Participant 5

Duration: 42 minutes

Mother of dysmenorrheic girl (16 years)

Interviewer: OK, erm could start off please by telling me a bit about yourself?

Participant: I’m erm, I’m a mum, I work at the University of (location), in administration, I’m a mum of five children, I’ve got four grandsons and I was born in (location), I work in (same location), and I support (location) football club (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: Oh and I’m 56 years old.

Interviewer: Fantastic, and erm what about your family living arrangements, do you live with your children or…

Participant: No, my, err, they, the only sib, err, the daughter I’ve got here is my youngest daughter who you’re gonna be interviewer err my two eldest daughters live with their partners in um, in the local sort of area, my son lives in a house on his own and my other son lives with my daughter in the house with my two grandsons as well, yeah.

Interviewer: OK, how old are your gandkids?

Participant: Err my eldest (name) he’s nearly 15, um and lives with his brother (name) who’s 12 and then we got um, (name) who’s 9, cause it’s my other daughter and his brother (name) who’s 4. Yeah a bit of a handful, with this massive family (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) Lovely big family…

Participant: Yeah (laughs)

Interviewer: Erm, if it’s OK with you can we now discuss your daughters pain?

Participant: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah it affects us (laughs)

Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit about the pain that she experiences so erm when it started and things like that?

Participant: Um, probably when she was about 12 and mainly feeling um really horrible, moody, very moody, pain in her tummy and her back, headaches, headachy and feeling faint and having the life drained out of her and literally and you know, I always knew that she was gonna have a period because of the symptoms she was suffering and, and I used to say are you going to be having your period soon and she said “I think I’m due on” and the bloated stomach yeah….

Interviewer: OK and did that start when her periods started?

Participant: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: OK, erm did that change at all since her periods started so…

Participant: Well it got so bad that she went on the pill about a year ago and it, it’s helped her a little bit, she still gets the, a little bit of the pain and the headaches not so much and the period is not so heavy, she used to get very bad periods where she used to get through so many sanitary towels you know and everything so..

Interviewer: OK, and you say that it got so bad… did it get gradually worse then?

Participant: Yeah, it affected her err going to school and also she’d wake up and the whole bed used to be flooded and she used to be, feel really horrible about herself and that and err yeah it comes a point where I took her off and the doctors suggest that she go to err a pill, the pill, the contraceptive pill for her periods, because they would help, the hormones, yeah.

Interviewer: When was the first time that you went to the doctors with her?

Participant: Oh about err 18 months ago, I didn’t really want her to go on the pill because I didn’t want her to start having the pill because, you know, the longer you’re on it, you know, it, I don’t know, it’s, I don’t know, it’s a risk factor for heart… you know so yeah, well it’s only to manage her hormones, it’s not for that.

Interviewer: It’s just for the periods…

Participant: Yeah, that’s it yeah.

Interviewer: Did she try anything else before the pill?

Participant: Yeah we tried all those other hormonal things what you try um, the, the period tablets, I can’t remember their names now, yeah just, just the pain relief tablets for menstrual periods, I can’t remember what they’re called now…

Interviewer: Yeah, I think I know which ones you mean… are they express or something?

Participant: Something like that, and also um just paracetamol and err hot water bottle.

Interviewer: OK, and was any of that effective at all?

Participant: No. Not really.

Interviewer: And, when you, when she first went to the doctors did you go with her?

Participant: Oh yes, I have to ‘cause she was under 16. First time wasn’t so bad when she went for her trail, the doctor said for her to go on the pill, for a trial for her tummy and she had to back and then she was then erm, unfortunately she couldn’t see the lady doctor, she had to go and see the male doctor and she hated it cause he, he was asking her questions that she thought was inappropriate to her and kept saying about sexual activity and things like that even though she knows all about STI’s and all of that and she said she was only on em for her periods and it was sort of like, she’ll probably tell you herself like she felt horrible about it and she was like “I’m only on there for my periods not for contraception” and things like that so it did put her off a bit. So err, rather, she’s actually gone back to the doctor a couple of weeks ago to the other lady doctor and got her pills and that cause she’s got to go for regular check ups yeah and she was 16, went with her but I said I’ll go in the room with you if you want me too and she said no it’s alright mum, that’s fine, so we went to the doctor and I said I’ll see you there.

