
Control group: M = 5



30% of the participants reported to have been happier with the penny and 70% wanted to keep it.



100% of the participants in the mascot group rated the images as less unpleasant than the control group.



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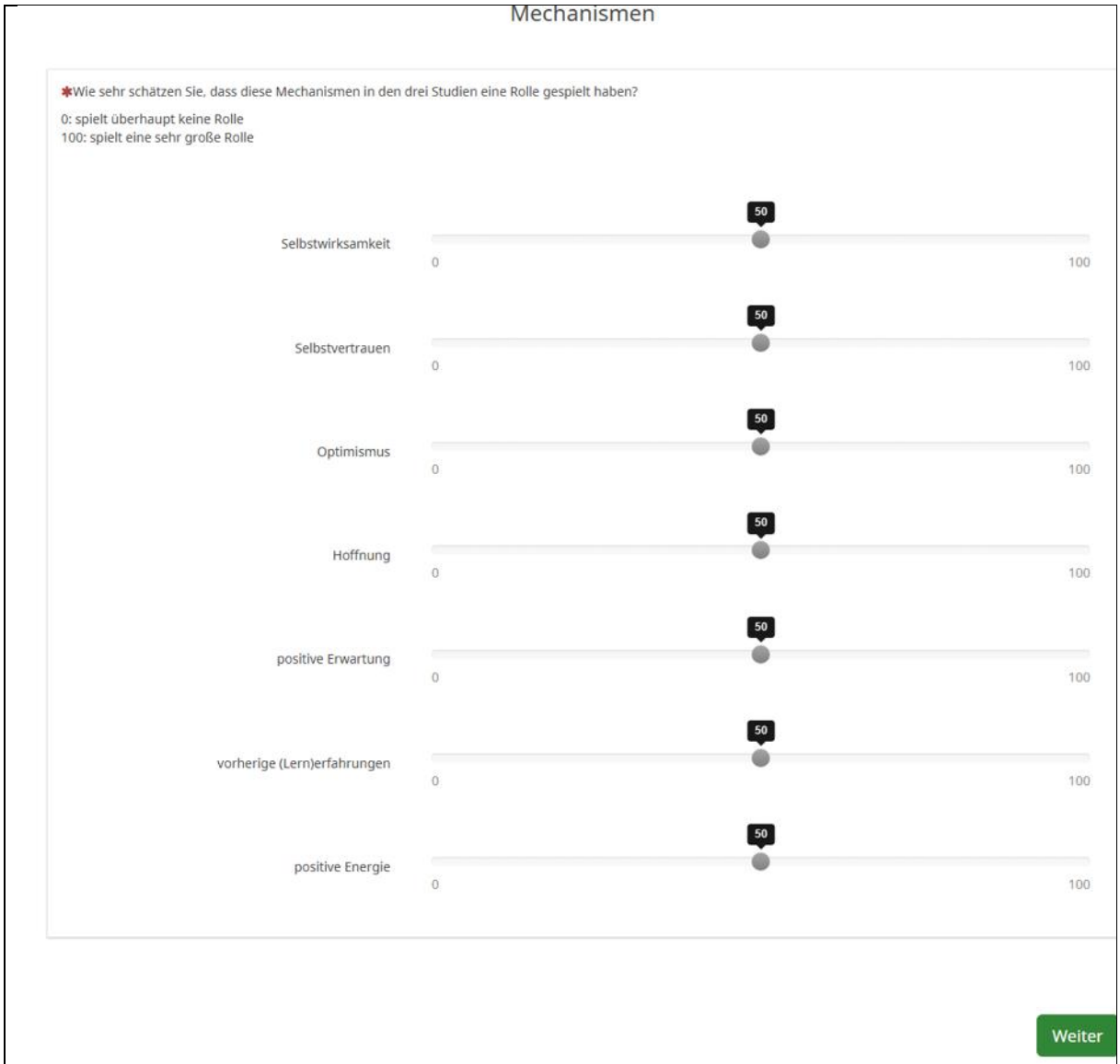

