Participant 21

Duration: 18:03

Dysmenorrheic girl (14 years old)

Interviewer: OK (name), could you start off by telling me a bit about yourself please?

Participant: Like what?

Interviewer: Erm so your age, school year and things like that?

Participant: OK, I’m 14, I’m in year 9, erm I have to pick my GCSE options this year.

Interviewer: OK have you, have you had any thought about it so far?

Participant: What, GCSE?

Interviewer: Mhmm

Participant: Uh, I will take History, RE, Music and French.

Interviewer: OK and do you play any musical instruments?

Participant: I play the trumpet

Interviewer: Oh very nice, do you play in bands and shows or anything like that?

Participant: Mhmm, a jazz band

Interviewer: Oh, very good. So do you have any other hobbies or anything like that?

Participant: I go to the gym

Interviewer: What types of things do you do at the gym?

Participant: Rowing, cycling..

Interviewer: Um, anything else you do outside of school?

Participant: Not really

Interviewer: That’s quite a lot though. OK so what’s your favourite, your favourite hobby to do?

Participant: Um I like doing the jazz band

Interviewer: Um so family living arrangements, who, who’s at home?

Participant: My mum and dad

Interviewer: Have you got any brothers or sisters?

Participant: I’ve got two half sisters and one half brother

Interviewer: And how old are they?

Participant: 25, 23, and 19

Interviewer: Uhuh, OK would it be OK if I ask you about periods and things like that?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: So can you tell me when your periods started?

Participant: Um when I was about 13 and a half.

Interviewer: OK and did you start getting any pain or discomfort or anything like that when you started them?

Participant: The first day I started them, I had a tummy ache for the whole day.

Interviewer: Mhmm, did it last for more than the day or anything like that?

Participant: Um I didn't really notice

Interviewer: OK, and um so can you, can you describe how things are now so do you get any pain now or have you done up to this point?

Participant: I normally get period pain for the first day or two of the period and then it just stops

Interviewer: OK and does it start when your periods start? Or a bit before or after…

Participant: Um, normally a little bit after

Interviewer: OK and um can you describe err the pain for me at all?

Participant: Err it’s just kind of like, kind of a stomach ache

Interviewer: OK and err where abouts is the, is it located?

Participant: I don’t know, there (points to lower abdomen) but I don’t know what it’s called.

Interviewer: OK so your lower, lower tummy, OK. And erm so can you tell me, do you get the same sort of pain every month, every period?

Participant: Um yeah normally

Interviewer: OK, are your periods regular? Do you get them every month?

Participant: Um, sometimes they’re a bit late or a bit early

Interviewer: OK erm so can you tell me, do you have any other symptoms at all? When you have your periods…

Participant: Um, I don’t think so

Interviewer: OK how about anything like non-pain related symptoms so erm any like bloatedness or erm hormonal symptoms or anything like that?

Participant: No I don't think so

Interviewer: OK so it’s just the tummy ache

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK so have you noticed any times when you get like a worse tummy ache than other times.

Participant: Yeah sometimes

Interviewer: OK so can you tell me is there any patters at all?

Participant: Um it’s worse when it’s heavier

Interviewer: OK, OK. Do you have any un-related medical conditions or anything like that?

Participant: Um, I’ve got a brain tumour.

Interviewer: OK

Participant: Yeah, that’s it. (participant indicated with her body language that she didn’t want to discuss this further in the interview. I decided therefore, instead of asking any more questions on the topic here, that I would gently ask her how her treatment was going later on if it seemed appropriate to do so.)

Interviewer: OK, so could you tell me about any treatment that you’ve had for your period pain or anything like that?

Participant: I took paracetamol afterwards

Interviewer: OK, have you been to the doctors at all about period pains?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about why?

Participant: Erm because I don’t think it’s something you really go to the doctor about.

Interviewer: OK and why do you think that?

Participant: In case it’s a man, yeah

Interviewer: OK would you feel uncomfortable talking to a man then?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Why would that be?

Participant: They don’t understand really

Interviewer: Yeah, OK so you said that sometimes you take paracetamol when you get a tummy ache erm, so does that always, is that always effective?

Participant: Erm most of the time.

Interviewer: OK erm what do you do if it isn’t effective? Is there any other way you, you relieve it or…

Participant: Um, um no I just kind of get on with it

Interviewer: OK, OK erm so what type of things do you do to get on with it? So if you’ve got a tummy ache and you can’t really get rid of it, do you ever do anything like make a hot water bottle or anything like that?

Participant: Sometimes I have a hot chocolate, yeah.

Interviewer: Does that work?

Participant: Um it makes me feel better

Interviewer: Ah yeah chocolate, OK um, so do you expect, from when you first started getting period pain, has it got better or worse or ..

Participant: Um I think it was worse when I first started and then it got a bit better.

Interviewer: OK and do you know why that is or…

Participant: No

Interviewer: OK it just has, OK erm, and do you know what the cause of period pain is?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Of like, when you learnt about periods and things at school, did they cover period pain?

Participant: They didn’t really teach us about that.

Interviewer: OK so can we talk a bit about how period pain affects your life when you get it? Um so have you ever had to take like time off school or anything like that for it?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Is there any reason for that?

Participant: Um, no I just don’t feel the need to.

Interviewer: So if you get up in the morning and you’ve got a tummy ache and what not, do you ever not feel like going in?

