Participant 18

Duration: 20.52

Dysmenorrheic girl (16 years old)

Interviewer: Could you start off by telling me a bit about yourself please?

Participant: I’m 16, I’m doing my GCSE’s, and that’s all really erm I watch a lot of TV when I should be revising (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) what GCSE’s do you take?

Participant: Erm, I’ve got the normal ones like Maths, English and Science and I’m doing History, Spanish, Art and something else, I can’t remember right now (laiughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) that’s OK, and what kind of things do you do in your spare time?

Participant: Erm, I go out with friends quite a lot and I watch a lot of Netflix.

Interviewer: OK, yeah I like Netflix too… OK so who’s at home? Who do you live at home with?

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

Interviewer: OK, and how old’s your sister?

Participant: 12

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

Participant: Erm yeah usually it’s not really bad but I’ve started taking these pills for my skin which affect it so when I do get them it’s really bad and last time, I don’t get them as often, I get them every like 3 months ish and the last time I had one it was really, really bad.

Interviewer: OK so can you start me off from the beginning so, when did you start your periods? How old were you?

Participant: I think I was 13.

Interviewer: 13 OK and you said you didn’t have any pain at first…

Participant: No I didn’t have any pain at all really.

Interviewer: OK are your periods always sort of irregular?

Participant: Every, well they were regular until I started going on my pills so they were like every month.

Interviewer: OK so when did you start the pills?

Participant: Erm I think like six, no like 8… quite a while ago, a year maybe.

Interviewer: OK and can you tell me how things have been since then?

Participant: Erm, I take, you have to take them every day and keep taking them until you breakthrough like with a period and then when you get them it is just so painful (laughs) and like I was at school, cause I went to school, but um it got really bad and I went to the nurse and on my way I vomited in the corridor.

Interviewer: OK and was that because of the pain?

Participant: Yeah like pain-related vomit.

Interviewer: OK so has it been that severe every time for the last year?

Participant: Erm like I started, I didn’t take any paracetamol with me to school so I started taking them so now it’s got a bit better.

Interviewer: OK erm so, can you talk to me a little bit about how the pain feels, like describe it for me if you can?

Participant: It’s just like, it’s like pulling on my insides like it’s really, I can’t, I dunno how to put it into words, it’s just very like, it’s like a deep inside you sort of pain.

Interviewer: OK and where roughly is it sort of pain? Can you describe the location?

Participant: Yeah in my belly, just like all over it really and sometimes your muscles ache but it’s not the main sort of thing.

Interviewer: OK and can you tell me about like the time period of the pain? So is it like from when you start your period or is it like before, or in the middle….

Participant: Erm mine usually starts like a day before and then it’s coming and then towards the end it gets less and less.

Interviewer: And is it the same amount of pain at the beginning?

Participant: Erm it’s not as like as intense pain at the start and then when it does start it’s really, really bad.

Interviewer: OK and then how long does the pain last that’s really, really bad?

Participant: About a day, maybe a day, just one day is the really bad pain

Interviewer: OK, OK so erm, has it, has it changed at all since a year ago when you started getting it? Is it different every month or…

Participant: Well, the worst one was my first one and now they’ve just got less and less, I think my body’s just getting used to the whole being on pills.

Interviewer: OK and what have you, have you been to the doctors about the period pain?

Participant: Erm no I haven’t because my mum’s a doctor so she just told me to take paracetamol for it rather than not go to school or something, she just gave me pills.

Interviewer: OK and did that help?

Participant: Yeah, they make it a lot more, like easier to get through the day.

Interviewer: OK so what other things would you do like other than the pills, is there any other way you’d try and relieve it?

Participant: I’d get, I’ve got this hot water bottle and I’d just sit with that on my belly when I’m at home.

Interviewer: Does that help?

Participant: Yeah

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

Participant: I usually just go to sleep cause it’s the best way to get through it without thinking.

Interviewer: OK so that helps as well, the sleeping. OK and what are your expectations for the future, you said about your body getting used to your skin pills now so… do you think it will get better or stay the same or…

Participant: I think it will reach the point where it’s just the same every time but I’m not on these pills forever so it’ll probably go back to the way it was before maybe which was just no pain really at all.

Interviewer: Do you know how long you’ll expect to be on them for?

Participant: Until my skin’s better and it’s getting better quite quickly

Interviewer: OK, that’s good. OK so, so do you think that that’s the cause of the period pain? Can you explain to me what the cause is?

Participant: Well the things on it said that they make them lighter and less painful but that didn’t happen to me, it’s obviously an abnormality to have it but it’s just with me, it just got worse.

Interviewer: OK… Do you have any un-related medical condition?

Participant: No, no.

Interviewer: Erm, OK so do you get any other period-related symptoms?

Participant: Erm I get really angry sometimes for like 2 days before but like I just sort of keep quiet and keep it in cause I can see that I’m being quite annoyed.

Interviewer: OK so, can you tell me about how it impacts on your life? So when you do have that period pain?

