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**Transcriber: N. Brown**

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ANONYMISED

Int[[1]](#footnote-1): It’s just popped up to say it’s recording now. Just to double check that you're still happy to go ahead with the interview and you're still happy to be audio and video recorded, just for this?

R[[2]](#footnote-2): Yes.

Int: Great, okay. My screen’s over here with my question guide on so I will look over there as a reference point, but I’ll still be listening to what you're saying, okay?

R: Okay.

Int: Do you want to start by telling me a bit about your experience of chronic pain? It was back pain as I remember it?

R: Yes, so like as I said, I’ve had it for quite a few years now, mainly upper and lower, not really in the middle. I know my father has a slipped disc in his back and that’s kind of where his back problems have come from but I don’t feel like that’s what I’ve got.

 And it’s pain... that I kinda attributed to being tall and maybe my posture and that kind of thing but yeah, I’m not really too sure what, what the actual diagnosis of it is but it’s just a pain that I’ve dealt with for quite a long time.

Int: How old were you when you would say it first started?

R: Maybe 16/17?

Int: Okay. We spoke a bit in the screening as well that you had like a foot injury?

R: Yeah.

Int: How’s that been getting on?

R: That’s still just pretty much the same, still really sore and that’s like on my Achilles - it’s not in the - the pain’s not in a place where I actually broke my foot, it’s sort of travelled to the back of my foot, more my ankle and that’s not really changed at the moment, not got worse, not got better.

Int: Remind me again when it was that that happened?

R: January.

Int: So a while ago now …

R: Yeah!

Int: Okay. Let’s talk a bit more about the back pain that’s been going on a bit longer.

Could you tell me about what it was like when it first started, compared to more recently?

R: I feel like when it first started, it was more of a, sort of like a burning sort of stabby pain and as time’s gone on and I’ve sort of tried to change a few bits about myself like my posture and applying hot water bottles and medications and stuff, it’s become more of a dull ache which is sore to the touch. So like if my partner’s giving us a back rub, it’s really sore then but I might not have realised how bad it was until he starts doing that, if that makes sense.

Int: Yeah, okay. So it’s changed a bit in how it feels to you?

R: Yeah, yeah.

Int: Does it affect your physical abilities, and if so, how so?

R: Well, obviously before I broke my foot, I did work out like nearly every day, five out of seven days a week, and the backache would always get worse if I’ve had a heavy session or you know, not taking proper care of the postures I’m doing while I’m working out.

 The job that I’ve got as well, I am on my feet all day so it does get worse if I’ve done a long shift or haven’t had as long a break, haven’t been sitting down kind of thing!

Int: Do you think it does affect your work and your education?

R: I’d say more work than education. I do sometimes feel like, it’s almost like I need to stop and like stretch, Bend forwards and backwards, and if I don’t or if I don't like crack my back, I feel like, like a build up of pressure almost in my chest and on my back so that does obviously affect us at work because if I don’t have the opportunity to do that, I am in pain, so yeah [*laughs*].

Int: Have you had time off and things because of it or not really?

R: Hmmm, not really to the point where I’ve took like an extensive amount of time off work, maybe like the odd day where it’s been really bad the day before, but I usually just try and rest quite a lot on the weekend or on a night time.

Int: Okay. Would you say that it affects your social life, and if so, how so?

R: Probably not too much, I mean there are certain things that if my friends wanted to do, I wouldn’t do like the big trampoline park things, I wouldn’t necessarily go to them because I know it would probably hurt my back and things like rollercoasters and theme parks, when I’ve got to sit on really hard chairs and stuff, I would try and avoid things like that. But just going out for like lunches and things, it doesn’t really affect us too bad.

Int: What about the foot and ankle pain as well?

R: Yeah, that one I’d say definitely at the moment is affecting me more because obviously, you need to walk everywhere so it’s like every step I might be experiencing pain.

 Obviously, in the current climate I haven’t been going out anyway but if this wasn’t the case, I probably wouldn’t manage to go on like a night out in heels or something like that because I just couldn’t cope with the pain.

Int: Do you think either of the pains, the foot pain or the back pain, do you think it affects your mood and your emotions and if so, how, do you think?

R: I think definitely the foot because it’s led me to feel rather confined and unable to do what I usually do and just be a bit more reliant on other people. Usually I’m very independent and I can just get on with my own thing, do my own thing but over the past couple of months, I’ve had to ask people for help to do certain things or you know, like not being able to do as long shifts at work because I can’t stand on my feet for much longer.

