Participant 13 (8)

Duration: 25.37

Participant: Dysmenorrheic girl (17)

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

Participant: OK, I’m 17 and I’m in sixth form doing my AS levels in year 12 and I do piano, I do a bit of running, a bit of singing so I’ve got a couple of hobbies (laughs), and yeah that about a little roundabout of me.

Interviewer: OK, erm what, what lessons do you do?

Participant: I take chemistry, maths, biology and geography

Interviewer: Very good.

Participant: It’s quite difficult (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine, how is it all going?

Participant: Well it’s, well my mocks went really badly but then I’ve got like a tutor and everything’s going better now

Interviewer: That’s good, erm so who’s at home, who lives at home with you?

Participant: Erm me, my sister, my mum and my dad.

Interviewer: OK, how old’s your sister?

Participant: Um, 15.

Interviewer: Um OK so you said about hobbies erm so have you got any other apart from singing, running…

Participant: Um, I’m a young leader and I do like a voluntary kind of work thing, I think that’s all of them…

Interviewer: OK, that’s a lot.

Participant: (laughs) yeah quite a bit.

Interviewer: OK is it OK if I ask you about your period pain?

Participant: Yeah that’s fine.

Interviewer: So erm can you start off by telling me when your periods started and things like that?

Participant: Erm I think I was between 13 and 14, I think I was nearly 14, it was like the summer holidays at the end of year 8 or 9, I can’t really remember but yeah I was just on holiday, it wasn’t the most practical of times but…

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah so that’s when it happened.. did you get pain straight away?

Participant: Erm, no not really, I don’t get a lot of pain. It’s kind of only started this year and the previous year as well. So now that I’m a bit older.

Interviewer: OK, so can you just try and describe it for me so what it’s like really…

Participant: It’s just like a dull ache for me; it’s just not that intense either, it’s just quite subtle like it’s manageable but not comfortable.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Participant: It’s that kind of little…

Interviewer: OK, can you tell me about the location of the pain, so where it is?

Participant: It’s like like just my lower abdomen area, like just below my belly button.

Interviewer: OK, do you get pain anywhere else at all?

Participant: No, just there

Interviewer: OK, and do you get any other symptoms like to do with your periods that aren’t pain related?

Participant: No not really

Interviewer: OK, erm are you periods regular?

Participant: No, no unfortunately.

Interviewer: How…

Participant: So I’ll go like normally it’ll be like 3 weeks or then like so I’ll have like a chunk where there’s one every 3 weeks and then in there they’ll, there’ll be 6 weeks or where I’ll go without having one and then it’ll go again to every 3 weeks but then again that’s not regular, so I dunno when the 6 week gap is coming and stuff like that.

Interviewer: You just know it’s gonna happen at some point?

Participant: Yeah I’m just waiting (laughs)

Interviewer: OK, so, does the, the, the dull ache last the whole time you’re on your period or…

Participant: No, it’s normally on the heavier days which is like which is just in the beginning, it’s just about, I would say it’s only one day really

Interviewer: OK, and do you get some sort of pain every time you get your period? Or are there sometimes when you don’t?

Participant: Yeah there’s sometimes when I don’t really. Most times I would say and it’d be one day.

Interviewer: OK erm so has that changed at all since you started your periods?

Participant: Um well I think I’ve just gone from no pain and it kind of slowly built up. Last year I had like a chunk of about 6 months where it was really bad and now it’s kind of died down again.

Interviewer: Yeah, OK, OK what was it like during those 6 months?

Participant: It was just like a, a more kind of, a more intense pain and a pain that lasted for longer, but it would last the whole period rather than for just one day.

Interviewer: And how long do your periods last?

Participant: About 4 days, 4 or 5 days.

Interviewer: OK so, you mentioned that you did go through 6 months when it was really bad, was there anything different about those 6 months?

Participant: I think I put on a lot of weight, well not a lot (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: I put on a bit of weight and then it kind of came up to prom at the end of year 11 after my exams and I kind of thought if I’m gonna wear this prom dress I need to lose a bit of weight, like if I want to feel confident in it cause it was strapless and everything erm so I lost, not a lot- only like 4lbs but it made like a significant difference because like I’m so small anyway so I think that possibly had something to do with it I think.

Interviewer: Erm, do you have any un-related medical conditions at all?

Participant: No

Interview: No, OK so have you ever, can you tell me about any treatment you’ve had for your pain, if you’ve had any?

Participant: I’ve not had like medical treatment, I haven’t been to the doctors, I just take paracetamol occasionally or I just put up with it most of the time. I’m just like oh I’ll just deal with it.

