Participant 16 (10)

Duration: 22.29

Dysmenorrheic girl (14 years old)

Interviewer: OK (name), um so if it’s OK, could you start off by telling me a bit about yourself?

Participant: Mhmm about my periods or just?

Interviewer: Oh if you just tell me about you so how old you are and things like that?

Participant: Yeah erm I’m 14, 15 tomorrow erm I do, I’ve done ballet since I was like 3, I do that once a week erm I do netball a couple of times a week and I play some musical instruments erm…

Interviewer: OK, what instruments do you play?

Participant: Erm guitar and piano

Interviewer: OK

Participant: Erm I go to (school name) with friends that I’ve known for years and I’ve got one younger sister who’s 10, 11? 11. A dad, a mum, cousins and stuff erm, I do German at school and History and Art and then all the stuff you’ve got to do like English and Maths.

Interviewer: How’s school going? Are you doing your GCSE’s at the moment?

Participant: Yeah so I’m doing my GCSE’s and learning all the stuff so…

Interviewer: How’s it all going?

Participant: It’s hard but it’s what I expected like I’m not struggling so it’s alright yeah.

Interviewer: OK so erm who do you live at home with?

Participant: Erm mum, dad and my sister

Interviewer: OK so would it be alright if you start to tell me about when your periods started and things like that?

Participant: Erm it was November, I was in year 8 at school, I think I was at like a dance club thing and then I went to the toilet and it wasn’t bad it was just like something that my friend had told me about when she started cause she’s like a year older and I was like oh that sounds like what she said so then I went home yeah and spoke to my mum and stuff like that and then… that was in year 8 so it’s been just like over 2 years.

Interviewer: OK and did the, did you start getting cramps and things at the same time?

Participant: Err yeah but like I didn’t know it was cramp then I just thought it was like pain cause I didn’t really know that was what it was then but yeah a bit.

Interviewer: OK and erm how is it now, could you describe it?

Participant: Erm it’s fine, it’s pretty much every month now, for the first like year it was only every 3 months I think it came and I never really got any pain, it was really mild and now it’s sort of every month like 28 days, just over a month, like pretty much every month and erm I get a bit of cramp but it’s not severe or anything and I get headaches quite a lot anyway like I don't think that’s to do with the period but it might be, I’m not sure.

Interviewer: Do they, so the headaches come at the same time as the period?

Participant: Yeah like before so the week before I start getting a few headaches and like cramp and then, when I’m actually on my period I don’t actually get that much cramp it’s more before yeah, I don’t know why.

Interviewer: Yeah OK how long before would you get it for? How many days before?

Participant: Probably during the week before for like a couple of days

Interviewer: OK and can you sort of describe the type of feeling it is, if you can?

Participant: It’s kind of like a sharp pain I think and sometimes it’s a sharp pain and I kind of feel like heavy if you know what I mean yeah, but sometimes it’s like a short, sharp pain that lasts like four or five seconds and then it’s gone so it’s different yeah.

Interviewer: OK so where’s the location of the pain?

Participant: Just like the bottom of my stomach and my bladder.

Interviewer: OK, OK and erm so do you get a bit of pain, is it always before your period?

Participant: Not always, most times but not every time.

Interviewer: OK and are there any differences between the times when you do get it and you don’t?

Participant: Erm um, no not really I think it’s, like I don’t get it that badly so no.

Interviewer: OK and the intensity of it, like how much it hurts, does that ever change, is that ever different?

Participant: Erm it’s never too bad but sometimes a little bit worse than others but I think that’s just coincidence I don’t really know, I don’t think there’s any reason.

Interviewer: You don’t know why OK

Participant: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: OK so is it, so when you have that couple of days where you have pain, is it the same pain throughout those couple of days or does it change at all?

Participant: Errrrmmm it’s similar pain, it’s like I have a sharp pain in my stomach but like you don’t feel sick you just have like a pain in your stomach so it’s on and off for a couple of days but it’s not too bad.

Interviewer: OK erm so has that, has that been the way ever since you started getting sort of period pains at all? Is it always the same from the very beginning?

Participant: No, not really. Sometimes like I used to not get it at all and then over the past like 8 months I do get a bit of cramp but it’s nothing too bad.

Interviewer; And erm, do you, do you have any like expectations for like the future, do you feel like it will get better or worse or, how do you think it’s gonna go, do you think it’s gonna be the same?