 With the back one, I think it’s just something I’ve learned to deal with so I wouldn’t say that’s necessarily affecting me emotionally, it’s more just an annoyance.

Int: Okay. You mentioned when you first started talking about a couple of, I think you said some medications and other treatments you've tried?

R: Hmm.

Int: Could you tell me about advice that you’ve had from doctors, nurses or other healthcare professionals about the pain?

R: So most of it has just been telephone appointments because they’ve never said or sort of picked up on the fact that it’s bad enough to be anything diagnosable, kind of thing. So all they’ve recommended is paracetamol, ibuprofen and at one point when it was really bad, co-codamol.

Int: And similar advice for both types of pain?

R: Hmm... Let me think … yeah, I think they might have said to be a bit more careful with ibuprofen for the foot but I can’t remember why they said that, yeah, it’s more paracetamol I took for the foot because I found even when I have been taking ibuprofen, it hasn’t really done much.

Int: Okay. Have you had any advice from any other types of healthcare professionals like a psychologist or a physio, anyone like that?

R: No, but I am planning to go to physio soon about both the problems, it’s just obviously getting money and time and obviously at the moment, it’s quite difficult to do anything.

Int: So, kind of on hold a bit?

R: Yeah.

Int: And you're learning more towards a physio it sounds like than perhaps talking to a psychology person or someone more alternative?

R: Yeah, probably just a physio.

Int: Okay. Have you had any advice at all from alternative therapists?

R: No, nothing that I can think of, I mean I’m also wanting to get the one where they like crack your back and like all your bones, so I’m looking into that one as well but at the moment I’ve had no advice.

Int: Yeah - Chiropractic?

R: Yeah, that’s it!

Int: So, looking towards maybe physio and chiropractic in the future?

R: Yeah.

Int: It is difficult at the moment.

R: Very.

Int: Do you try anything else like heat patches or that sort of thing?

R: Yeah, I’ve tried the heat patches which are actually quite good, I didn’t think they’d really make that much of a difference, yeah they are good but it’s more obviously when the pain’s a bit more localised than spread out and that’s just for the back, I haven’t tried heat on the foot, I’ve only tried ice packs on the foot.

Int: What kinds of other things do you do yourself to cope with various types of pains?

R: I do quite a lot of stretching, just following like YouTube videos, that kind of thing. Other than that, just like trying to stand up and sit up more straight like when I’m driving or standing at work and trying, if I’m standing, to like plant both feet on the ground instead of bending one knee or leaning on one knee. Other than that, yeah just trying little things.

Int: What about things like relaxation and mindfulness, do you do any of that sort of thing to help when you're in pain?

R: I’ve tried some meditation on YouTube but I couldn’t really get anywhere, and then I tried to download the Mind app but to access anything, you had to pay for it so I didn’t bother.

Int: Oh, okay. You mentioned a couple of times there about using YouTube for the stretches and attempting the mindfulness, is that your go to?

R: Yeah, I’d say so, I think it’s less for the pain, more for just relaxing and unwinding, I think obviously it just comes hand in hand and I find when I am more stressed, my back pain does get worse and actually now I’ve mentioned it, the back pain does get worse around like term time because when I revise, like I usually find myself hunched over on my bed, writing notes and stuff which is probably quite bad but it just does, it’s how I do it and that usually does make it worse.

Int: You mentioned that you did try using one of the Mind apps... was it just that you had to pay for it?

R: Yeah, that’s it, you could have like three videos that you could access and the rest you had to subscribe for it.

Int: Okay. When you're doing stuff at home yourself or just when you're by yourself to help manage the pains, have you had any problems with any of the strategies you’ve used?

R: Um... no, nothing I can think of... No, nothing.

Int: Okay.

Do you think you could tell me a bit more about any internet resources you've used either to find information about the back pain or the foot pain?

R: Obviously straight up Google searching, looking on sites like Mayo Clinic, I think it’s called and… I forgot the other one but it’s just like general medical websites. Because I’m at uni as well, I know how obviously to use Google Scholar and that sort of thing, so I have had a look at a few journal articles about it but nothing that’s really uncovered like one diagnosable thing.

 For more like coping with pain and pain strategies, I follow quite a lot of Instagram pages which are like positive quotes and things like that, and also my old boss, well he’s now a paramedic so I had a bit of a conversation with him about my foot, other than that, that’s it.

Int: It’s interesting because you said you went to, I can’t remember what website you said just then, what was it you said?

R: Mayo Clinic.