Mechansims
How strongly do you think the following mechanisms played a role in the three studies?"—Prior learning experiences, positive expectations, optimism, hope, positive en-ergy, self-efficacy, and self-confidence (slider ratings; 0: does not play any role at all; 100: plays a very large role

b) Control Estmation Task



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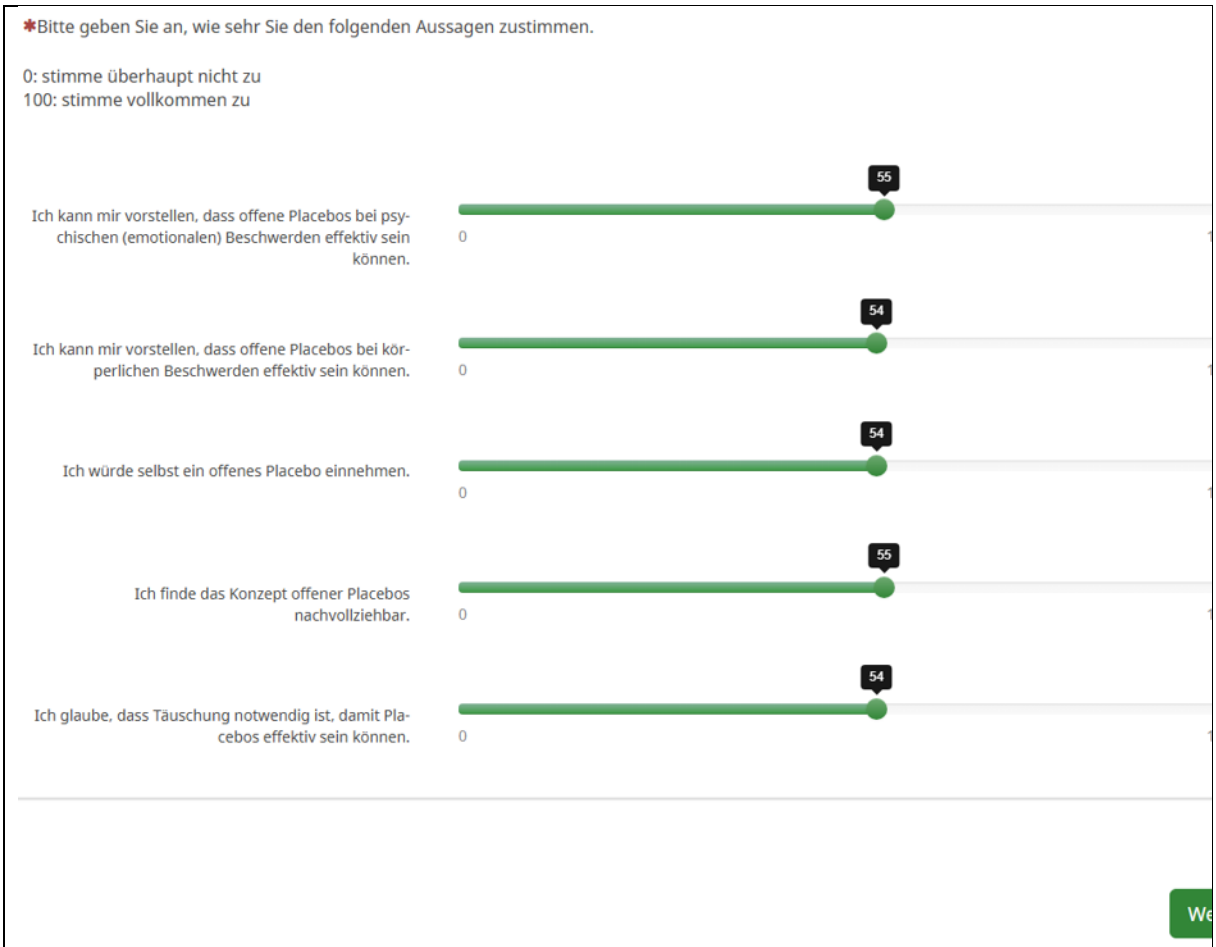