Participant: Erm it’s, it’s just inconvenient really to have to and erm and it puts me in a really bad mood for like a few days, with like everyone and sometimes my mum and sister get it at the same time and it’s just really bad for my dad (laughs)

Interviewer: Yeah, what happens when it’s like that?

Participant: Everyone’s just like on edge, like you just do one thing and everyone’s off it and my dad’s just sitting in the corner like oh and he just waits for it to blow over until it’s over (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) Poor dad. Erm so do you, is it the pain that makes you feel quite…

Participant: Erm I think it’s sort of a mixture because before when I didn’t have any pain I was still quite moody but not as irritable but when you’re sort of concentrating on the pain, other things that you have to concentrate on are just annoying.

Interviewer: OK and erm so who does that, you said that can sometimes cause conflict at home, is that moreso with your sister or mum…

Participant: I don’t really know cause I have conflict with my sister anyway

Interviewer: Oh OK

Participant: But me and my mum, me and my mum don't really fight that much but something, when we’re on our period we do like more so probably my mum.

Interviewer: OK so you talked about when you got to school at one point, you were sick, can you tell me a bit about how it came up to that sort of point?

Participant: Erm I was in my art lesson and I’d felt really ill over lunchtime and I’d gone round asking people if they had paracetamol and no one did and then I finally got some off my friend (name) in my art lesson and um I was just sitting there and she said (name), you look really unwell I think you should go to the nurse and then on my way to the nurse I was sick.

Interviewer: OK, OK so then what did you do? Did you go home?

Participant: Yeah I went home.

Interviewer: OK is that the only time like you’ve sort of missed a bit of school or…

Participant: Yeah it was only an afternoon, not the whole day, I’ve asked for days off before but my mum’s always like just deal with it.

Interviewer: Yeah, how does it feel when she says that?

Participant: It’s just like oh OK (laughs), cause you’ve just got to get through it really

Interviewer: OK, so what about when you, so you did go to school, how does your day kind of pan out when you go in with it?

Participant: Erm, I’m sort of more quiet because I can’t be bothered to talk that much because I’m sort of in pain but sometimes, like usually I’m on the same time as my other friends because it always happens that way and we’re all really, we don’t really argue that much, we’re just like irritable and a bit like… mhmm.

Interviewer: OK and what about with school work and things like that?

Participant: Erm I sort of, I just get on with it and do my erm, copy down my homework but I don’t usually do that the night and I’ll wait until it’s gone .

Interviewer: OK, fair enough, so you leave it a bit later than you might normally?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: OK and do you find it difficult to err concentrate in class or anything like that if you’re in pain?

Participant: At the start of using these pill I found it really hard to concentrate cause it was just so much pain but now I’ve sort of grown to concentrate and write down everything. I’m probably not as concentrated as I am when I’m not on my period.

Interviewer: OK, yeah, OK um, how about things like hobbies and sports and things like that?

Participant: Erm, if it’s really bad sometimes I miss my hockey practice on a Tuesday but apart from that it doesn’t really affect any of my other hobbies, just my hockey.

Interviewer: And how about your hockey coach? Err do you say what…

Participant: Erm I just say I’m missing it because I don’t feel very well or not up to it but it’s not every time.

Interviewer: OK do they, are they quite understanding?

Participant: Yeah they’re just like OK I’ll see ya next week, cause I’m not a very key member of the team. I just go to stay healthy.

Interviewer: Yeah, and erm is there any reason you don’t tell them like exactly what the problem is?

Participant: Yeah, I think, it can be a bit, cause my coach is a man so it’d be a bit awkward because men are usually quite awkward about that kind of thing (laughs)

Interviewer: OK, do you talk to your dad at all about it?

Participant: Hmm not really, my mum does, she tells him why I’m in a bad mood but I don’t really

Interviewer: Is that again because he’s a man?

Participant: Yeah and he’s quite awkward my dad (laughs) he’d just be a bit like oh OK…

Interviewer: (laughs) and do you feel OK about your mum talking to him about it?

Participant: Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: OK, so is it mostly your mum who you talk to?

Participant: Yeah I do tell my mum about it and she’ll sort me out with paracetamol and stull like that.

Interviewer: What does she err, what does she say when you feel in pain and went to your mum?

Participant: Just say oh it’s OK and get me some paracetamol and just be generally nicer (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) OK and how about erm things like what you would do with your friends like sleepovers and stuff like that?

Participant: Oh I would still go to a sleepover probably but loads of my friends don’t if they’re on their period but I would, it depends how close I was to the person…

Interviewer: OK, so, so if you was close to the person, so you would definitely go?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: And would you tell them?

Participant: Yeah they’re em, they’re just all very nice about it my friends yeah.

Interviewer: That’s good, are they all girls your friends?

Participant: Well I’ve got, I don’t stay over at boys houses, I stay over at my friends who are girls houses and they’re always understandable and sometimes if it’s really bad then my friends who are boys I just tell them to leave me alone because of it (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughs) and do you fell like it’s as easy to talk to them about it as it is to talk about it with your girl friends?

