

HEAVY PERIODS

PREPARED FOR
3 MONKEYS ZENO

PROJECT DETAILS

FIELDWORK DATES		14 th to 18 th September 2018
SAMPLE DEFINITION		1,004 women who have experienced heavy periods in the past 3 years (18+)

This report is based on the results of an online survey.

24TH SEPTEMBER 2018

HEAVY PERIODS AND LIFE DISRUPTION

TWO IN FIVE EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION ON OCCASION OR EVERY CYCLE

Of those who experience heavy periods, three quarters (75%) were not aware it was a medical condition. This being said, nearly two in five (37%) experience headaches, 35% felt irritable or moody and three in ten have experienced stomach cramps (33%) at least once during every cycle. Sadly two in five (40%) experience depression on occasion or every cycle. This is reflected in the fact that when asked to rate their periods on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 = they absolutely hate them), a third (34%) indicated they absolutely hate them (option 1).

When looking at who they would feel comfortable discussing the topic of heavy periods with, encouragingly three-quarters (76%) would feel comfortable talking to their female friends. The top five individuals they would feel comfortable discussing the topic with is detailed below:

- Female GP (78%)
- Female friends (76%)
- Mother (68%)
- Female nurse practice (67%) or Partner (67%)

NEARLY FOUR IN TEN HAVE CALLED IN SICK TO WORK DUE TO HEAVY PERIODS

The most common issue arising from heavy periods was avoiding wearing white or light-coloured trousers / skirts / shorts (71%); this was followed by having to change outfits due to leaking (69%) and wearing more than two sanitary towels / products at a time (44%).

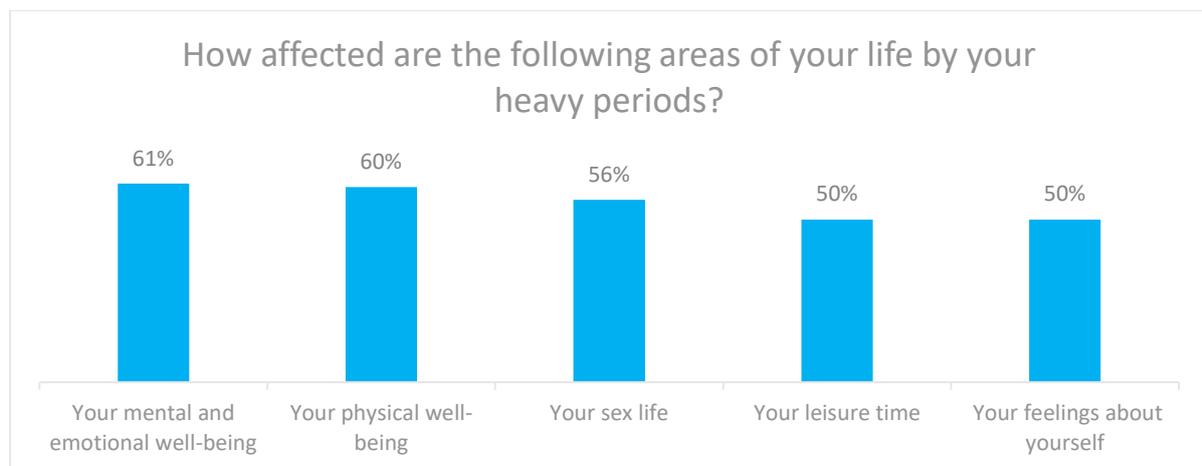
Turning to how this disrupts their life, 62% have avoided a exercising or sporting activities and 38% have missed a meal out; one in ten have even missed a funeral (10%). A quarter (24%) miss out on a romantic / sexual experience with their partner every cycle. The amount of days they are unable to carry out their usual daily routine due to heavy periods averages at 2 days (1.7) with it costing them on average €16.

This is mirrored in working life with an average of 2 sick days taken in the past 12 months due to heavy periods. Of those who have taken a sick day from work, 31% say they have a stomach upset / diarrhoea, 28% say they have a migraine and 20% have had a cold/flu.