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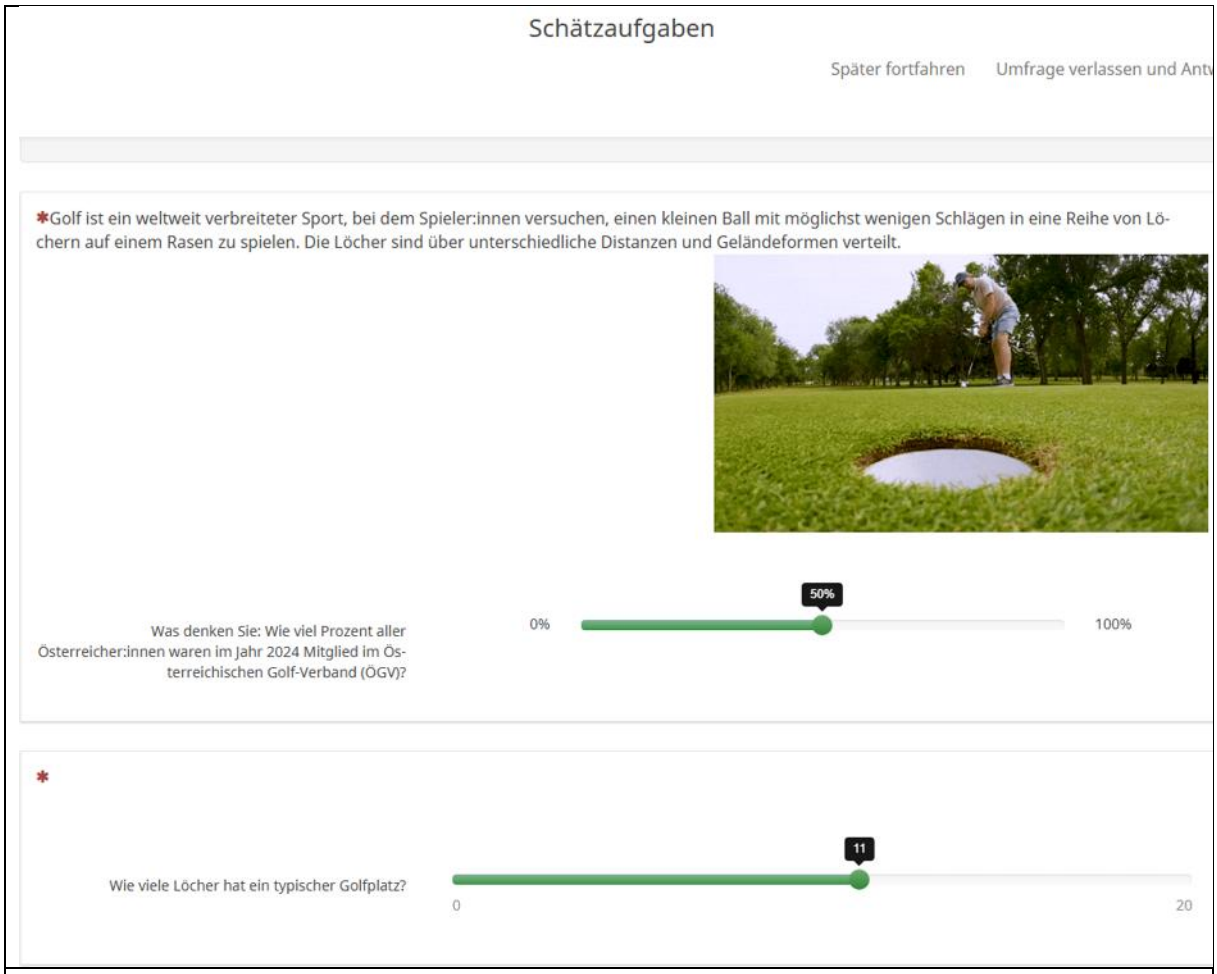
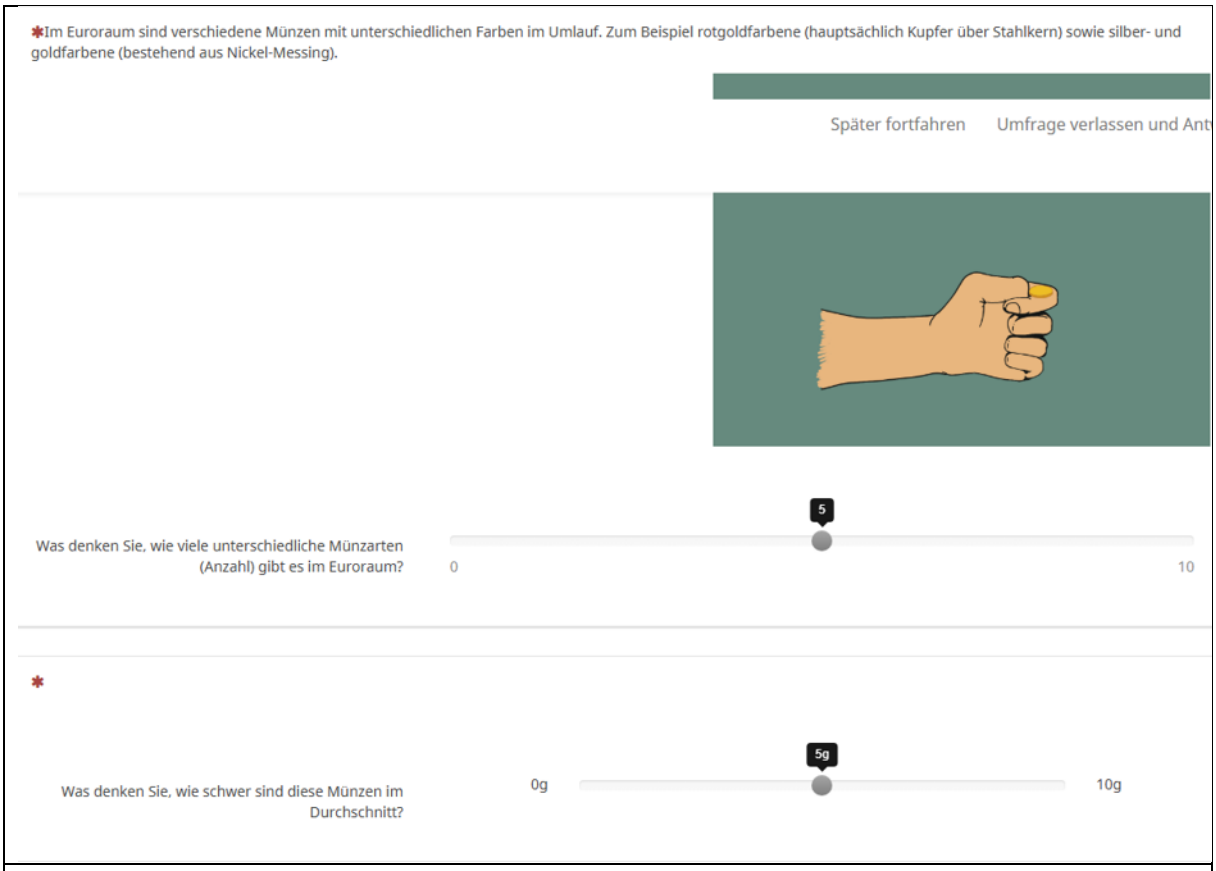