Interviewer: So you were there..

Participant: I was there in the waiting room if she needed, so yeah

Interviewer: So um, when she first went to the doctors was the pill the first medication that he suggested?

Participant: Yeah, yeah the lady doctor yes. Yeah.

Interviewer: So that was the first thing, OK, and did it um, did it become effective, you said it reduced the heaviness?

Participant: Yeah I think it did yeah, yeah it, it, not so much the, the, the, she’s still got the symptoms as in the tummy, not as bad but um, it, it was mainly to control the, the flow you know, it wasn’t like big flow- it reduced the flow mainly.

Interviewer: Was that pretty much straight away or…

Participant: No, it takes a little bit of time yeah…

Interviewer: Erm, can I ask about the regularity of the pain? So is it with every period, or every few…

Participant: Um, I think it’s, I think it’s got to do with, as she’s got older it’s got worse and it would get worse when she used to get IBS yeah cause I’m not sure whether it was like stress related or to do with her GCSE’s, that sort of going on erm, yeah I think if she didn’t have the stress then she would have managed the periods a bit better (laughs), yeah. But um, you, you just have to get on with it so they say so err yeah.

Interviewer: So you mentioned about IBS, has she got any other err unrelated health conditions or anything like that?

Participant: No, no, no, yeah that doesn’t seem so bad now but we tried to stop her having so much bread, bready, pizza stuff yeah.

Interviewer: OK and did that co-occur with the, the period pain?

Participant: Yeah that would occur sort of just before her period, it was like erm, the bloated stomach like and then the period and then being, couldn’t go to the toilet, constipation, and then soon as the period come, everything would just relax you know?

Interviewer: OK, and then it would…

Participant: Yeah get on with…. Yeah.

Interviewer: Erm, how about with the other symptoms, you mentioned like a lack of energy, being quite drained…

Participant: Yeah, just wanting to go to sleep and not wanting to get up yeah.

Interviewer: Is that, those symptoms with every…

Participant: Well is good at school she will go to school with it, some of her friends won’t go to school, as soon as they’ve got a period, they take to their bed and they just go to sleep for 2 days and things like that but she will go because she’s not 100% you know she gets very light headed and things like that and um, and you know…and she’s not one… the nurses at that particular secondary school are not very helpful you know whereas I went to a school where I was with nuns and they was sweet as you like, they were very, you know they were more compassionate about how you felt you know, there was always, where it was a girls school, they knew it was sort of like a thing but yeah they made you feel , but, well, where with her school, I think they’re just, the, the nurse there is not very nice, not a very good person to have around when you’ve got girls and boys at the school so yeah.

Interviewer: What would happen then so if she did go to the school nurse, how would they, how would they be with her?

Participant: Well erm, like she would very not go to the nurse but she did about a month ago when she felt a bit teary eyed and all she said she wanted to do was go somewhere quietly, be quiet, and calm, you know she knew she was and you know and that was is, she wanted to go back into her lessons but she just needed some kind of quiet time and then I had a phone call from the school saying I think your daughters not very well, she’s crying, can you come and pick her up. And I thought you, are you supposed to be a nurse or something? I thought oh, well I didn’t say that to her but I thought oh, and then she said apparently that’s why most of the girls don’t go to her and I said oh well that’s probably why they all stay at home then.

Interviewer: OK so rather than going and asking for help?

Participant: Yeah can I just be quiet and go into a quiet room, I just sort of, I’m going through a bit of a thing, going on and you know, mind you she’ll probably tell you herself you know.

Interviewer: What happened then did, erm did you come and get her or did she want to stay?

Participant: Well I was off sick with a very bad back and I said to the nurse well I can’t you know, come get… so my husband had to come from work in (location) and pick her up from school and she said she was gonna go back lunch time and she says oh no I’ll probably only get sent back home again so, if she went back to school.

Interviewer: OK, erm can I ask about erm, going back to doctors visits, did she have any investigations or anything like that into the pain or anything like that?