Participant: Umm sometimes but I just end up going.

Interviewer: OK do you like school?

Participant: Yeah, it’s alright

Interviewer: OK so you always go to school. When you get there and you’ve got a tummy ache erm do you ever find it impacts on how your day would be?

Participant: Um, well like if I’ve got really bad subjects that day and yeah it just kind of make me not focus on it a bit more and yeah it’s not that good.

Interviewer: OK so has it ever affected your school performance or anything like that?

Participant: I don’t think so

Interviewer: OK and how about daily activities so, how it, would it impact on what you would normally do in a day at all?

Participant: Um no, not really.

Interviewer: OK and what about your hobbies, you play in a jazz band, would it ever impact on practicing for that or whether you feel like going to jazz?

Participant: Um, like when I have a period I’m, I don’t practice too much cause I want to just sit down and not do it.

Interviewer: Does that impact on how well you do or anything like that?

Participant: It means I haven’t practiced as much and got used to the songs and stuff as much.

Interviewer: And do you ever explain, do you ever tell the rest of your band that why you haven’t practiced as much?

Participant: No

Interviewer: How comes? (pause) Would you not talk about that type of thing?

Participant: No, no, they’re mainly boys.

Interviewer: Do you think it would be different if it was girls.

Participant: Um I don’t know cause there’s no girls in my year that go.

Interviewer: OK and erm how about, you said that you go to the gym, you go rowing and stuff like that erm so does it impact on that? Whether you feel like going to the gym or doing rowing or…

Participant: Yeah sometimes when it’s bad I don’t go.

Interviewer: And how do you feel about that when you have to stay at home?

Participant: I feel like I should have gone.

Interviewer: What would you do instead?

Participant: Watch TV

Interviewer: OK and how about family life, does it ever impact on erm if you’re in pain or anything like that, does it ever impact on what you guys do as a family?

Participant: Um no not really.

Interviewer: OK so if you planned to do something with your mum and dad, would you still go or would you not really feel like…

Participant: Um sometimes I stay and watch films.

Interviewer: OK and are your mum and dad alright with that, do they understand?

Participant: Um sometimes.

Interviewer: OK, OK, um and do you, do you talk to your mum and dad about sort of period-related things?

Participant: I talk to my mum

Interviewer: Why don’t you talk to your dad?

Participant: Cause he doesn’t have a period

Interviewer: OK cause he’s a man…

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK so when you talk to your mum is she err, is she understanding about it?

Participant: Err she kind of just tells me to get on with it

Interviewer: OK how do you feel when she says that?

Participant: I just get on with it

Interviewer: So does it help when she says that?

Participant: Um yeah

Interviewer: OK, OK and how about any like social, social things? Does it affect that in any way?

Participant: Once I couldn’t go swimming with my friend yeah.

Interviewer: OK and how did you feel about that?

Participant: I was a bit annoyed cause… but yeah.

Interviewer: Would it ever impact on, other than that, whether you would go and see your friends erm or anything like that?

Participant: Not really

Interviewer: OK so you’d go anyway?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: So do you talk to anyone else about period things? Have you got any friends who are…

Participant: Well a few of my friends haven’t started yet so they don’t really know what I’m talking about and yeah one of them that has started is a bit awkward about talking about that sort of stuff yeah.

Interviewer: OK, OK do you know why she feels awkward about it?

Participant: Cause she’s really shy

Interviewer: OK, would you like to talk to her about it do you think?

Participant: I think it would be a bit awkward cause she’s really shy and…

Interviewer: OK, does it ever impact on how you feel about yourself at all?

Participant: No, I don’t think

Interviewer: OK, erm does it ever impact on when you know, like making plans for the future like if you planned like a holiday or something with the family or you planned to go and do something with your family or school trips or anything like that?

Participant: I’ve never really connected that with school trips and stuff and holidays

Interviewer: OK so you’ve never worried about it at all?

Participant: No

Interviewer: OK can you just talk to me about any other things that you do to make yourself feel better if you have a tummy ache or not feeling good because you’re on your period? Anything you do to…

Participant: Um well I just sit down and make myself a hot chocolate and watch a film.

Interviewer: OK, OK and how erm, cause you said that erm when you couldn’t go swimming you felt a bit annoyed, how was your friend, the person that you were going to go swimming with?

Participant: Well she was a bit disappointed but then we just made plans to do something else so.. it was alright

Interviewer: OK so she wasn’t annoyed or anything like that?

Participant: Um well I think she might have been for like 10 minutes but then she just got over it

Interviewer: And can you tell me as well, can you talk to me a bit about- you said you always go to school and don’t have any time off or anything like that, what about when you erm do have pain at school, do you go to like the school nurse or do you ever talk to teachers or anything like that about it?

Participant: Um, when I run out of sanitary towels, sometimes I go and get them from reception.

Interviewer: OK and do you find it OK to do that, are they OK about it?

Participant: Um, err well the first time it was a bit awkward but it’s, it was alright the second time.

Interviewer: Why did you feel like it was awkward?

Participant: Because if they said they didn’t have any and I didn’t have any and I was just like yeah…

Interviewer: OK. Is there anything else you would like to talk about in relation to your period pain and how it impacts on your life at all?

Participant: No

Interviewer: OK, OK erm is it OK if I stop the recording?

Participant: OK thank you very much (name)