

## Clinical Case Study

### Miss Sheila Y. Aged 40

**Doctor:** Did you phone me a little while back or not ?

**Patient:** My GP did. <sup>1</sup>

**Patient:** It started with a distended abdomen...not any pain but from about January, I began to get lower abdominal pain. I went on quite a strict healthy diet because that has often sorted out indigestion problems before, but it didn't help. Also by about February I began to get increasingly tired..fairly exhausted... and my sleep patterns went from sort of 6-7 hours a night to around twelve or fourteen. Round about the same time my temperature control seemed to go...as though I was cold most of the time...and all the symptoms really remained the same. I couldn't carry on working and stopped working in March. <sup>2</sup>

**Doctor:** What were you doing.

**Patient:** I am a clinical psychologist. <sup>3</sup>

**Doctor:** Has anything else evolved and developed since March

**Patient:** Not really, all the symptoms have stayed the same. As my GP's letter says: I have had numerous tests and they have all come back negative. <sup>4</sup>

**Doctor:** Did she check your thyroid function?

**Patient:** I think so. <sup>5</sup>

**Doctor:** Have you had any scans or ultrasound, and did they find any problems with the ovaries?

**Patient:** There was a small ovarian cyst, but it was a little one. <sup>6</sup>

**Doctor:** Just a single one?

**Patient:** Yes <sup>7</sup>

I have a lot of adhesions from a previous events.

**Doctor:** So you have had ovarian cysts removed in the past?

**Patient:** I had very heavy periods in my late teens and was becoming virtually anaemic and the cyst was found on routine examination. <sup>8</sup>

**Doctor:** [Have there been] changes in your periods, or changes in your physiological reactions?

**Patient:** Periods have been a bit haywire. I had an abnormal smear last summer and had colposcopy last June, and over the last year...It used to be very regular...the cycle has gone a bit haywire: from nineteen to thirty days...they used to be bang on twenty-eight, and they have got much heavier and much more painful. <sup>9</sup>

**Doctor:** When they did the colposcopy, did they do any cone biopsies or cautery or anything [else] on the cervix.

**Patient:** They burnt something out. <sup>10</sup>

**Doctor:** So what is your cycle like at the moment...you say it has gone a bit haywire...how would you describe your menstrual cycle at the moment?

**Patient:** Well, the last cycle was thirty days, the one before that was nineteen, the one before that was twenty-three. <sup>11</sup>

**Doctor:** And how many days did you bleed

**Patient:** About five which is more than it usually is. <sup>12</sup>

**Doctor:** ... and that is associated with some pain?

**Patient:** Yes it is very painful <sup>13</sup>

**Doctor:** Who is at home with you?

**Patient:** Just me. <sup>14</sup>

**Doctor:** Have you had a relationship in recent years?

**Patient:** No not in the last five or six. <sup>15</sup>

**Doctor:** ...and what about prior to five or six years ago, was there a boyfriend?



- Patient:** I am seen as the person who provides the support and the supervision to the team I work in, which can be a bind sometimes. I bring my ability to be empathic...that it my most useful attribute and I think it is also a skill. I can be quite outwardly calm in very difficult situations..I don't feel I fly off the handle or get hysterical about things. <sup>30</sup>
- Doctor:** [Do you have a strong sense of duty?]
- Patient:** I don't think that duty is the right word, I am very committed to my work and to people, to treating people.....kindly and with consideration. <sup>31</sup>
- Doctor:** Where does this commitment come from, do you think?
- Patient:** Well I think that some of it definitely comes from my parents, well the ability to succeed...I think I have translated that into commitment...and I think that's something I have always had...if I want to do something I want to do it well. I certainly want to be seen to be doing it well too. I like to get praise. <sup>32</sup>
- Doctor:** Do you have high personal standards in terms of what you will and will not accept from yourself?
- Patient:** Yes, yes, but that can become stressful as well, because my standards are sometimes different to other people's. What I...I mean now... that's why the last two years I have been less stressful...I work in a team where we basically each share the same attitude, approach, discipline...that is why I signed myself to an immediate working environment with people who share the same beliefs. <sup>33</sup>
- Doctor:** What do you drink mostly?
- Patient:** Coffee. <sup>34</sup>
- Patient:** ...The only way that I can cope with the amount of work that is coming in is to have, is to be perhaps almost rigid, certainly very organised..it is perhaps unkind to be extremely organised, so I am someone who makes lists...but in my personal life I like things to be very spontaneous, on a whim call someone and suggest we do something. <sup>35</sup>
- Doctor:** What about hobbies?
- Patient:** Theatre, music, writing, reading <sup>36</sup>
- I work on an empathic level, so that I can pick up what is not being said. But I am not seeing something before it has been shown [to] me. So I find children being abused when other people don't, but I'm on that kind of level...others had suspected before they came to me but didn't manage to get the information from the child. I'm not asking for information, just responding to what I get. <sup>37</sup>
- Doctor:** Do you cry?
- Patient:** Yes, very much so. <sup>38</sup>
- Doctor:** It is a catharsis for you, does it make you feel better?
- Patient:** Yes, I have trouble with anger...expressing anger, but not with tears. <sup>39</sup>
- Doctor:** How bad did things get in March?
- Patient:** I was just exhausting myself by going to work... also the pain was getting bad then. And [there had] been a couple of sessions with a client when I just had to stop because of the pain. I went off to have the laparoscopy and just never went back, basically. <sup>40</sup>

