Participant 9

Duration: 20.28

Dysmenorrheic girl (16 years old)

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

Participant: Erm I’m 16 years old

Interviewer: Mhmm

Participant: I am an A-level student erm studying languages erm I like to go out with my friends erm I like crafts and DIY and reading and general things like that

Interviewer: OK err and how about living arrangements, who do you live with at home?

Participant: Erm I live with both my parents and my brother and sister and the dog (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) How old are your brother and sister?

Participants: Erm my sister is 14 and my brother’s 9

Interviewer: OK, erm so would it be OK if I ask you about the period pain that you experience now?

Participant: (nods)

Interviewer: OK so err can you start off by telling me err a bit about that?

Participant: Err well usually I will get a pain in my stomach like the day before my period starts and then it kind of carries on into it but it doesn’t carry on the whole way through erm it’s usually like, it’s, it’s quite painful but it’s not, it doesn’t stop me from doing things that I want to do.

Interviewer: OK, erm could you tell me like when your periods started?

Participant: Erm, I think I was 13, well maybe 12.

Interviewer: OK and did the pain, did that erm experience start at the same time as the…

Participant: Yeah…

Interviewer: OK so exactly the same time… so has it changed at all…. Got worse or better?

Participant: Erm it’s not as bad as it used to be.

Interviewer: OK, why do you think that is?

Participant: Erm I think I’ve just kind of gotten used to it, it’s not, like it’s been going on for a while obviously and I’m just used to the pain.

Interviewer: OK so about how you cope with it…

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK erm so can you sort of describe the feeling of the pain for me at all?

Participant: Erm it’s low down in my stomach

Interviewer: Mhmm

Participant: And I quite often like to say it’s like someone’s put their hand in my stomach and it’s kind of twisting everything around (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) OK and can you tell me a bit about erm, does the intensity throughout the period change at all?

Participant: Erm, it’s always quite intense just before or like just at the start and then it starts to fade.

Interviewer: OK and erm can you tell me about any accompanying symptoms or anything?

Participant: Erm I sometimes get pain in my leg, like both legs, but not very often, like a dull ache.

Interviewer: OK, OK, erm anything else at all?

Participant: Erm, occasionally headaches but not very often

Interviewer: OK, do you always get the leg muscle aches?

Participant: Not all the time but usually.

Interviewer: OK, have you noticed any times when like the pain is worse or better? Any months where the pain is worse or better?

Participant: Erm, not really… maybe it’s a bit worse in the summer, just because I’m doing, I go out more in the summer so I notice it more.

Interviewer: Yeah…. OK….And have the, the other symptoms, have they changed at all since you started your periods?

Participant: Um, the muscle aches, I didn’t used to get that, that’s newer.

Interviewer: OK, how long have you had that for?

Participant: Erm, maybe like the past year.

Interviewer: OK, um can I just ask, do you have any un-related medical conditions or anything like that?

Participant: No

Interviewer: OK… so have you ever been to the doctors or anything like that?

Participant: No

Interviewer: OK, why, can you tell me why that is?

Participant: Err well I feel like I deal quite well with pain so I didn’t really feel the need to.

Interviewer: OK, have you ever thought about it?

Participant: Erm, not really no.

Interviewer: OK so what type of things do you do to relieve the pain?

Participant: Erm, usually I take pain killers or have a hot water bottle.

Interviewer: OK and how effective are pain killers?

Participant: Erm fair, fairly effective yeah they get rid of it.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK and what type of pain killers do you use?

Participant: Um, paracetamol.

Interviewer: OK and what about the hot water bottle?

Participant: Yeah I think that works, especially if it’s like, in the evenings when I go to bed.

Interviewer: OK, is it worse then in the evenings then?

Participant: It can be, it’s usually just mixed.

Interviewer: OK so there’s no pattern…

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: OK and can I ask…. You’ve mentioned about how you cope with it better, so it feel better now… so how do you cope with it in yourself? What type of things do you do?

Participant: Erm well sometimes if, like my friends are going into town or something like that I just won’t go because I don’t really want to walk around a lot erm and normally I just take the pain killers and I like have a few cups of tea.

Interviewer: OK, do you find that helps?

Participant: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: OK so, you mentioned about not going walking, do you find that makes it worse?

Participant: Yeah like if I, if I’ve got school on a day when I’ve got my period I really hate walking to school.

Interviewer: OK, OK and how are your friends so if you didn’t go out are they OK with that?

Participant: Yeah, I’ll either just say like I’m not feeling well or just say I want to go.

Interviewer: OK, do you talk to them about periods and things like that?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Are they quite understanding about it all?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Can I ask about, you mentioned about not wanting to walk to school, when you get to school does that impact on how your day is?

Participant: Erm maybe, not as, I don’t concentrate as well as, well I find it hard to concentrate sometimes but not that often.

Interviewer: OK, has that changed at all since, because you mentioned that now you cope better with it so, has that changed since when you first started getting…

Participant: Yeah, I deal with it a lot better now.