Participant: No, no, no

Interviewer: No, and erm has anyone explained or tell you the reasons for the pain? Have you had anyone…

Participant: No

Interviewer: No, OK, what erm, what do the doctors say about the cause of the pain?

Participant: Nothing

Interviewing OK, nothing…

Participant: I think they generally think that they should know (laughs) yeah. Yeah, but she’s, she’s quite a clever girl and she, I think she knows but if, I feel sorry for these poor girls that don’t know nothing you know and err they don’t know the reasons why they are getting these pains and things like that and (daughter) and I do talk to each other about it so it’s not so it’s, and she’s got two older sisters who go thorugh the same kind of thing you know, so…

Interviewer: OK, erm so she’s ware of why she’s getting the pain and all of that, OK erm and how about, her sort of future expectations, you know, does she expect to always get it or does she expect that it will get better…

Participant: I think she thinks that she’s got to live with it, it’s one of those things that women have to have and you know, and m yeah you have to put up with it I suppose (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah, and what, do you think the pain will….

Participant: Well (laughs) to tell you the truth, I think if you’re not gonna use it (laughs) get it out (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: I got to the point where I finished having children and I just wanted it got rid of, why should I put up with the, the pain, and not having the thing, I kept my ovaries but I had very, very bad periods and very bad pain and in the end I asked and they said yes OK, I had it taken out, you know the womb and it was the best thing I ever done, it was much better.

Interviewer: Yeah, and did you think, would that be something that you’d recommend to your daughter?

Participant: Um, I think after she’d had her children yeah, well it is, well I’d already had 5 children so you know so there’s no need for it, why should I put up with it and I didn’t want, didn’t want to take medication, didn’t see why I had to put up with it so… you know….

Interviewer: Did they give you any reason for your err period pain?

Participant: Erm, no (laughs)

Interviewer: Erm so was everything OK with just sort of taking it out?

Participant: Yeah, they wanted to take my ovaries out as well just in case I got cancer but I said no, I’d like to have my ovaries thank you very much cause it would just make me older very quicker so just whip the womb out, I didn’t say it like that (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: But you know, you know, yeah

Interviewer: And have things been better for you since?

Participant: Oh my gosh yeah, yeah, I don’t have to worry about, I do because my daughter has to use sanitary towels and, but I don’t have to worry about, it was so embarrassing to the point where I was working and there was just blood running out, I used to be in meetings and I used to have to get one of my friends to come behind me and you know, so it’s not very nice, very painful and not very nice.

Interviewer: Do you talk to your daughter, cause obviously she’s sort of going through similar things, do you talk to her about your experiences?

Participant: Yeah, yeah, well I did, I was so much better on the pill but I thought to myself um, it, it shouldn’t be a contraceptive pill that you should need to take um, it’s a thing that you have to go through and they say sometimes doing exercise helps yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, has she tried that?

Participant: Sort of (laughs) she walks everywhere, she walks to school and back, her school’s right over there (points), she walks there and back but, she is pretty, she’s not one that gets driven to school so she walks everywhere so you know, she’s errm yeah she’s, she likes to do exercise erm when she can.

Interviewer: Ok, erm ca I ask, you mentioned about that she’s on the pill now, how did you feel about her going on the contraceptive pill? You said you don’t know why it has to be a contraceptive as well?

Participant: Yeah, I wish they wouldn’t call it a contraceptive pill because then like she said she had a lecture from a male doctor who’s kind of like, I, you can feel by the way he was talking to her that she was purely, it was is it because the sex, are you using it as a sex and she said no sort of thing and she said I don’t like to be lectured on STI’s and you know, and being careful and things like that she says I know all that stuff but I’m on this tablet for purely for my periods you know and she was, she felt really, I don’t see why they should call, they should not call that pill a contraceptive pill, it should be a pill for period pain, pill for periods, you know it should be separated yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, so do you think that he didn’t, the doctor didn’t really understand that it was for the pain?

Participant: Yes, yeah I think so well…

Interviewer: (pause) So, so you spoke a little bit about her going to school, the school nurse and things like that, does she ever have time off for period pain?