Int: What was it that you liked about that one, that you went to that one?

R: I think mainly top of the Google search, it’s usually the first one you click but I think if I’ve ever Googled any problems in the past, they always seem to have an answer for everything so it just seems like quite a reputable page to look at things on. Obviously, I don’t really trust Wikipedia so I wouldn’t look there for any sort of information.

 I’m trying to think what the other one was called, I think it was Science Web or Web of Science, something like that but it’s usually that one that comes up first.

Int: Other ones that are out there are things like Healthline or there’s WebMD, have you been on either of those?

R: Yeah, WebMD, that was it.

Int: What was your experience like of having a look on there?

R: Yeah, I mean all these medical pages kind of say the same thing in that you know, you get your overview of the problem and then treatment, symptoms, diagnosis kind of thing.

 I think I probably like both the pages the same but it’s good to just have somewhere to go to, to kind of find out your own information instead of relying on a doctor or even relying on what a doctor has said because sometimes things might have been misinterpreted.

Int: Okay. I’ll come back to what you mentioned about Instagram in a minute, but I would like to know, have you looked on an NHS website at all to find out about pain?

R: Yeah, I have looked on it quite a lot of times for other things, I haven’t really looked at it for the back one but I did when I broke my foot and the Achilles pain which I’ve got now, I did look on NHS but NHS website is quite crowded at the moment so I’m kind of avoiding it because it’s just like COVID banners everywhere, so it’s not really the nicest place to look on right now!

Int: Oh right. So, you’re finding it a bit off-putting perhaps?

R: Yeah.

Int: In terms of social media, you mentioned Instagram, more for the coping side of coping with pain.

What’s your experiences of following various pages on Instagram been like in relation to the pain stuff?

R: I think it’s really good, obviously Instagram can be very bad for a lot of things but if you find the right niche and the right pages, they can be very helpful, not even just for the pain pages but even just the positivity pages, you sometimes see things that you would never expect to see.... How do I put it? I don’t know, obviously nowadays there’s things we’re becoming more comfortable to talk about in society, it’s comforting to see things being talked about and things being normalised, which wouldn’t have been 10-years ago so I think that is a good thing.

Int: Okay. I’m interested as well because you said about using YouTube for the stretching videos, especially before, do you use Instagram for anything like that, looking at the videos on there?

R: Yeah, definitely, more on Instagram for like the food side of it, is it healthy, gym, motivation, that kind of thing. For stretching, I find I’ll save the videos on Instagram in the saved area and then never look at them, so I feel like it’s sort of forgotten about.

 On YouTube, you can search for something, a particular video and you’ll find it pretty much straightaway but on Instagram, you can’t search for that video again, so yeah I don’t feel like it’s the best for looking for that kind of thing.

Int: What about Facebook, do you use that at all?

R: No, not for like, I mean one of the stretching stretches that I do is by a woman who does like a lot of the workout videos and I’m in a group of hers on Facebook but Facebook’s a lot more just like people that you know talking about random stuff, rather than getting help, that kind of thing.

Int: Okay. When you're initially going on Google and looking for advice or information about the pain, what are you hoping to find, do you think?

R: I think a sort of, just like a definite answer, if you look at a list of symptoms, you want to be able to match four out of five of them to get some sort of comfort of knowing this is what’s wrong with you and I think, I don't know, maybe just sort of reassurance and I mean the last thing you want when you go on these pages is to get to the end and then for it to be, “yeah there’s no cure for this, this is what you've got, that’s it”, so I think having a treatment or things like that at the end of pages is probably what I’m looking for most. Yeah.

Int: Do you think your use of internet resources, either websites or media or apps, do you think it’s changed from when you were first started getting pain to more recently?

R: Definitely, most of all obviously technology is massively increased in its usage so now, if you need something, you just pick up your phone and look for it whereas ten years ago, you'd have to speak to a doctor to get a definite answer.

 I think it’s just with it being so accessible, all this information, that’s why I go onto Google and things like that because it takes two weeks to get a doctor’s appointment, when I could just Google it and cut out the middle man.

Int: Yeah. Do you think the types of things you look on have changed as well?

R: Probably but just because with the age, like looking at different things and finding out, just being able to understand more what’s out there so you're looking at different things anyway.

Int: You said before about searching on Scholar …

R: Yes, of course.

Int: How have you found that?