Interviewer: So how would it be previsously?

Participant: Previsously, I’d just kind of like I’d be in a really bad mood all day and I wouldn’t really wanna concentrate at all.

Interviewer: (pause) and how would that affect things like your school work and things like that?

Participant: Erm well it would affect like negatively slightly but not really notice, noticeably.

Interviewer: And how about, you mentioned being in a bad mood, is that because of the pain or is that…

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit about that, if that affects your interactions with friends…

Participant: Yeah well, I tend, when I’m in a bad mood I tend not to listen to people so I’ll just kind of ignore everyone and if a teacher’s talking I’ll just kind of zone out and like sit in my own little box…

Interviewer: Yeah, does that have any impact on, on how people react…

Participant: Probably (laughs) not that I’ve noticed but yep probably.

Interviewer: OK, so you talked about walking and how that does seem to make it a bit worse so how about PE at school- do you do PE?

Participant: Not any more but I used to, erm yeah I really hated that when I had my period but I would never like not do PE because of it.

Interviewer: OK what would make you still do PE even though you wouldn’t want to?

Participant: Just like I wouldn’t really think it was a good enough reason not to join in.

Interviewer: OK, so would you ever talk to PE teachers about it or anything like that?

Participant: Not really no.

Interviewer: Have you ever talked to…

Participant: I’ve talked to like normal, a few different teachers but not many.

Interviewer: And how, how was it talking to them about it?

Participant: Erm well I think they must get it quite a lot because everyone was really understanding.

Interviewer: OK and what would their reaction be, how were they with you?

Participant: They they understood if I’d not been very responsive during lessons.

Interviewer: So is that the reason that you told them?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK, can you tell me, you mentioned about how it affects your mood and concentration, how do you cope with that- what do you do to make that better?

Participant: Well like usually I just take the pain killers because if I’m not feeling any pain I’m usually more alert erm I kind of just, try and just ignore any pain and try to just like get on with things.

Interviewer: OK, and how about um relationships like, so like your siblings, you’ve got two younger siblings- does it impact on…

Participant: I get very impatient with them but I think my sister usually understands why.

Interviewer: Do you talk to your sister more than your brother then?

Participant: Yeah a lot more.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit about erm, just give me some examples or something like that?

Participant: I’d usually, well she hasn’t got her period yet but I will usually complain to her like “oh you’re so lucky you don’t have to go through this” (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) Err and how about your brother, do you speak to him at all?

Participant: Erm, no he’s too young.

Interviewer: OK, and err, do you get impatient with your brother as well?

Participant: Yeah quite a lot

Interviewer: And erm how do you try and explain why you’re feeling a bit impatient

Participant: Erm I just try and say like erm I’m not in a very good mood, go away (laughs)

Interviewer: How does he react to that?

Participant: He usually does, I think he understands that there’ll be something wrong.

Interviewer: Erm how about relationships with your parents, do you talk to your parents at all about it?

Participant: I talk to my mum, my dad sometimes but not as often.

Interviewer: How comes?

Participant: Just because my mum can relate to it so I find it easier to talk to her.

Interviewer: That’s understandable. And how is she, is she understanding?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: And how about when you get impatient?

Participant: (laughs) well I think because she’s had the same sort of feelings before she understands what I’m going through and yeah she doesn’t really get angry.

Interviewer: That’s good. And how about hobbies or sports or anything, has it impacted…

Participant: Well I don’t really do much sport but usually I’d just, cause I like to do crafts and things so I’ll just sit and do that to take my mind off things.

Interviewer: Do you find that helps?

Participant: Yeah to distract myself.

Interviewer: What other types of things do you do to distract yourself?

Participant: Erm like I’ll read a book or watch TV or just general kind of mind numbing things.

Interviewer: Yeah, do you find, is there anything you find is better at distracting you from it than other things?

Participant: Usually, if it’s something that I have to quite like concentrate quite thoroughly on like, if I’m doing textiles, if I’m doing sewing or something like that that I have to actually concentrate on then I find that’s better.

Interviewer: OK, and how about any aspects of your social life, so how about sleepovers- would it impact on them?

Participant: Erm it would depend on who it was, if it was with a really close friend I’d still go and I’d be alright (talks to pet dog who is jumping up “Archie stop”)

Interviewer: It’s OK, it’s OK. OK so you were telling me that there are a couple of friends who…. (dog jumps up) it’s OK, he’s lovely.

Participant: I can take him up…

Interviewer: honestly he’s lovely. OK so about your friend?

Participant: Yeah I have a few really close friends that I wouldn’t mind going to a sleepover with if I had my period but like maybe not like big groups of people.

Interviewer: OK, and how about, is it all girl friends that you have?

Participant: Erm mostly yeah

Interviewer: OK, would you talk to any guy friends about it?

Participant: Erm maybe just to complain but I doubt they’d really understand

Interviewer: OK yeah, have you at all?