Participant: She might have had one or two days but like I said she will work through it she will, she’s not 100% when she does and you know that because she doesn’t, her concentration goes a little bit um she could do with actually laying in and going to school a bit later you know just, because it is tiring, you have your periods (points to researcher), you get sort of like you get a bit drained and you get tired

Interviewer: Yeah

Participant: And err just err going to school a bit later, you know

Interviewer: And how about if she does go into school, you mentioned earlier her concentration, has that affected her school work and…

Participant: Sometimes it can yeah, she gets very a bit (inaudible), tired, sort of dramatic, or teary eyed or she’ll start getting a bit you know one minute she’ll cope with something, then the whole world is kind of a bit (inaudible) you know, up in the air.

Interviewer: Yeah and how do you feel about that you know, if it is affecting her school and her concentration at school?

Participant: Um, I don’t know, I try and get her to um pump her with erm omega oils (laughs) you know so like for her concentration (laughs) try and get her to eat properly you know, lots of good, lots of good food and that, mainly and try to keep off mainly, cause she goes to chocolate, chocolate is one of the worst things, she goes for a, I always know cause she’s “mum can you get some chocolate” and I thought she’s due to have her period and I know and she’s on a choc fest sort of and she eats my chocolates as well (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: Yeah she loves her chocolate but even more so before her period

Interviewer: Yeah

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Um, so err has she spoken to any teachers at school other than the school nurse about it or anything like that?

Participant: No, I don’t think so, well she hasn’t mentioned it, talking to the teachers, I think they tend to talk to each other the girls and she, like I said, she’s got older sisters who she’s got, same problems and, yeah one of her sisters has bad periods, my eldest daughter, she really has them bad so..

Interviewer: Yeah so she’s got support from say you and sisters…

Participant: Yeah, oh yeah and if she’s got problems and she goes to visit and she has a period, they’ve always got spare knickers and sanitary towels (laughs) you know what I mean so if she’s got like that, she can go to a safe place when she knows that she, it’s not erm, there’s always err a mechanism there to, oh if I have a period then I don't have to worry cause my sisters have got all their spare, spare knickers and sanitary towels cause she doesn’t like to go out when she’s got her period.

Interviewer: No, that’s understandable. Amd how about, so you mentioned she doesn’t like to go out, erm how about sort of doing things around the home? Does it affect her ability to…

Participant: She gets very err drops things, she’s very clumsy (laughs) she gets very clumsy yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah and what about things like hobbies or, does she have any hobbies?

Participant: Yeah she songs, she sings yeah, she sings in a band err she does sing, yeah that’s her hobby she likes singing.

Interviewer: Does it affect that at all

Participant: Yeah sometimes it may, it, it’s sort of a bit silly when it comes to performing she’ll go “ oh I can’t do that” yeah and so it’s all too much and you know she gets very teary and things like that.

Interviewer: And how about her pain, does the pain affect her ability to sort of you know go and perform and sing…

Participant: No, she’s got, she’s got quite a good pain tolerance yeah, she just goes and does it yeah

Interviewer: Erm and how about sports and things like that, you mentioned she’s pretty active?

Participant: Well she’s pretty active but she hates sports (laughs). She says” oh the teacher wanted me to do the running I have running” (laughs) she’s not….

Interviewer: So it doesn’t affect anything like that…

Participant: Well she will do, she’s always in sports day but she, as she gets older she says she doesn’t have to do it, she won’t go any further than that so..

Interviewer: OK erm and how about going out with, going out with friends and doing sort of social things does it, does it affect whether she’ll, she’ll go out?

Participant: Well she does go out but she does get a bit like one minute she’s alright then she does do silly things like she wont like she wont think straight, she gets very forgetful about telling us where she’s going and then I know she gets a bit dithery you know, I know she’s OK but she’s a bit dithery “oh yeah did I forget to tell you” Yeah, yeah so, yeah, no she’s, no like I said, she’s, she’s, I don't think really it has bothered her really, you know, it hasn’t taken over her whole life completely.

Interviewer:: Yeah, how about, you mentioned that she’s very heavy, has that affected, so from before she was on the pill, did that affect her staying at peoples houses and…

Participant: Yeah she would always take her, I would always have to have loads of sanitary towels, she would take extra super duper night time ones, err she’d only go with friends who she know had kind of, had the same problem err I think she would not, not really go anywhere as much, you know, just in case, the first two or three days she’d rather be home yeah.