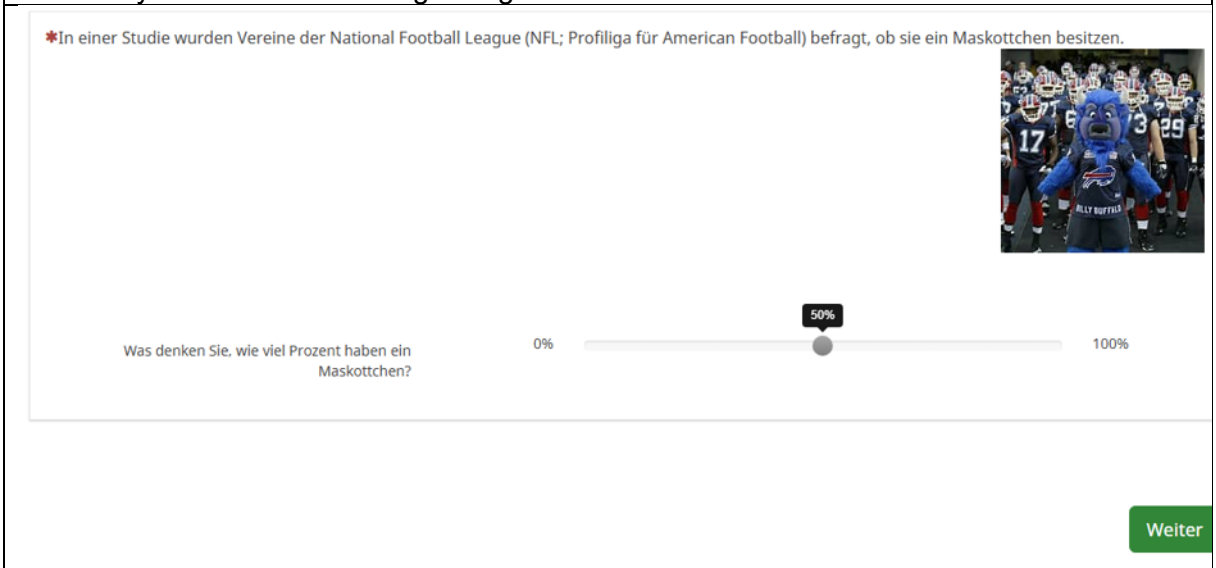
Estmation tasks
Golf is a sport played worldwide in which players attempt to hit a small ball into a series of holes on a grass course using as few strokes as possible. The holes are distributed across different distances and types of terrain.

