Participant 14 (9)

Duration: 20.48

Dysmenorrheic girls (15 years old)

Interviewer: OK, could you tell me a bit about yourself?

Participant: OK, um I’m 15 years old, obviously, I go to (name of) school um I do dance quite a lot after school and in school for a GCSE um so that might affect them… um err, I like errr sit down and read, (inaudible) if you know what I mean.

Interviewer: OK, what subjects do you do for your GCSE’s?

Participant: I do…. Dance as an extra one, geography and oh… what is it, oh a language- err French, I was like oh (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) how are you feeling about your GCSE’s coming up?

Participant: Um I’m a bit nervous, as you should be but erm yeah it’s like something that you’re gradually gonna get used to cause we’re doing mocks and stuff so you have to just…

Interviewer: OK and how about, you say you dance, do you have any other hobbies or…

Participant: I play piano err, do dance and I’m really just, I spend quite a lot of time at home doing homework and then mum makes me go and research what I’ve done in the lesson so I do that yeah but quite a lot of my time has been taken up by dance quite often.

Interview: Yeah OK, do you dance in shows and things like that?

Participant: Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: OK erm so who’s at home?

Participant: Um, me, da, me, mum, dad and (sister)

Interviewer: and (sister) is your sister?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK, so is it OK if I ask you a bit about your period pain?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: OK so um can you start off just by telling me a bit about when your periods started and…

Participant: Umm, I think I was like halfway through being, 6 months into being 13 when I started it and then it was quite brown stuff at the start and I was like what on earth is this, and then mum was like OK and then I didn’t have it for a while and then I had the proper stuff erm yeah and kind of like I didn’t have any pain at all and then now I’m getting more cramps and it’s kind of annoying if you know what I mean (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah (laughs)

Participant: Yeah (laughs)

Interviewer: OK so are you periods regular?

Participant: Um yeah

Interviewer: OK and how long do they sort of last for?

Participant: Just like it varies between a week and a week and a few days.

Interviewer: OK, OK so you said that cramps started erm how long ago did they sort of start coming?

Participant: Um, I think it was only like October and it was a shock to me cause I was like ‘mum what is this pain?’ and I was like this is pants because like yeah it was quite painful yeah.

Interviewer: Was your mum quite understanding when you said?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: And what did she do, did she advise you on how to….

Participant: Yeah she said, she, she gave me a hot water bottle, she was like pop this on your stomach and OK and she said take some paracetamol and I’m not a big fan of taking medication um, I don’t know like, I’m like ‘it’ll go away, it’ll go away’ so I kind of just leave it to settle yeah and….

Interviewer: How long do the cramps normally last for?

Participant: It’s normally like, if it’s on a school day, it’s normally for the whole school day and then when I get home it starts to settle but it might be because I’m doing more things.

Interviewer: OK, do you get any other symptoms with your period? Any like changes or…

Participant: No not really

Interviewer: OK so it’s just cramps?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK where do you get the cramps?

Participant: It’s just like in the lower stomach like quite near there

Interviewer: OK, you said that you started getting the cramps in October, has it changed since then or has it been the same every month?

Participant: Sort of the same every month, it kind of has, I have 2 days without them and then it comes on like gradually and then the last day is probably the worst and I’m like god.

Interviewer: OK so its more towards the end of the period?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: erm, can I just ask have you got any un-related medical conditions?

Participant: Erm yeah I have like seizures, I have epilepsy but I haven’t had one for 3 years so they’re thinking of reducing the meds, medicine which is good.

Interviewer: OK and is that, you said you wasn’t keep on taking any other medication, is that…

Participant: Yeah that’s kind of the reason in case it throws me off.

Interviewer: OK, so have you ever thought when you got the pain, about going to the doctors or anything like that?

Participant: No not really because I’ve heard like my friends have said ‘oh I’ve got such bad cramps’ and things like that and obviously I was on my period so I thought OK it might be that then because it wasn’t like a severe stomach pain, I wouldn’t go to the doctors for stomach pain- it’s not my favourite place to go.

Interviewer: Err so we talked about hot water bottles, are there any other things that you do other than that to relieve it or help it at all?

Participant: I kind of just try and sit in one place, in one position, like try and find a comfortable position and have a hot water bottle and just try and sit there and do whatever on my laptop, homework.