Participant: Erm yeah little bits but nothing really in-depth.

Interviewer: OK and does it impact on whether you would talk to a teacher whether it was a man or woman teacher?

Participant: Yeah, I’d prefer to talk to a woman

Interviewer: Why is that?

Participant: Just because of the like relatability. I know that they would understand.

Interviewer: Erm does it ever impact on how you feel about yourself? You mentioned it affects your mood a bit…

Participant: Mmmm, well like usually if I’m on my period I’ll be wearing like baggy jumpers because like really comfortable things because I don’t want to go all out and I, I prefer to stay inside.

Interviewer: OK, is that because of the pain?

Participant: Yeah just kind of everything, it kind of makes me feel bad in general so you wanna stay inside and stay warm and just like be by yourself.

Interviewer: Is that something, does it help staying warm as well then?

Participant: Yeah definitely

Interviewer: And what types of things do you do to stay warm?

Participant: I’ll have like a blanket or hot water bottle or have a big jumper on.

Interviewer: OK. How about social support so who would, if you was feeling generally bad, who would you go to for support?

Participant: Probably my mum or like one of my really close friends.

Interviewer: What would they do to help you?

Participant: Erm well I like to vent like rant and they’d probably like just listen and as long as I can get things out, that’s what makes me feel better as long as someone will listen

Interviewer: OK, and how about how you think it will be in the future? Do you expect it to stay the same? Do you expect to be able to cope better or worse?

Participant: Well I probably will be able to cope better than I do now because it has improved since I first got my period but I doubt I’ll ever be able to be like completely fine with it.

Interviewer: OK and how er, why do you think it’s improved and you cope better?

Participant: Well just like I know what to expect and I kind of like I, I understand what’s happening better and I know how I’ll react to certain things and I’m more comfortable with it.

Interviewer: Is erm, the impact that it has, is that the same every month?

Participant: Erm usually kind of winter months I’ll sometimes feel worse just because it’s cold and kind of miserable and it kind of affects my mood in general.

Interviewer: OK, can you talk to me about the regularity of your periods?

Participant: Well it used to be very irregular at the start but now it’s kind of evened out.

Interviewer: OK, when they were irregular, was the pain..

Participant: the pain was worse when I like when I didn’t know really when it was coming.

Interviewer: OK so you feel that maybe that helps knowing?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: OK, so are there any other ways in yourself that it makes you feel. So when you’re in pain, how you feel in yourself?

Participant: Erm well I, I feel kind of like, I kind of close in on myself a little bit and feel like I don’t really wanna do anything or, I don’t know, I don’t wanna go out because I know I’ll just be in a bad mood the whole time.

Interviewer: OK, so if there was like a family event or something like that, would it impact on anything like that?

Participant: Well, I’d go but I wouldn’t really enjoy myself, like I’d probably just sit down the whole time and not really talk to many people.

Interviewer: How does that, how does that sort of affect your experience of that event?

Participant: Erm well I’m like, in general I won’t have like, I’ll probably still enjoy myself but I wouldn’t as much as if I hadn’t had my period at the time.

Interviewer: OK, have you got any examples of family events?

Participant: Erm… (pause)

Interviewer: It’s OK if you can’t remember…

Participant: I think I had a wedding once when I had my period and I didn’t get up and dance at all, I just kind of sat down the whole time and it was like, it was still fun but I didn’t enjoy myself as much.

Interviewer: OK, so how about things like if you were gonna book a family holiday or something like that, is it something you'd think about before or would you not worry about it….

Participant: Erm I definitely would worry about it especially if we go somewhere like with a pool or, I wouldn’t want to have my period at the time like I’ve been in that situation before where we’ve been on holiday and I’ve had my period and I’ve just to kind of sit by the pool and I didn’t want to go in just in case.

Interviewer: Yeah. And does it affect how much you enjoy your holiday?

Participant: Erm to some extent yeah but not massively because I’ll still be like in a different country but I wouldn’t have had like all the experiences that other people have had.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. OK, erm is there anything else that you would like to talk about today that we haven’t covererd?

Participant: Not that I can think of

Interviewer: OK, just one quick question- would you ever go to the school nurse or anything like that?

Participant: Possibly yeah like if I got my period and I wasn’t expecting it I’d go to her to like get supplies and, and maybe ask for some pain killers.

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

Participant: Yeah they are because I go to quite a big school so they must have that pretty much every day.

Interviewer: OK so you feel that they experience that a lot… OK and how about getting paracetamol are they OK to give that out to you?

Participant: Erm yes like they will, I’ve like I haven’t asked for, because I’ve never been in that situation but I’m sure they would give it out.

Interviewer: OK, OK, is there anything else you’d like to cover?

Participant: I can’t think of anything no

Interviewer: OK, thank you very much

Participant: You’re welcome

Interviewer: Is it OK if I stop the recording?

Participant: Yeah