What do you think: What percentage of the Austrian population were members of the Austrian Golf Association (ÖGV) in 2024?
How many holes does a typical golf course have?



In the euro area, various coins of different colours are in circulation. For example, there are reddish-gold coins (made primarily of copper with a steel core) as well as silver- and gold-coloured coins (made of nickel-brass).

What do you think: How many different types of coins (denominations) are there in the euro area?
What do you think is the average weight of these coins?



In a study, National Football League (NFL) teams (the professional American football league) were surveyed about whether they had a mascot. How many teams reported having a mascot?



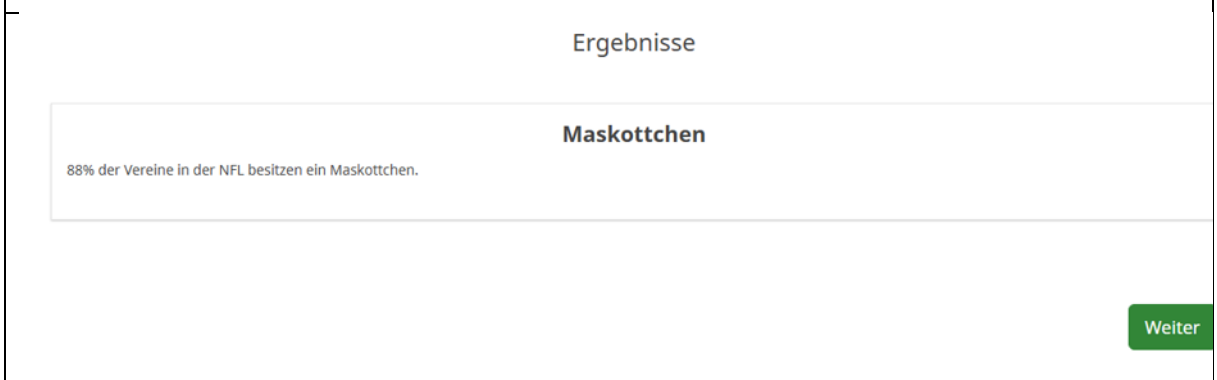
Results

We would now like to share the answers to the estimation questions:

