Table 1

ICD-10 diagnostic guidelines relating to BPD

Conditions not directly attributable to gross brain damage or disease, or to another psychiatric disorder, meeting the following criteria:

- markedly disharmonious attitudes and behaviour, involving usually several areas of functioning, e.g. affectivity, arousal, impulse control, ways of perceiving and thinking, and style of relating to others
- the abnormal behaviour pattern is enduring, long standing, and not limited to episodes of mental illness
- the abnormal behaviour pattern is pervasive and clearly maladaptive to a broad range of personal and social situations
- the above manifestations always appear during childhood or adolescence and continue into adulthood
- the disorder leads to considerable personal distress but this may only become apparent late in its course
- the disorder is usually, but not invariably, associated with significant problems in occupational and social performance.

For a diagnosis of BPD clear evidence is usually required of the presence of at least three of the traits or behaviours given in the clinical description.