Interviewer: So since she’s been on the pill has that changed?

Participant: Yeah but one thing she forgets is the pill and then has a period (laughs) because one thing you must remember is to take your pill because that’s what happens, if you miss a day I said you’re just gonna trigger it off and then you’ll be having double periods and things like that so she has to take them with her religiously, carry them round with her in her bag, school bag and things like that, just in case she happens to go off with one of her friends and stays you know… (pause)

Interviewer: Yeah and then she hasn’t got it…And how about sibling relationships, has it impacted on that at all?

Participant: No, no.

Interviewer: Do you think that’s cause they’ve experienced…

Participant: Yeah it’s worse when they’re all at the same time (laughs) and they’re all (laughs) all hormonal at the same time my girls (laughs), have you got sisters?

Interviewer: A sister (laughs) so yeah I know. Erm, and how about things like social support, you said she’s got…

Participant: Friends yeah

Interviewer: Is that good for her?

Participant: Oh yeah definitely….

Interviewer: And her sisters, do they talk about it with her/

Participant: Oh gosh yeah, yeah, yeah it could be kind of an embarrassing conversation and my husband and the boys and they talk about and they go “ you don’t understand what we’ve got to go through” (laughs)

Interviewer: And how is your husband with that…

Participant: Oh yeah used to it, used to it, you know there’s nothing shy about anything here you know, you know and also we got special knickers with erm special, erm (laughs) erm she ears my (laughs) I’ve got these specia gurdle like knickers, I don’t wear them now but they fit her and when she, on, on her period, she’s got special period pants she calls them and ones that they don’t mind if they get all messy and that but they keep the towel together, she doesn’t wear tampons, I don't like her wearing tampons anyway because of um, you know sometimes you forget and they can cause infections and things like that, I just don't like them, I never wear them myself personally erm, um yeah so she, yeah now she, and, one, thing, it’s not, you talk about, it’s it’s, you just get on with, it’s just part of the life you know.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK, and how about the way she feels about herself?

Participant: She says she wishes she never had them but I think that’s what most women say (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: Cause they’re a bit of a nuisance, they’re a pain mum, and I said yeah I know, it’s what us women have to put up with ey.

Interviewer: Yeah, and how about her confidence?

Participant: Yeah sometimes it does affect her confidence, she’ll go through about 2, 3, 4 days like very um, she does lack confidence in herself, I don’t know whether it’s the hormone thing kicking in, she’s very teary, bloated, pain, cantankerous, um you know silly, drops things, yeah but then she’s back, back up again- very outspoken (laughs)

Interviewer: So it’s just at the time?

Participant: The time, yeah we manage it

Interviewer: So, it’s lots of contributing factors, it’s also hormones, it’s also….

Participant: Yeah and also what’s going on in her life at school like she’s just done her mocks, and last time she done her mocks, she didn’t do very well but that’s because she had her period thing but it depends on what, when they take their exams, when it happens you know so….

Interviewer: So has it impacted on things like exams and…

Participant: Sometimes it has yeah, where she hasn’t been able to concentrate, she can’t understand why she hasn’t been able to concentrate so much and beating herself up about it but, so, she’s, she’s alright, like you say you just have to manage it sometimes so you know, can’t do much about it really.

Interviewer: OK, and does it impact on her future plans or anything like that?

Participant: (laughs) (inaudible) She’s always telling me, don’t wanna have a relationships with anybody at the moment, she’s not ready, she’s, she’s 16 and she’s (laughs) “I’m not ready for a relationship yet” she says (laughs) cause all her little friends have all got boyfriends and things like that and she says, oh well, I said you probably meet somebody at uni anyway and you need someone who’s like-minded like you who wants to do the sort of like, not exactly the same as you, but know, know where you’re coming from you know, but no she’s not really sort of, she just rises above it, cause they’ve all got boyfriends but I don’t think she’s bothered anyway. She is and she isn’t but she’s “can’t be bothered with relationships, all these girls get crying over their boyfriends” (Laughs) and I said oh you’ll probably meet someone when you go to college or uni when you know you’re with someone who has to do studying or…. The same as you and can understand what you’re going through at the same time. Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: Yeah and do you, do you think, how about things like family holidays or um, does it, does the period effect that, planning for it?