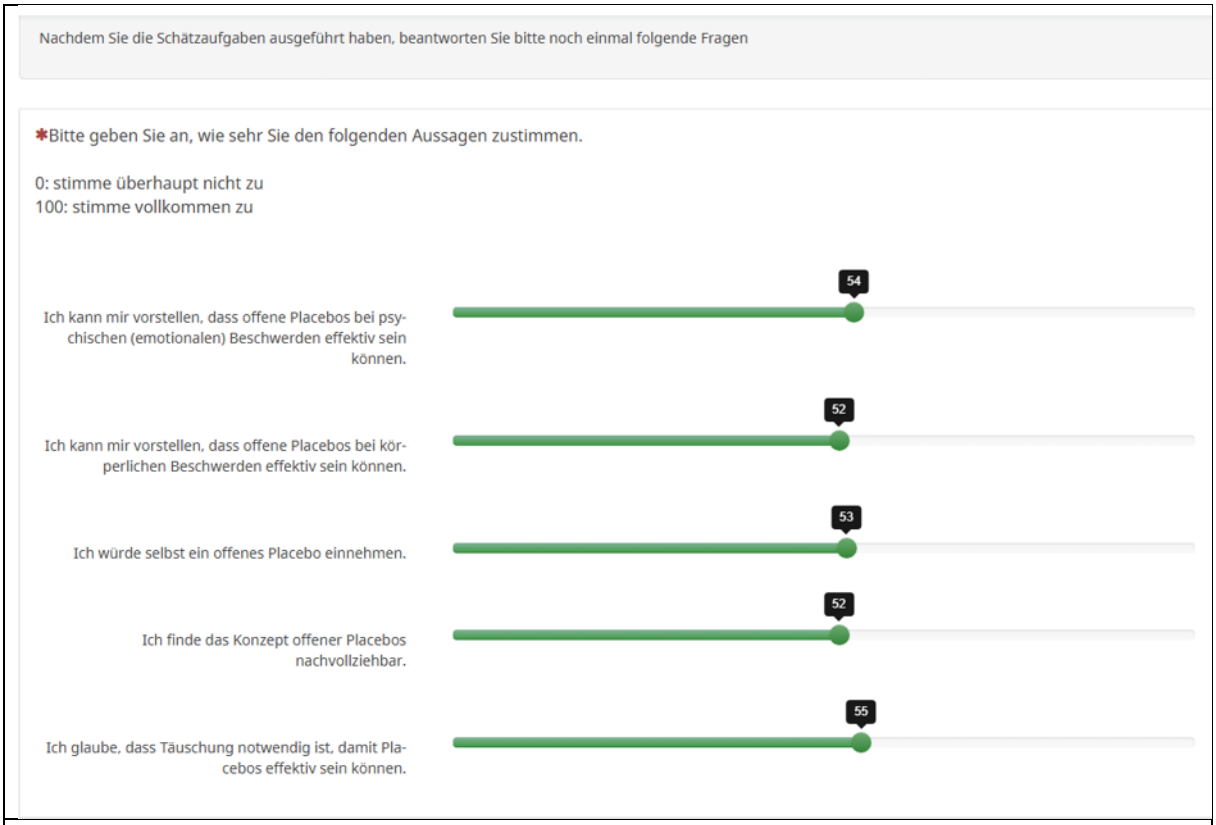
Golf: In 2024, 1.4% of the Austrian population were members of the Austrian Golf Association (ÖGV). A typical golf course has 18 holes.



Coins: There are 8 different euro coin denominations. The average weight of a euro coin is 5.36 grams.



Mascots: 88% of NFL teams have a mascot.



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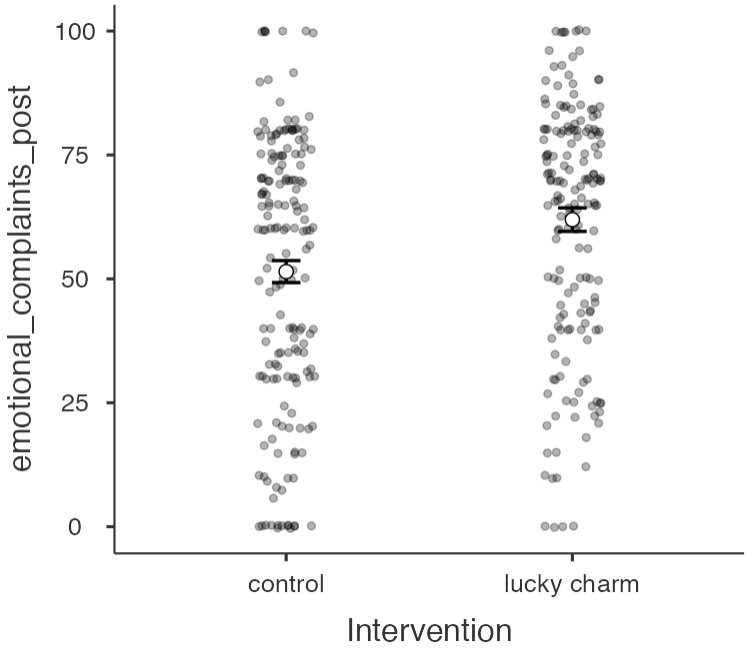
Supplementary Table S1: ANCOVA results for the total sample (n = 348) Differences in post-intervention scores on the five OLP-related questions were examined using separate ANCOVAs, with Intervention (lucky charm, control) and Country (Italy, Austria) as between-subjects factors and the corresponding pre-intervention score as a covariate. Results were considered statistically significant when p < .01 (Bonferroni correction: α = .05/5 = .01).