Interviewer: OK, so um do you find paracetamol effective when you take it?

Participant: Yeah most of the time, sometimes not really but..

Interviewer: OK, erm when you just put up with it- why do you think to do that?

Participant: I don’t know, it’s because it’s not, it’s not that bad a pain. I think it’s because I can deal with it like ‘I’ll deal with it’….

Interviewer: OK, so is there like any particular reason other than that that you haven’t been to the doctors about it?

Participant: No I don’t think so, it just never really came to mind, and did’t really seem necessary for me I think. I think the only reason I’d go to the doctors would be to talk about how it’s not very regular and stuff but just deal with that, because that’s very frustrating a lot of the time but…

Interviewer: Yeah, erm is there anything else you do at home, non-medication related that can like reduce the pain a bit.

Participant: I normally take quite hot baths

Interviewer: Does that help?

Participant: Yeah sometimes, just cause I know a lot of people use hot water bottles but they just, I just get really hot and sweaty and I don’t like that so I take, I just normally have hot baths.

Interviewer: OK, is there anything that you do like within yourself like to take your mind off the pain or anything like that?

Participant: I tried yoga but then it worked for a while until I could do the basic moves and then I’m not very flexible so I couldn’t really go much further so I was like well this isn’t, so yeah I tried to do a bit of yoga in my room.

Interviewer: And does that help?

Participant: Yeah cause I feel like it calms me down a lot cause my dancer teacher at school used to do it with us so, she does all the classes and stuff and taught us all the breathing and stuff and I think like it does actually make your brain switch off so I think it works quite well for me.

Interviewer: OK, so do you, has anyone every explained to you what the cause of period pain is or talk to you about that at all?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Do you know what the cause of it is?

Participant: No

Interviewer: Would you like to know?

Participant: I’m not really fussed to be honest (laughs)

Interviewer: OK, so you’ve never asked…

Participant: No, it’s not really something… I think again it’s because I don’t really get that bad a pain, I haven’t felt the need to go and talk to anyone about it (inaudible).

Interviewer: And erm, what are you future expectations of it, like do you expect it to be the same and be sort of manageable or do you expect it to get worse or go away as you get older?

Participant: Well I’d hope it would, it it was to change I would want it to obviously have to pain but I wouldn’t mind if it stayed as it is because I don’t really feel like it affects me too much. I wouldn’t want it to worsen obviously.

Interviewer: OK so when it was a lot worse erm, did you, did you feel, how did you feel about it when it was like that?

Participant: It was just really, just annoying, just cause I’d gone from having no pain to suddenly this pain, it’s just like oh for goodness sake, I didn’t have this then, I was just annoyed by it (laughs)

Interviewer: That’s understandable.. OK so how does, how does it affect your life, or how did it when it was quite bad?

Participant: I think it just made me quite moody, that’s it but then I think my parent could tell as well a lot of the time cause I could be quite snappy as well like when I’m like ill or in pain or something I get quite ratty and stuff so I don’t think they really appreciated that (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) and how about now? Is it different now that it’s a little bit better?

Participant: Yeah I think because I’m older as well, I know like how to deal with it like I’m not, I know how to calm myself down and obviously not get angry at people and stuff like that so.

Interviewer: Yeah, and how about- have you taken any time of school or anything like that?

Participant: No I haven’t, my mum wouldn’t let me, no (laughs)

Interviewer: Have you tried then?

Participant: No I’ve never tried but I know because obviously I’ve got some friends who have taken time off school and, and I, I’ve told my mum, I’ve been like oh so and so’s off school because they’ve got period pain and then she’s been like ‘that’s ridiculous, you’d never take time off school’ so I’m like OK mum, you don’t know what they’re going through (laughs)

Interviewer: Oh I see well then you’d better not.. (laughs)

Participant: I know (laughs)

Interviewer: OK and how about things like PE and things like that, have you ever not been able to do PE or…

Participant: Hmm, I think… I was in the netball team up until year 11 and I think it made netball harder but I still did it. Things like trampolining, I hated, we did trampolining when we were in year 10 but I hated that when I was on my period because it’s just a bit of an awkward sport to do isn’t it, jumping up and down but I never sat out because I’m quite sporty anyway, I enjoyed going to PE

Interviewing: OK so you did it despite not really wanting to

Participant: Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: OK so, do you feel like, so when you’ve been on your period , when you had that 6 months when it caused you quite a bit of pain, when you did go to school, were there any days where- how did it affect your day at school? Was it different to if you didn’t have pain?