Participant: Err no, so it really, they don’t really get it and they’re a bit like disgusted by it like that’s what makes them go away (laughs)

Interviewer: OK so what are their reactions like?

Participants: They’re just like ‘ohh OK, ergh’ (laughs)

Interviewer: So, you said sometimes you feel a bit like irritable so when you have to concentrate on something other than the pain erm does that cause any difficulties with your friends or anything like that?

Participant: Erm not really because we’re all quite like insulting in a jokey way so it’s a bit normal, like you’re being a bit more serious with it but they don’t really notice.

Interviewer: OK and how about, how about other family things so we talked about sort of relationships with family members when your dad sort of runs off you know and things get a little bit difficult because you’re feeling irritated because you’re in pain erm, how about like when there’s family activities like birthdays or Christmas and things like that? Does it ever impact on things like that?

Participant: I’ve never been on my period on my birthday but I think it would just be, just get on with it really and have, because it’s quite tolerable so I think it would be OK

Interviewer: And erm how about holidays and things like that?

Participant: Oh when I go on holiday, I always, if I’m on it, I get really scared about the pool because of the whole being embarrassed if it was in a pool and things and we planned to go to a waterpark on one day and we had to change all of that because of um and I had to leave my meal early cause I felt really ill, that happened one time.

Interviewer: How did it feel when that happened?

Participant: Um well my dad didn’t really, my mum had to like explain it really in detail to him because he was, my mum was hinting and he wasn’t getting it, and he was like ‘we planned this, we planned this day’ but he was fine with it once he understood (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) and how did you feel when…

Participant: I was a bit disappointed the fact that I’d just changed all the plans but I just didn’t really want to go to the water park cause you’d be in the water all day and just be a bit….

Interviewer: Yeah. What did you do instead?

Participant: Yeah we still, I think we just um, cause we were at a theme park and it had a water park and rollercoaster and we went to one of the rollercoastery type parks.

Interviewer: OK so, do you know what the cause of the period pain is?

Participant: I think like, isn’t it mini contractions?

Interviewer: OK yeah, so how, who told you about that?

Participant: I saw it on erm tumbler the website cause it was just like explaining the whole thing cause they always put things like that on and it’s like ‘all females are badass because of this’ and that’s how I learnt (laughs)

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

Participant: Erm not, not really I don’t think, I think it’s just a thing I have to deal with.

Interviewer: And is that, is that how you cope with it, how do you cope with it in yourself?

Participant: Just accept that it’s gonna happen for quite a while and just get through it.

Interviewer: OK and how about future plans, does it ever impact on how you plan future events and things like that?

Participant: Well I go on Duke of Edinburgh awards and erm the trecks, there’s like no bins or anything so I have to plan ahead for that and work out if it’s gonna be on then and ask, I think if it did happen I’d have to ask my mum to get me those pills that postpone it or with my pill at the moment, they’re quite, if you stop taking them then you just get one straight away so I could probably do it better with just planning ahead that.

Interviewer: OK, is that something you would worry about like if it was coming up?

Participant: Yeah one time I went on a water sports holiday ages ago and that was before I was on my pills and it was due for that exact week and I had to sort that out with pills and things cause I think it came the week before, it came a week early so I was really grateful cause it would have been really bad for the whole water events for a straight week.

Interviewer: OK and is there anything else that it impacts on you or your life, especially if it is quite severe? Like the time when you were sick…. Has that happened any other time?

Participant: That’s only happened once but it was really embarrassing cause it was right next to, well all of my friends were in lessons but a group of my sisters friends, people in her year that she knows, like it was right next to them and they were all taking the mick out of my sister and my friends don’t know about it but they all know. Yeah.

Interviewer: OK and did your sister like explain to them, did you explain to them why it was?

Participant: No I didn’t tell them what it was, I just said I didn’t feel very well um my sister thought it was quite funny so it was alright.

Interviewer: Yeah, and was your mum OK coming to pick you up?

Participant: Oh my dad got sent to pick me up and I didn’t want to explain to him why I was sick in the car so I just said I didn’t feel very well. I rang my mum when I got home.

Interviewer: OK so why didn’t you want to explain to him?

Participant: It would just be a bit…. Weird… weird sort of thing like awkward almost.

Interviewer: OK so easier to talk to mum?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: Is there anyone else you talk to about it?

Participant: Erm when I first started it, I remember I didn’t tell my mum, I told my gran, cause when I was about 11 or 12, 11-12 that’s when I was really close to my gran so I think I told her first and then she told my mum cause I was more scared to tell my mum than my gran.

Interviewer: Yeah OK, how was your gran about it?

Participant: She was just fine cause she’s obviously had longer having it than my mum yeah.

Interviewer: Why was you worried telling your mum about it?

Participant: I don’t know, I was just young so I didn’t really, I dunno I was just funny about that kind of thing but now I’m just, I’m more open.

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

Participant: No, I don’t know, I don’t think so.

Interviewer: OK, is it OK if I stop the interview?

Participant: Mhmm

Interviewer: OK.