MEDICAL ADVICE AND TREATMENTS

THREE IN FIVE ARE MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY AFFECTED BY THEIR HEAVY PERIODS

Heavy periods most commonly affect mental health and emotional well-being (61%). Those aged 18-34 were the most likely age group to have their emotional well-being affected by their heavy periods (65%). The top five areas which are affected are shown in the graph below:



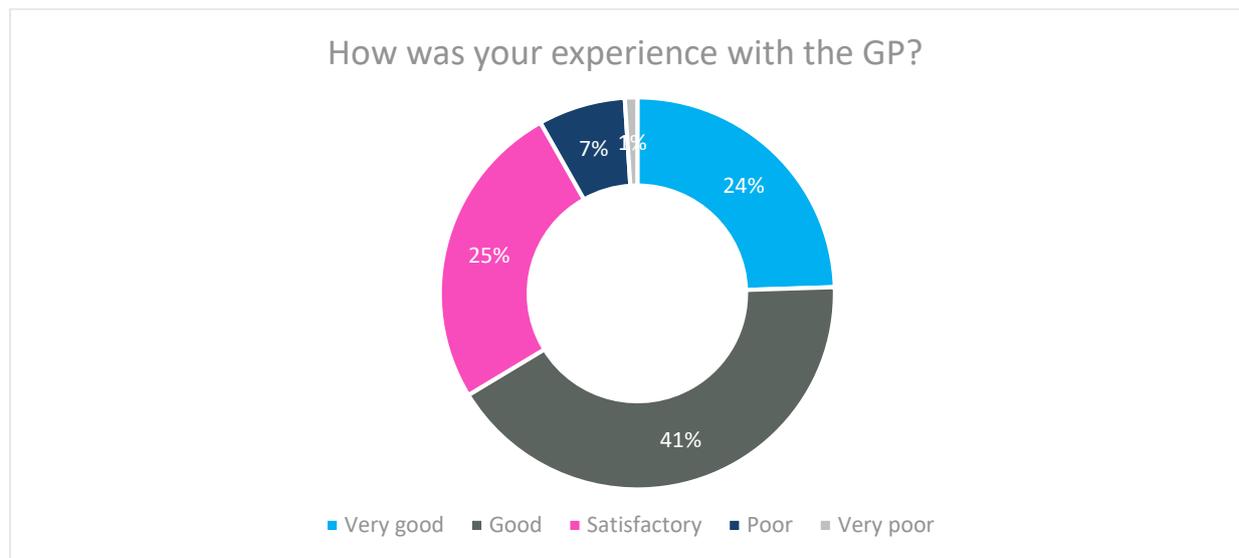
Despite so many having areas of their life affected by heavy periods, only 54% have seen their GP about this problem and only three in ten (28%) have seen their gynaecologist. The most common reason for not visiting a GP or gynaecologist is they feel heavy periods is just part of being a woman (60%) - followed by they don't know how the GP can help (27%).

Turning to what would make them more likely to visit their GP about heavy periods, 35% would be more likely to visit if they had known that heavy periods were a medical condition. Over a third (34%) waited for more than a year after experiencing heavy periods to see their GP. The other reasons are listed below:

- If had known that heavy periods were a medical condition (35%)
- If I had known that they would offer all solutions/ options (28%)
- If I believed they would be able to help find a solution (25%)
- If I had information to better understand the condition (11%)
- If I could see a female GP (7%)

THREE IN TEN WERE NOT GIVEN ANY TREATMENT OPTIONS FROM THEIR GP

Four in ten first saw their GP about heavy periods due to intolerable pain (42%). Other reasons include heavy periods affecting them in their day to day life (33%), the fatigue was too much (23%) and they leaked in public (16%). Examining the process of visiting a GP, there was a fairly even split between the first visit being with a female only GP (47%) and a male only GP (41%). The majority (65%) did think their experience with the GP was good with the highest satisfaction rating being with female only GPs (69%). The full breakdown of satisfaction is in the chart below:



Although the majority were satisfied with their visit to the GP, it took on average 5 months to get the diagnoses of heavy periods (menorrhagia) with 54% never being diagnosed. This is reflected in the fact only 15% were given a full range of treatment options, with 27% not being told about any treatment options. The most common way to prepare for visits to the GP/ gynaecologist was by looking at information websites (19%).