Participant: I don’t really think so, I think just the occasional complain like oh it hurts so much but I just kind of get on with the lessons because I like to do well and succeed, I don’t like being distracted in lessons and missing stuff, that’s why, I think that’s the other reason why I don’t take days off school or I didn’t take days off school so I don’t think it really affected school.

Interviewer: OK, good, so how about things like daily things, just like you would normally do, yeah would it affect anything like that?

Participant: I don’t think so, I’ve occasionally not gone to (name of running group) because it’s like running and not really feeling like… but um no I think everything else…

Interviewer: OK, and if you don’t go running are they OK with it?

Participant: Yeah, I’ve stopped now cause it got really bad, like loads of little children joined and like this is meant for teenagers, why are all these little kids here and it just kind of got to a point and me and my friend (name of friend) just sat and said we’re not even like exercising anymore so we kind of just stopped going. We used our GCSE’s as an excuse, I’ve got GCSE’s to revise for, worked quite well (laughs)

Interviewer: OK , so do you, when you didn’t go, did you tell them it was because of period pain?

Participant: I’d tell my friends but, like there was no reason to tell the coach like I just I dunno I was just like oh sorry I can’t come tonight and blame it on an illness like oh I’ve got a really bad headache…

Interviewer: OK, why wouldn’t you want to tell the coach?

Participant: Cause it was a man (laughs)

Interviewer: So if it was a woman would you have said?

Participant: Maybe yeah, cause I’ve often told my netball coach whose a teacher at school but I think sometimes she told us when we joined in year 10, ‘when you’re on your period you should tell me’ and most of the time we didn’t but if we were in pain or something like that, the majority of the team would tell her just to kind of forewarn her so she knows I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah that’s fair enough. Did it affect your performance when you were playing?

Participant: I think so yeah, I was a bit more weary of kind of, I wouldn’t really go for the passes as much and kind of hang back a bit but that’s about it.

Interviewer: OK and how about any other like hobbies or sports or anything like that? You said you sing… did it ever impact on anything like that and make you not go or anything?

Participant: No I don’t think so, everything else is kind of like, cause most things I do in school so I’d be there anyway and they’re things that I really enjoy doing so I want to do them despite having period pains and stuff.

Interviewer: OK so you said you spoke to your friends about it. Has it affected like what you would do with your friends, your social life or anything like that?

Participant: I don’t think so, I just think we’re all quite open about it now so it took like one of our friends in our friendship group, it was like year 11 or something when she didn’t get her period so we all held back and kept it to ourselves until she got hers then suddenly like, especially this year, telling each other, well not everything but like telling each other a lot more than we would have this time last year. But, I think that’s the only way it’s affected me socially

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you find it’s better now that you’re all really open about it?

Participant: Yeah definitely, well it’s just a bit of a laugh sometimes, just I think it’s good to talk about it because you can just go ‘oh well I’m not the only one who’s got this, this, and this’

Interviewer: What about if you were friends with any guys, would you talk to them about it do you think?

Participant: I think it’s dependent on what kind of a friend they are so like I know, you can be friends with some boys but you know you just friends with them, there are some boys you are really good friends with. And I think, if it was definitely just a friendship (laughs), I would possibly consider telling them but I wouldn't want to make them feel uncomfortable, I feel like boys can be, they get very awkward when it’s brought up so I wouldn’t want to make them uncomfortable by talking about it.

Interviewer: OK, and how about family life and things like that, does it affect, if you’re in pain does it ever effect like your relationship with your sister or parents?

Participant: Not really my parents but my sister, I just get frustrated with her because she’s, she’s at the age where she’s like ‘oh look at this, look at this’ and all these things like on her phone and stuff and it’ll just get to a point where it’s like stop and go away erm but it doesn’t affect- it’s not that bad, it doesn’t affect it that much like our friendship like we’re fine afterwards, I’m just like ‘go away’ and she does (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: (laughs) I sound really mean

Interviewer: (laughs) no, no, that’s how it is with sisters. How about with your mum, do you talk to your mum about it?

Participant: Not really, no. I don’t think she, I don’t know- my sister’s more open than me and she’s younger than me, I don’t you know like announce it round the house but I’m quite like, I’m fine with my friends but I dunno at home I’m quite like keep it to my, keep things like that to myself I dunno.

Interviewer: OK so is that the same with your dad as well?

Participant: Yeah I don’t think I’ve ever talked to my dad ever about anything like that.

Interviewer: Why’s that?