1. OLPs for reducing emotional complaints

ANCOVA - emotional_complaints_post

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η²p
Country	889.56	1	889.56	4.20	.041	0.01
Intervention	8531.28	1	8531.28	40.30	<.001	0.11
emotional_complaints_pre	162215.84	1	162215.84	766.32	<.001	0.69
Country ✻ Intervention	43.70	1	43.70	0.21	.650	0.00
Residuals	72606.93	343	211.68			

Estimated Marginal Means
Intervention



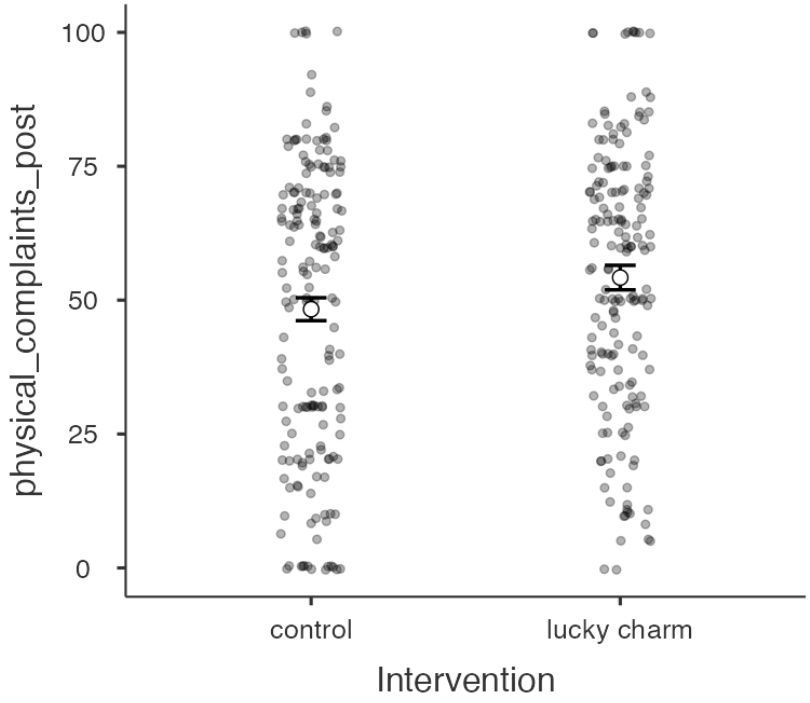
2. OLPs for reducing physical complaints

ANCOVA - physical_complaints_post

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η²p
Country	1.39	1	1.39	0.01	.933	0.00
Intervention	2706.57	1	2706.57	13.78	<.001	0.04
physical_complaints_pre	160487.05	1	160487.05	816.83	<.001	0.70
Country ✻ Intervention	87.94	1	87.94	0.45	.504	0.00
Residuals	67390.75	343	196.47			