Participant: I think, since she’s been on the pill, it’s been better cause she plans, she plans it like I used to, you take and extra couple of days pill and then as soon as I come back from holiday I come off the pill and then have the period but that would be, that is probably one of the benefits of actually, going on the pill is you can have control of not having a period and thinking about what happens if you have an accident, what happens if you, you know, you’re not feeling your best you know so in a way that is a good thing, you’ve got more control of your body and that’s, I think that’s an important thing.

Interviewer: And how about before she was on the pill, did that impact on….

Participant: Yeah, it did, yeah she’d get really, if she had a period, everything was just awful for her, she couldn’t wear nice stuff because she was frightened that it would, you know, and then she’d get bloating and then she’d get teary and oh god, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, and so, has the impact, we talked about school and things like that, you know, has that changed since she was 12, I think you said she started her periods at that…

Participant: Yeah I think she’s learnt to manage it, learnt to, to manage her, the reason why that happens and that happens is the short, it part of, she’s got to manage herself and how best to manage it you know- before the pain starts perhaps take a couple of paracetamol just to and to run with it a bit and um yeah it, it becomes part of your life and like I say it’s managing it properly. Yeah.

Interviewer: And um, how do you think she copes with the pain- you said she manages it quite well but how um, do you think the way she’s coped with the pain has changed- in herself?

Participant: Yeah she knows what to do,she knows that if she’s got pain then she’ll tell me is it alright ot have a couple of paracetamol and I said yeah and I say you know if you feel like the pain is coming on, don’t leave it till it’s really hurting you then take it-she might have them once, a couple, the first couple of days are the worst and then she might say can I, can you make me a water bottle, “mum”, yeah so she wants to be mummied a bit, yeah and erm yeah sort of…

Interviewer: So does this start before the period? You said that sometimes you would know…

Participant: Yeah it’s the chocolate, the chocolate and yeah, it’s the carb thing isn’t it.

Interviewer: So that’s how you know?

Participant: Yeah and she’ll do stupid things like, I don't know what, oh yeah when she has a wash, she’ll wash the whole bathroom (laughs), she’s all over, all over the place. She’s such a (laughs) yeah….

Interviewer: Erm can I ask how, how her period pain affects your life at all?

Participant: Um, um yeah I suppose when she gets like that I get annoyed at her a little bit and then I have to get, put myself into a room and quiet down a little bit cause yeah she gets a bit scatty, yeah it’s the scattyness, we’ll have to be careful, not be careful what we say to her, we have to be tactful with what we say to her without getting our heads blown off yeah, yeah so..

Interviewer: And how about your social life, so if she, you know if she was in pain or, or something like that, would that affect your, your hobbies or your social life?

Participant: Not really no, no I don’t like her to be in pain. All I can do is sort of, do, do the best I can for her like you, like I’ll give her, she’ll have a couple of paracetamols, she’ll have a water bottle and that’s all I can do, she has to ride with it kind of thing. I try and do things that distract her from the pain kind of thing.

Interviewer: Do you find that that works?

Participant: She goes oh oh, I say a bit of hovering might help (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: And then she goes oh I can’t, I can’t it’s not working for me mum (laughs). A bit of exercise would you it good, a bit of hovering (inaudible), she goes (exhails) (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) Err how about things like family activities, things that you would all do together, does it impact on, you know if she can’t do it, is there anything you can’t do because of it?

Participant: No, just get on with it, just get on with it, oh god no, you just, it’s, it’s one of those things, it can’t just stop you know, say for example she didn’t feel like on holidays, she used to go I don’t think I can…. And I used to say OK go sit quietly in the room, I say I’ll make you a drink, hot chocolate like you like and you might go to bed and then I’ll go off somewhere and she was quite happy about that you know and that’s the best way to be really. I don’t think it should impact much on your life, it’s a simple thing that you have to get on with and you just um, do the best you can really yeah. Otherwise it can be, it would end up just taking over your whole life, oh my god she’s on her period, everything, if it rains stop playing things like that.