R: It’s interesting because obviously when you're in uni, you're looking for a particular thing and then you start using it for your own personal use and personal problems, it’s really interesting but it’s very laborious to try and find out an answer because obviously it’s a whole scholar article, you've got to sit and read through to try and find out what it’s saying and then a lot of the time, it’s like with a confounding variable or you know, another stimulus or that kind of thing so it’s not amazing, but it’s interesting, I guess.

Int: Overall, which internet resources have you found the most helpful, do you think?

R: Helpful in terms of gaining information, probably just Google, straight up Google search but in terms of coping and finding like little tips and tricks, that kind of thing, probably Instagram.

Int: Okay. Anything that you’ve come across on the internet or apps or websites that you thought was unhelpful and why was that?

R: Erm... I mean obviously with Google, as you go further down the page, you get these dodgy sort of websites and that kind of thing and I know always like when you're on Google particularly, you get all these ads that are like, “eat this particular berry and it’s going to solve your back pain” and it’s like well no it’s not and I think that is quite unhelpful, obviously I know not to click on these things but a lot of people out there that don’t know that, and then could end up exacerbating the problem. But in terms of pain, I haven’t really found anything unhelpful or like bad, there’s plenty of bad stuff out there but not necessarily on this.

Int: Okay. I’m going to skip back a little bit before I kind of ask a bit more, I’ve got one more question about online resources.

But, when you’ve been trying to find out how to deal with pain, who or where do you think you’ve turned to first, in the very first instance?

R: To be honest, probably like straight to my boyfriend, if I’ve got a pain or a problem, I’ll message him straightaway and be like, “this is going on today, this is happening right now” and you know, he’s not like a doctor but he’s knowledgeable and he helps to calm any sort of anxiety that I’ve got about anything, so he’s always a good port of call, whether he’s got an answer or not it’s still comforting in you kind of want to tell your partner if there’s something wrong so they know there’s something wrong with you.

Int: Has he, or anyone else in your friend or family circle, given you much advice at all?

R: Probably just standing up straight, not necessarily advice but he’s the one who rubs my back all the time, he’s helpful in that situation [*laughs*]! If I’m just chilling, he’ll go and get us a hot water bottle or things like that, so he is helpful.

Int: Okay, that’s nice.

So for the online resources, is there anything else that you think would be helpful or would have been helpful in the past, to help you manage either your back pain or the foot pain?

R: I think, I know they’re out there but like all of these online doctors and things like that, I think would be so helpful but as soon you get into any of them, it’s like you've got to pay £30 or whatever a month to access any sort of help and it’s like oh yeah, the doctor’s here right now, he can answer your questions but I’ve got to pay for it and obviously, I understand that these people can’t run off nothing but a lot of people can’t afford to pay for these things and then having to wait, as I say for a doctor’s appointment, isn’t very helpful so it’s quite hard in that sense and I mean obviously, not for online but just making doctors’ appointments’ more available would be helpful, but I know that that’s no-one’s fault other than the government’s so … yeah!

Int: Hmmm. You mentioned that sort of thing before when you were talking about the Mind app or meditation apps …?

R: Yeah, of course, making them more free or even like putting student discount things on there, that sort of thing I think I would bring in a lot more revenue because you're going to be more inclined if it’s a lot cheaper to buy it.

 Same with like Fitbit, obviously you’ve got to pay for Fitbit Premium and I know there’s a lot of, I do pay for that and there’s a lot of different videos on there but it’s a tenner a month and a lot of people aren’t going to pay that, it’s like healthcare shouldn’t have to be a price to get it, like good healthcare.

Int: Okay - I think I understand where you're coming from.

Do you have anything else to add on to anything that you’ve said, either about your experience of pain or about online resources, websites, apps?

R: Probably just... I think you've got to be careful with using online resources. I know Snapchat have little sort of bulletins where they give random pieces of information through like magazines and stuff, and you have to be very careful to trust these sort of things. As I say, if you're a young and impressionable person and they’re telling you to do something that could possibly help your pain when it can really not, I think that’s very dangerous and just going back to Facebook, obviously I know a lot of people take to Facebook to try and find answers to their problems, and it’s not really very helpful because it’s not really scientific help! I know people can offer advice but it’s just not great, nothing that Google search probably couldn’t tell them.

Int: Okay. Yep – and that’s fair enough as well!

That brings me to the end of the questions, I’ve gone through everything I had on my checklist. I’ll turn off the recording and then you have a chance to ask me any questions about the study or anything else, okay?

R: Yeah, that’s fine.

[CLOSE]

1. Interviewer [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Respondent [↑](#footnote-ref-2)