Participant: He’s quite an awkward person, I was about to say I don’t know but he’s a, I think if I mentioned it, he would just kind of like close down and like shut down on me but like cause he can’t, he like gets embarrassed. He can’t say the word like, like he can’t say it- it’s just really weird but if he can’t do that then he’s not going to be able to talk about periods is he (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: My mum always says ‘if I was to suddenly die’ it’s horrible… ‘to suddenly die or something you’d be lost without me because he would have no clue how to deal with two teenage girls (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) bless

Participant: I know he’s like a little old man and he’s only like 50 (laughs)

Interviewer: Can you talk to him about non- girly stuff?

Participant: Yeah of course, we don’t just ignore him, like leave him in a corner (laughs) no.

Interviewer: (laughs) Erm…. Does it ever impact on like how you feel about yourself?

Participant: No I don’t think so, I think sometimes, I think it changes my body image a lot like cause I went through a bit of a stage where I was like ‘oh I’m so fat’, I think everybody does… but like I did lose quite a lot of weight because of it but I do think, you know when you feel a bit down and then you think oh for god sake everyone’s so much thinner than me and then like when I’m happy again I think oh I actually quite like my figure and it’s like it doesn’t last very long.

Interviewer: OK so does that fall in line with periods?

Participant: Yeah I think so, I think it just falls in line with like the moodiness I get with it really.

Interviewer: OK, so we mentioned like your friends, but you don’t talk to your mum about it, don’t talk to your dad about it, is there anyone else that you talk to?

Participant: No I think that’s it

Interviewer: OK is there anyone you would like to talk to about it or do you think that’s enough having your sister and your friends?

Participant: Yeah I think that’s enough, I think if I had a huge problem I could go to my friends first. There’s one friend who like, she’d know exactly what to do like if anything like a huge problem arose or something, I’d definitely go to her and then after her I’d go and speak to my mum. But then I don’t think I need anyone to talk to, I think I’m alright.

Interviewer: OK so how about future plans, does it impact on anything you plan to do in the future?

Participant: No not really

Interviewer: And like family holidays, you said, what about when holidays are being booked…

Participant: Oh yeah, I don’t, I do worry about it but I wouldn’t make mum book a holiday around it well obviously there’s 3 of us and one man and it would be quite hard to book a holiday around that especially with only a six week break so I could make her change but I wouldn't, I think, it happened over the summer again, actually I think it’s happened every summer since and it’s just like a bit of an effort to deal with, especially if it’s in a hot country and it’s just, you just want to be able to have a bit more, not freedom but you don’t want to have to worry about that the whole time.

Interviewer: OK and if you have some period pain or discomfort, does that impact on what you can do when you’re on holiday like how much you can enjoy yourself…

Participant: I think to some extent but I don’t think, I don't think too badly, if I was on holiday and I had like even just a small amount of pain I probably would take a paracetamol, I wouldn't like no I don’t take ibuprofen, but like straight away just to, just to kind of get rid of it just so I could properly enjoy myself.

Interviewer: And what about other like family events or anything like that, like Christmas or birthdays, has it impacted on anything like that?

Participant: No not really, I, I don’t really worry about anything like that so much.

Interviewer: OK so if you’re in pain you just get on with those things?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, you know you were saying you just like get on with it, can you tell me a bit more about that like how, like why you do that and how you think when you….

Participant: Yeah, I don’t know why I do it, I think it’s, I think it’s because I dunno, I think, I honestly, it’s just something that I kind of do, cause at the start I just put up with it and then because I’d never initially went to mum and said look I’m in lots of pain, if I was in pain, I, I think the first time I think I told her that I had a headache so I could take some paracetamol erm.

Interviewer: Why didn’t you tell her?

Participant: Cause I think my dad was downstairs when I went down to her and I think I didn't want to announce it in front of everyone erm so I think it’s just because I kind of can deal with it that I just put up with it and get on with it.

Interviewer: Was that different when it was a lot worse, did you find that more difficult to just get on with it?

Participant: I think when it was a lot worse I, I resulted to paracetamol a lot more so most, most days I would.

Interviewer: OK and did you talk to your mum about it then?

Participant: I, em, in pass, in passing comment but not, I didn’t really sit down and talk to her about it cause it’s not, it wasn’t so bad that I was like let’s go to the doctors to see if they have anything, it,s like, it was a pain that you could get rid of with paracetamol , so it seemed a bit, kind of ridiculous to make a huge fuss about it.

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

Participant: I don’t think so, I don't, it’s not very interesting (laughs)

Interviewer: No it is, thank you, I’ll turn this off.