Interviewer: OK and what are your future expectations? Do you expect to always have it or do you think it will go away…

Participant: I’m not sure actually, because it only started in October, I’m not quite sure I expect I’ll have them for a bit longer but then I don’t know.

Interviewer: OK so you’re not sure?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Do you know the cause of period pain?

Participant: No

Interviewer: have you ever done anything about it at school or…

Participant: We’ve had sex education but then they never mentioned period pains and cramps or anything like that which is quite unexpected so, I think yeah they mentioned what there is to use but they never mentioned the cramps and things like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, do you think it would help if they had, if they’d told you before?

Participant: I think it would of err just be like you might get them so it might be helpful

Interviewer: Is there anything you do to take your mind off it when you’ve got a cramp? Anything that helps, like helps you not think about it?

Participant: I try and just kind of like move my mind somewhere else because it is painful but I try to, take it away from that situation.

Interviewer: What type of thing helps you to do that?

Participant: Usually probably me just lying on my bed, on my laptop just watching videos but obviously sometimes you have to do homework or something like that so…

Interviewer: OK, if you go to school, do you find it affects how the school day is or anything like that?

Participant: For me, like depending on which day it is because I have dance some days and then PE another day, but erm I try and put it aside but then it does affect you because you’re constantly kind of aware that you’ve got that and kind of nervous inside and especially when it comes around that time of the month, I always get a bit (pulls face) just in case.

Interviewer: Yeah, have you ever not been able to do anything like PE or dance because of it?

Participant: No not really, it hasn’t really restricted me because I’m not, not, not a person where, there are some girls in my year who are like I’m on my period, I can’t do it and it’s like really?

Interviewer: OK so you just do it anyway?

Participant: Yeah, yeah I just do it.

Interviewer: Do you ever tell the teacher or anything like that, do you ever mention it?

Participant: No not really, the only times my friend mentioned it erm but then, no, not really, she was like ‘I’ve got really bad cramps’ and then Miss was like ‘what?’ (laughs) so she’s kind of aware of my friend not being like 100%.

Interviewer: OK, and how did she react to that, did she…

Participant: She was OK, she was like do you need to go to the nurse and then she was like no, no it’s fine and then she was like do you want to drink some water and things like that, it’s reassuring to have a teacher there that would say that and things like that.

Interviewer: Do you think that it would be, do you think it would, if your pains were worse or you couldn’t cope with them or anything like that, do you feel that you could talk to any teachers at school?

Participant: There is, there are some teachers that I could go to, there’s the nurse and you can go in and say I don’t feel very well and ‘go outside’… OK um so there’s one teacher, my French teacher, she’s very reassuring so probably just go and sit in there and say not good today and she’d probably be really understanding and she’s kind of one of those who will take, take care of you as well and care a lot about every single student she has and teaches so it’s nice.

Interviewer: Yeah that’s nice. Erm do you talk to your friends at all about it? Would you ever mention it to them?

Participant: My friends seem to want to talk about it when they’re on it and I’m just like OK, OK we’re gonna have this conversation for about 5 minutes but then it doesn’t get awkward but it gets like, urgh, can we talk about something else instead of that yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, can you tell me a bit more about that, why you don’t want to talk about it too much?

Participant: it’s a bit, unless it’s obviously someone like you or my mum, I think it’s a bit confidential to me, like I don’t like to tell them what’s going on in my body, just like blurt it out…. (makes noise)

Interview: OK, I know what you mean. So you said that you do lots of shows with your dancing, so has it ever impacted on how you feel like you’ve been at shows or how you’ve enjoyed it maybe?

Participant: It kind of, depending on how heavy it is, it kind of restrict my movement if you know what I mean so I’m always trying to, I try to do it full out obviously but and obviously sat in second position for about 3 minutes which my teacher makes me do at any point so I always kind of try to make the second position as low as it was so it doesn't cause anything to… yeah.

Interviewer: OK, again have you ever mentioned anything to the dance teacher?

Participant: No, they don’t come across to me, like they’re very helpful and very, very nice but I wouldn’t go there cause I don’t like, they’re not like a person that I’d go to for that, like if I was I’d go to the physiotherapist that I go to and I’d say I have a really sore stomach so I might have to sit out but I never really do I just carry on.

Interviewer: OK, do you feel that they would be OK with you sitting out or...