Participant: Probably the same or better yeah like I don't think it’s gonna get any worse.

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

Participant: No, no

Interviewer: No, OK, sorry, OK so can you tell me the types of things that you do so when you do get the pains and feel a bit uncomfortable, what type of things do you do to get rid of it?

Participant: Just erm, it depends if I’m at home I’ll just like relax and stuff, sometimes I’ll have a couple of paracetamol or if I’m at school I’ll just bear with it I dunno just like take it a bit like easy if it hurts but erm nothing much.

Interviewer: OK and what do you find, do you find paracetamol helps much to get rid of it?

Participant: Er yeah it does

Interviewer: OK and how about so when you do relax, do you find, does that work?

Participant: Yeah I think so, yeah like if I just like sit on my bed or something like that it does help a bit yeah.

Interviewer: OK and do you get any other period symptoms like hormonal stuff or skin conditions or…

Participant: Erm my skin’s alright anyway but I feel like when I do get a few spots it’s usually when my period is so yeah probably that and the odd headache.

Interviewer: OK, OK so have you ever been to the doctors about period-related stuff?

Participant: No

Interviewer: OK can you tell me a bit about why that is?

Participant: It’s just not that bad like the pain isn’t that bad like it doesn't stop me doing anything so yeah.

Interviewer: OK so you don’t feel there’s reason to?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK and erm would you, you talked about paracetamol and relaxation, is there anything you do like at home or erm like hot water bottles or differences in food or anything like that that you try?

Participant: Erm I do use hot water bottles sometimes and just like have a hot chocolate or have a cup of tea erm

Interviewer: Does that make you feel better?

Participant: Yeah just more relaxed and stuff.

Interviewer: OK so it’s all about relaxation.

Participant: Mhmm yeah

Interviewer: OK can I ask, what, do you know the cause of period pains? Has anyone ever explained it to you or…

Participant: Not really, I think you cramp because it’s releasing blood, I don’t know, I don’t really know.

Interviewer: Have school or in sex education, that sort of thing explained about period pain?

Participant: Yeah not really about the pain, they’ve explained what it is but not about the pain really.

Interviewer: OK so more about…OK so do you think, looking back would you have liked to know a bit more.

Participant: Yeah, yeah probably,

Interviewer: OK so you said that you when you go to school you sort of try to take it easy and stay relaxed, how do you find being able to do that at school, is it easy or…

Participant: Erm it’s not too bad, I think it’s just you surround yourself with people you feel comfortable with like your good friends and stuff and they go through the same things and it’s not that bad and we talk about it and stuff so it’s not that bad yeah I find it OK.

Interviewer: Do you find it easy to talk to your friends about it?

Participant: Yeah, yeah, yeah we kind of like half joke about it but like, like my friend will say ‘oh have you got any paracetamol?’ or something like that. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you help each other out so if you, if you needed a paracetamol, would you ask your friends?

Participant: Yeah, yeah, mhmm

Interviewer: OK, and how about, have you ever not wanted to go to school because of it or…

Participant: Um when I first started I was like, I didn’t really know what I’d do at school with it just because it had never happened before and I didn’t really want to go to school but I did so it didn’t stop me but yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah OK so did you mention that to your mum or anything?

Participant: Yeah I was just like oh I don’t want to go to school and she was like it’s fine (laughs), yeah

Interviewer: OK so she..

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: Do you talk to your mum a lot about it?

Participant: Yeah quite a lot

Interviewer: And what about your dad?

Participant: Not really, erm I think he knows and I think my mum probably tells him when I’m on my period but I don’t really tell him or like no not really like I would I just don’t.

Interviewer: Yeah Why? Why do you think you don’t talk to your dad…

Participant: I don’t know, it’s just my mum, she’s been through it so she understands, she knows what I do and stuff whereas my dad doesn’t.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah that’s understandable.

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: And what about your sister, do you ever talk to your sister about it/

Participant: Erm well I think she’s only just learnt about them at school so kind of yeah a bit more now, not much but just like, if I say like I’ve got cramp she probably knows what it is now whereas before she just wouldn’t know.

Interviewer: Yeah, does it ever impact on erm like your relationships at, at home… so if you’re not feeling 100% and… does it ever impact on how like….