Interviewer: OK so you mentioned that she knows how to cope with it, she knows a lot about what to do, at the start, when she first started getting the pain, how did she cope with it then sort of in herself?

Participant: I don’t think she realised how painful it would be you know and how it would impact on her life. It takes a few years for girls to get their heads round it that their bodies are changing and it’s not a one off thing that’s gonna happen, it’s gonna take, it’s getting ready for the, for the journey that they’ll have to go through in their lives you know and being prepared for it.

Interviewer: Do you think it was a bit of a shock for her?

Participant: Erm no, not so much because she’s seen her older sisters with it, I think if you’re a, a child on your own, you’ve got nobody to talk to, no one to swap notes with and things like that, but if you’ve got a good support mechanism around you, you can ride the storm together yeah, you know.

Interviewer: Do you think that’s helped then?

Participant: Yeah, yeah I think so.

Interviewer: OK, can I ask, you mentioned about how the nurse called you up and said can you come and get her, has that impacted on, if you’ve had to leave work, cause your husband had to leave work to get her…

Participant: Well that was the first time she said she actually went to the nurse and never again.

Interviewer: Right so that’s the first time and it hasn’t happened again since…

Participant: She said she’ll never ever go back. Because if you feel, I said if you feel like that I said you just, she said oh I’ll just have to cope with it, it’ll just, I’ll just go off somewhere?

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that, that she doesn’t have that support, well she doesn’t feel that she can go to the nurse for that support if she needs it?

Participant: Um, I think I feel quite um, I feel quite upset about it actually because I thought, not only her, it’s other kids, other female, err kids, people want to speak to them, who are vulnerable, and want to go and speak to that person, I thought, well I won’t tell you what I thought… (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: But I was actually gonna complain about it to the headmistress about it but there’s another person there with the, who’s a liason officer and she said she’s nice apparently so um, (name) said everyone will talk to her but they wont talk to (laughs) (hear alarm) Sorry can I just stop here a minute, I’ve just got to switch off my…. (goes out of the room)

Interviewer: Of course, I’ll just pause it.

Interviewer: OK we’re back, erm and can I ask how does it impact on your stress levels generally?

Participant: Um, sometimes it does, when she gets like that I do hate it, I hate that kind of, time cause then I’m going through that time and I’m going through the menopause as well and there’s nothing like a menstrual girl and a hormonal woman clashing a little bit, it’s not very you know, you have to you know like, cause I’m coping with my stuff and she’s coping with her stuff and it’s not good sometimes but yeah we try, try if we can, to avoid each other a little bit sort of going off separately trying to go into our own little place and just sort of chilling out.

Interviewer: And that helps?

Participant: Yeah it does, I think so, a bit of space from each other and then you can talk to each other civilly after.

Interviewer: Do you think, because you are both going through, it’s different but is similar…

Participant: Similar, yeah it is similar enough yeah…

Interviewer: So do you find that because, in a way, because you are going through something quite similar that you know you understand each other in a way and can talk about it after and….

Participant: Yeah, sometimes you can’t, you can’t, you know it’s gonna come but you can’t, when it does come, it’s how, how it arrives, it, you know when, you gotta deal with it and then when it leaves as well it kind of…

Interviewer: Can’t predict it?

Participant: No you can’t, humour helps (laughs)

Interviewer: Does (daughter) use humour as well?

Participant: Yeah, yeah (laughs)

Interviewer: How about any other coping skills or anything like that?

Participant: hmm (pause)

Interviewer: You’ve mentioned humour, going into a quiet place…

Participant: Yeah music, music, music yeah definitely, music yeah, music’s definitely a good coping mechanism, me sitting quietly doing something is fine for me and I think she likes to go off somewhere in her room and puts, puts ear phones on a listens to music, purely just chilling out.

Interviewer: OK, and is there anything that we haven’t covered that you want to talk about at all?

Participant: Um, no not really, I think we’ve covered everything.

Interviewer: OK is it Ok if I (points to recorder)

Participant: Yeah yeah

Interviewer: Well thank you very much, everything you’ve esaid has been really interesting and helpful.

Participant: That’s alright.