Participant: I think so but it’s like they don’t really support people sitting out unless they are ill like or have something wrong with them but I think, especially my ballet teacher, she is quite understanding so I think she would probably be alright with it but my other teachers are like…. OK just carry on just trying to do the things that they asked…

Interviewer: OK, so how about your social life, does it impact on whether you felt like you wanted to go out with your friends.

Participant: I’m not sure like if I’m on it and I have my cramps I’m not really up for anything, I’m like urgh OK we have to do that again, things like that but I think if it’s just like normal I do everyday things.

Interviewer: OK and erm so if you kind of felt that you weren't really up to doing anything, would you go anyway or would you….

Participant: I would probably go anyway but yeah, I probably just go I’d just be like OK, If I got tired I probably wouldn’t push myself as much as I would.

Interviewer: And how about family life, if you’ve got cramps and you’re not really feeling like doing anything, does it affect anything at home, and things you would normally do with your family.

Participant: Not normally no, cause on weeknights, mum and dad are normally working and things like that so it’s kind of me and (sister) would have to do our homework, play the piano, do things like that um so kind of just really put aside which is kind of good because you forget about it but sometimes it’s not very good.

Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine, does it impact on your homework or playing the piano?

Participant: It makes me a lot more lazy, a lot more lazier, you know ‘come on piano’, ‘do I have to?’.

Interviewer: And how about family activities like family holidays, has it ever, or Christmas or birthdays and things like that?

Participant: Well, thankfully like, I don’t know why but we always seem to go for the late end of the month, I don’t know why, which is not when my period is so it’s really good so I just kinda like, hey it’s over with, I can do whatever I want now but then there’s that situation where you’re kind of a bit wary just in case it….

Interviewer: OK, so your sister’s a bit older than you, she’s 16?

Participant: Yeah, not 17 sorry

Interviewer: Do you talk to her about it at all?

Participant: I do I go oh (sister), I’ve got really bad cramps and things like that so I just kind of tell her that, I don’t know why but she doesn’t normally tell me about it I just, I just find it kind of, not reassuring but easier just to be like I’ve got really bad cramps.

Interviewer: Is she understanding.?

Participant: She goes ‘oh no’ and then she just carries on and I’m like thanks (sister) (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) and err do you talk to your mum and dad about it?

Participant: Not my dad no, no, I talk to my mum about it but not my dad, I think it’s a bit awkward.

Interviewer: OK, can you tell me a bit more about why you wouldn’t talk to your dad about it?

Participant: I think it’s just a, obviously because he’s a man, I don’t think he’d be very understanding about it, he wouldn’t really know much, it’s kind of a subject that most girls would go to their mum about and I’m sure most boys would go to their dad about a problem if they had a problem if you know what I mean because it’s kind of like there to help.

Interviewer: Because they’ve been through similar things?

Participant: Yeah, yeah

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

Participant: No not really cause I’m not a very, not a confident person, but because I know myself very well then it’s like if I’m on it I’m kind of a bit shy if you know what I mean and my friends are like why are you so quiet and I’m like oh no reason.

Interviewer: Why don’t you tell them if they ask you?

Participant: Well it depends who it is, if it’s my friends at dancing or if it’s my close friends I’ll just be like I’m on my period, I don’t feel very well erm but if it’s like just some person because I’m normally quiet chatty and they’re like oh you’re really quiet today and I’m just like oh no reason and it’s just like I don’t want them to be alarmed or anything like that but I just don’t want to tell them.

Interviewer: OK, so does it impact on any future plans that you have so you said that like it’s fine with holidays because you normally plan them for the end of the month, but what about dance show- does it affect anything like that or piano or anything.

Participant: It doesn’t really affect piano at all because it’s just really sat there but em my dance school, it’s quite a high dance school and they kind of get you ready for the dance word you know so I’m kind of, I do want to become a professional dancer but then if I don’t then I can go back because I have my studies behind me, that it might affect that but I’m not sure, it might do.

Interviewer: Does it worry you that it could do?

Participant: It doesn’t worry me but it just does come as a little thing but most dancers would have it, there’s quite a high population of girls than there is boys so, in my type of dancing so.

Interviewer: What type of dancing is it?

Participant: Its contemporary and ballet so the ballet side of it puts a lot of boys off but the contemporary side of it is very good, it’s like very professional.

Interviewer: OK is there anything else we haven’t talked about today that you would like to talk about?

Participant: No. no

Interviewer: OK well thank you, can I stop the recording?

Participant: Yeah