Participant: Not really, I don't think it really… I don’t fall out with people over it and stuff like that so no.

Interviewer: OK and how about like hobbies and sports… you said you’re quite active and play netball and things like that…

Participant: Erm netball it doesn't affect anything cause I kind of forget about it when I’m playing netball but in dancing I do think about it sometimes if like, cause it’s ballet you’ve gotta like hold your leg up and stuff and I’m always a bit conscious but I don’t get worried about it so…

Interviewer; If you’ve got, if you do have a bit of like discomfort and a cramp, erm do you talk to the ballet teacher about it or anything like that?

Participant: Not really

Interviewer: OK, do you think it affects your performance when you’re there and how you are?

Participant: Erm sometimes it can like if it’s on my mind I might not put my leg up like as high or something like that but I had it on my dancing exams like the end of last year and I got an alright mark so it was, it was alright then.

Interviewer: OK, that’s good

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: And how about in netball, do you ever feel like you, you don’t really, cause you said it, it takes your mind off it…

Participant: Mhmm…

Interviewer: Do you feel that you still perform as well when you are playing…

Participant: Probably if I’ve got like a cramp but probably not but I don’t usually get them so no I think it’s fine…

Interviewer: OK erm so how about social, social things so like sleepovers and stuff like that? Has it ever impacted on anything like that?

Participant: Erm I probably wouldn’t go to a sleepover if I was on my period I don’t think…

Interviewer: What would hold you back from doing that?

Participant: Erm I dunno just like going to the toilet would be more awkward and I don’t know, it depends on the friends, there’s like one or two friends that I might but most friends I probably wouldn’t.

Interviewer: Yeah OK and erm, have you ever been in that situation where you’ve sort of said no?

Participant: Erm I don’t think it’s ever happened actually, I think maybe once, my friends said oh do you want to do a sleepover on Saturday and I’ve said erm maybe next weekend (laughs) but like I told her why and she was fine with that so.

Interviewer: OK so you feel alright saying that?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK erm and do you feel like you could, if you, you know you said you’ve got one or two friends that… do you feel like you would tell them before you went?

Participant: Erm, yeah probably yeah.

Interviewer: Why would you, yeah sort of feel the need to sort of say….

Participant: I dunno, I dunno really, I would just rather tell them before than just sort of… I dunno, I dunno I just would.

Interviewer: OK so you just feel more comfortable…

Participant: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: OK, erm so how about things like family activities and stuff like Christmas or birthdays or holidays, does it impact on anything like that?

Participant: Hmm not really, most family things I’m fine with like if we go out for a meal somewhere then I’m fine with that but one time when I was on holiday it happened, we went for 10 days and it was like the last few days and I was like ‘oh that’s really annoying’

Interviewer: Yeah, did you, did impact on how you enjoyed your holiday or anything you could do?

Participant: Erm I still enjoyed it but it was going swimming that I couldn’t do which is quite annoying cause my sister was in the pool and I was like… yeah but I still enjoyed it…

Interviewer: OK so just those last couple of days yeah… OK. And how about like if your family were going out and maybe you had like a cramp and you didn’t feel like going um, would you, would you still go? Would it impact on that at all?

Participant: Um I’d probably still go, I’d probably just have a couple of paracetamol and go like if I didn’t feel well I’d tell mum or dad but I’d probably still go yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. And how about, does it impact on how you feel about yourself when you’re on your period?

Participant: Probably like when you walk around school I feel a bit more self-conscious but nothing too bad. I don’t feel like I haven’t got low self-esteem or anything, I just feel a bit more self-conscious.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK.. What makes you feel a bit more self-conscious?

Participant: Erm, I dunno like when ya, when you’ve been sitting down for a while and then you stand up you’re just like, oh just in case a bit comes out when you stand up and then you look and it’s like, like at school I tend to keep my coat with me so I put my coat on cause it’s long and it goes down to there and then I feel fine if I’ve got that on.

Interviewer: Yeah, just in case. And erm how about, so do you do PE at school?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Yeah OK so does it ever, have you ever not been able to do PE or anything like that?

Participant: No, I think the first time when I started, I didn’t do PE but apart from that yeah I do it every time.

Interviewer: And do you ever tell PE teachers?

Participant: Erm some people do but I don’t, I just leave it.

Interviewer: Why don’t you tell them?