THE MOST COMMON TREATMENT OPTION TO BE OFFERED BY A GP IS MEDICATION

GPs most commonly prescribe medication such as low doses of female hormones e.g. birth control pills (65%) with this being more common in those who saw only a male GP (69%). The full breakdowns of the treatment offers by GPs is below:

Treatment	%
Medication	65%
Intrauterine hormonal treatment	24%
Endometrial ablation	13%

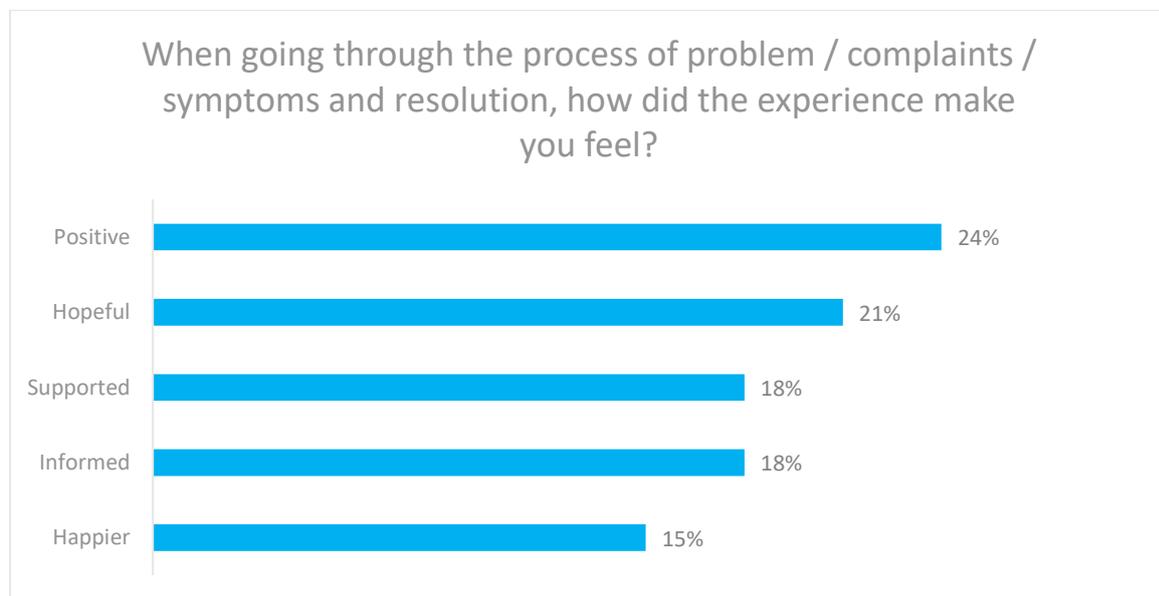
Myomectomy	10%
Uterine artery embolization	8%
Hysterectomy	8%

Unsurprisingly, the most common treatment to receive was medication (9%) with nearly half (48%) receiving all the information they needed on this treatment. The most common treatment for the patient to not receive any information on is myomectomy (32%).

When looking into treatment options discussed by gynaecologist it widely mirrored those offered by GPs, 16% received a full range of treatment options, however, a smaller number were not told about any treatment option (14%). Medication was also the most popular treatment offered (50%), although significantly more were offered intrauterine hormonal treatment (32%) and endometrial ablation (12%). The treatment most commonly received was also medication (11%).

A QUARTER FELT POSITIVE WHEN GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS OF PROBLEM / COMPLAINTS / SYMPTOMS AND RESOLUTION

The average length of time between problem and treatment is 16 months although the majority were being treated in a regional hospital (60%). A quarter (24%) described the whole process of problem / complaints / symptoms and resolution as positive. The top 5 feelings towards the process are below:



Encouragingly, 66% of those who received treatment think it had a positive impact on their life with only 5% thinking it had a negative impact.

The most common solution to heavy periods was medication (31%) followed by intrauterine hormonal treatment (11%) and a hysterectomy (9%). This being said 34% indicated none of the treatment options they received were a solution for them.