**Review appointment:**

- Doctor:** ...How was your trip up? <sup>41</sup>
- Patient:** Alright, busy train
- Doctor:** Yes, it would be on a Friday. So, I wonder if you could maybe just recap' on everything that has happened, so that I am just able to patch out in my own mind [the course of events] It was the twenty-fifth of July, and we sent out the remedy, didn't we, last time. What happened in the period following that?

- Patient:** Nothing for about five days. About five days later, I started to feel less tired and have more energy and that has continued. I find that I'm sleeping a normal eight or nine hours instead of fourteen to sixteen..... A lot of the symptoms have gone, some other ones have gone too. <sup>42</sup>
- Doctor:** Which ones do you think are the most obvious?
- Patient:** The pain I was having is much less frequent. It hasn't happened at all in the last fortnight...just the odd twinge. <sup>43</sup>
- Doctor:** Periods?
- Patient:** Well, I've had three since I took the remedy. They're mainly early...sort of twenty-three, twenty-four days, but the first two were less painful, less heavy. The last one felt like it wasn't as good but it certainly wasn't as bad or as painful or as heavy as they had been. The pattern of bleeding has changed too. <sup>44</sup>
- Doctor:** In what way?
- Patient:** Slower to start and slower to stop. <sup>45</sup>
- Doctor:** How about the skin generally?
- Patient:** I have had some itchiness but nothing really to make note of. The temperature has got better. You remember I used to be either very cold or very hot. That seems to have evened out. It's like the thermostat has started working again. <sup>46</sup>
- Doctor:** How have you been in your mood and in your general well-being?
- Patient:** Well, happier, but then I've got more energy. I was getting really down about how long I'd been off work and how I was feeling. It seems now that I've got more energy back that my mood has lightened. I'm putting that down to my response to how I was feeling. <sup>47</sup>
- Doctor:** The things that are left that need really to be addressed.... The things that are most important are the abdominal symptoms. The remaining abdominal symptoms?
- Patient:** Yes. <sup>48</sup>
- Doctor:** Are there any other symptoms that remain, that are a problem for you?
- Patient:** No. If I can get rid of the distension and the gurgling I'll be happy. <sup>49</sup>
- Doctor:** When.....Is there a pattern to the symptoms in the course of the day at all, according to the....
- Patient:** I think that it's better in the morning... or after a period of not eating or drinking anything. <sup>50</sup>
- Doctor:** So fasting improves it?
- Patient:** Yes. <sup>51</sup>

### Second Review Appointment.

- Doctor:** Now I've got your letter. I'm sorry I haven't responded fully to you. So... maybe we could just start with an update on what's been happening since I saw you last. Some things have improved and other things have remained pretty much static, is that right?
- Patient:** Yes. Most things have improved because I'm back at work now. <sup>52</sup>
- Doctor:** What things have changed additionally to the last visit in October do you think?
- Patient:** Less exhaustion, although I still don't feel that I'm back to what I was, but that's certainly improved. I haven't had any pain... abdominal pain at all. I think the distension is less. It's occasionally there, but it's less. <sup>53</sup>