Participant: I dunno, I just don’t feel like it’s bad enough, like it’s not that big of a deal, I don’t get it that badly, if I got cramp and I couldn’t walk very well I might miss but it’s not that bad really.

Interviewer: So do you feel like if it was you could talk to them?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK and when do you, are there any teachers you wouldn’t go to if you did have bad period pain or any that would particularly would? Or do you just feel comfortable going to anyone?

Participant: Erm not really talking to loads of teachers about it like it’s never really been bad enough to do that like some people go to the nurse and tell her but I’ve never really needed to do that, so I probably wouldn’t I dunno.. I talk to my friends about it so I don’t really need, I don’t really feel the need to talk to teachers about it. I dunno…

Interviewer: Yeah, OK, are all your friends girls?

Participant: Yeah most of them.

Interviewer: OK do you talk to the boys about it as well?

Participant: Not really no, no, I, I might, I might say like oh I’ve got cramp but I wouldn’t tell them no, yeah

Interviewer: Why, can you tell me a bit about why that is?

Participant: I dunno cause like they don’t, they don't know what it’s like so there’s not much point in telling them… like there’s one girl I know who gets really annoyed when boys joke, like jokes about periods and she’s like ‘you don’t understand, you don’t understand how bad it is’ (laughs) so yeah… nah I wouldn’t cause they just don’t know what it’s like so…

Interviewer: Yeah, OK um so, how about like your social support so you talk to your mum, did you tell your mum straight away when you started getting the pains?

Participant: Erm yeah I didn’t know what it was when I first started so I was like I think I might I don’t know and she was like ‘yeah yeah it’s fine’

Interviewer: Erm so yeah is she quite good..

Participant: Yea

Interviewer: OK so what does she do if you do have period pain, what would your mum sort of do to help you feel better?

Participant: She would say like do you want a paracetamol do you want a hot water bottle… or… or but like sometimes she’ll say ‘you just gotta get on with it, it’s better to get on with things’ which is kind of good cause you don’t want to have, you don’t want to stop doing things so yeah she’s good.

Interviewer: How does it, how do you feel about it at the time?

Participant: Erm like sometimes I feel awkward telling my mum like randomly saying but like if I need her to buy more things and stuff like that then she know and sometimes she’ll ask like ‘are eyoou on your period?’ and I’m like yep.

Interviewer: Yeah and do you always feel OK talking about it?

Participant: Yeah, pretty much yeah

Interviewer: erm so how about like future plans like if you were planning erm cause you said you do like ballet… do you do like shows or anything?

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: So if you had something like that coming up, would you think about periods or period pain?

Participant: Yeah, I do have a show coming up but I kind of like know now roughly when it’s gonna come and if, if it’s not gonna be then, then I’m like pheww cause, but if it is then I would be like oh I wonder what I’m gonna do and yeah I do, I do think about it like if we're going on holiday with the school or something I’ll think oh I wonder what date we’re going and stuff like that but I’ll still go like it wouldn’t stop me from going but yeah I do think about it.

Interviewer: OK, OK, is there anything else that it impacts on your life that we’ve not covered?

Participant: Erm I don’t think so like I would still go to town with my friends if I was or like I’d still do things with my friends or I’d still sleep over at my cousins house if I was cause we talk about it all the time and stuff and like I might say oh I’m on my period and she’s like oh same and yey and things like that but I don’t really think it impacts that much no.

Interviewer: OK so you said you’d still go to town with your friends still, would you erm, like would you still have as good a time, would it affect your experience of going out?

Participant: Erm I think I’d still have a good time but I’d just make sure I was able to go to the toilet if you know what I mean like I would, I do think about it but I just, it wouldn’t affect me not having a good time.

Interviewer: OK and erm so if you did go to school, if you did go to school and you had pain as well, would it impact on your day?

Participant: Erm if I, sometimes when I’m not on my period and I get cramp, I’m kind of like oh god I hope it doesn't start during school but like it’s, I don’t get like really stressed about it, it doesn’t really affect my day that much.

Interviewer: OK so if you’ve got a cramp, does it impact on how you concentrate on your work or anything?

Participant: Erm not really like I know it’s there but no I think it’s fine.

Interviewer: OK, is there anything else that we’ve not covered?

Participant: I don’t think so

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

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: OK thank you very much

Participant: That’s alright