Estimated Marginal Means

Intervention



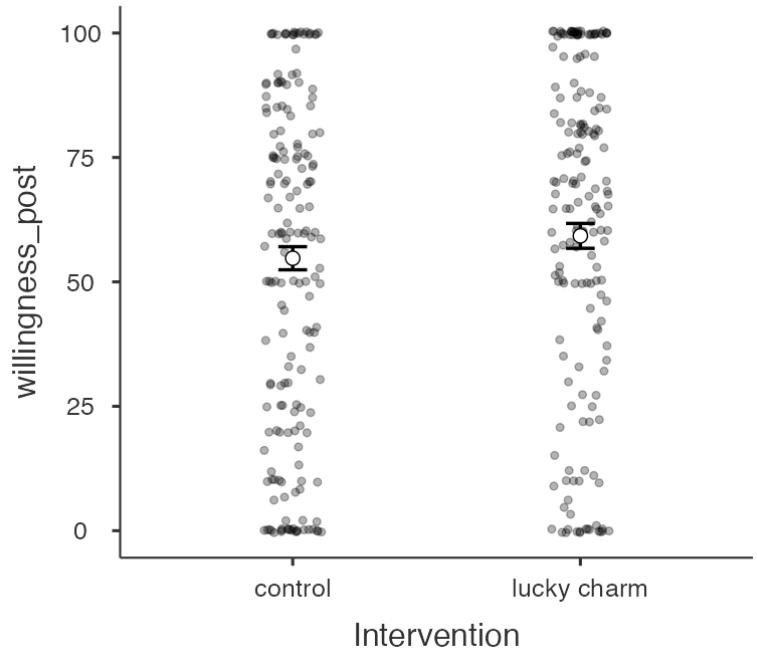
3. Willingness to take an OLP

ANCOVA - willingness_post

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η²p
Country	665.13	1	665.13	2.88	.091	0.01
Intervention	1548.13	1	1548.13	6.69	.010	0.02
willingness_pre	292372.02	1	292372.02	1264.27	<.001	0.79
Country ✻ Intervention	53.31	1	53.31	0.23	.631	0.00
Residuals	79321.35	343	231.26			

Estimated Marginal Means

Intervention



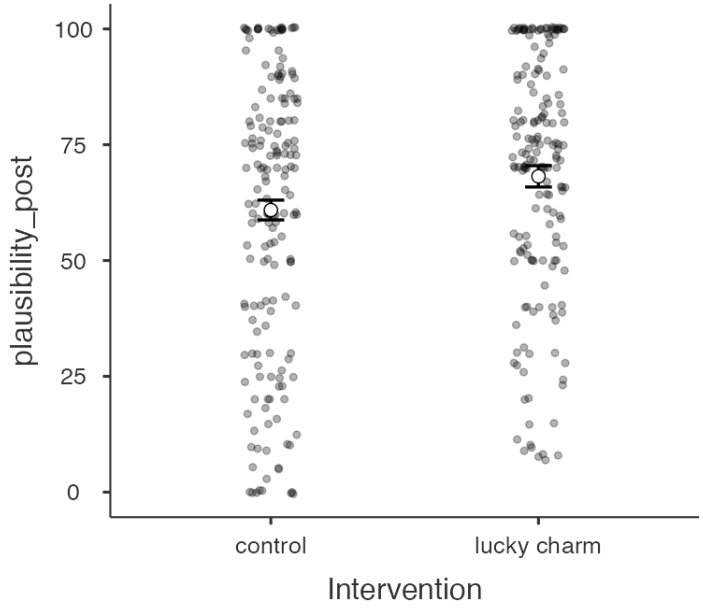
4. Plausibility of the OLP concept

ANCOVA - plausibility_post

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η²p
Country	891.88	1	891.88	4.53	.034	0.01
Intervention	4088.47	1	4088.47	20.77	<.001	0.06
plausibility_OLP_pre	182639.32	1	182639.32	927.67	<.001	0.73
Country ✻ Intervention	128.21	1	128.21	0.65	.420	0.00
Residuals	67529.74	343	196.88			

Estimated Marginal Means

Intervention



5. Necessity of deception for placebo effects to occur

ANCOVA - deception_post

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η²p
Country	0.57	1	0.57	0.00	.961	0.00
Intervention	4897.04	1	4897.04	21.06	<.001	0.06
deception_pre	193444.73	1	193444.73	831.99	<.001	0.71
Country ✻ Intervention	0.13	1	0.13	0.00	.981	0.00
Residuals	79750.69	343	232.51			

Estimated Marginal Means

Intervention

