



discover.ai

Understanding Experiences of Periods

Relatable yet Relegated:
The consequences of hiding menstruation away, and what we can do to create change



About us

discover.ai

Discover.ai is all about exploring rich and relevant content gathered from sources in the online world, to identify honest and authentic insights and ideas. For each brief we receive, we hand pick the places in the online world to go to, in order to feed our project with the most meaningful content.

The content we gather will often include, for example, narratives from experts and organisations websites, activists and NGOs, influencers and bloggers, online journalism, emergent brand websites, and conversations from real people in the form of conversational forums, feedback and review sites and relevant social media conversation.

To find out more, contact Rose Crabb at info@discover.ai



Bloody Good Period is a charity that fights for menstrual equity and the rights of all people who bleed. We believe that no-one should be at a disadvantage just because they menstruate.

Many refugees, people in the asylum system and those living in poverty simply cannot afford period products. People who menstruate suffer because of the culture of embarrassment and shame that exists around this natural, biological process.

We give period products to those who can't afford them, and provide menstrual education to those less likely to access it. And we help everybody talk about periods. We have partnered with more than 100 organisations around the country, helping more women and people who menstruate have bloody good periods.

Through our Bloody Good Employers initiative, we have set our sights on UK workplaces. Based on 2021 research with both employers and employees, which showed a need for change and open conversations about menstruation in the workplace, we now have a year-long training and accreditation programme. This will drive huge change and improve the lives of people at work, nationwide.

To find out more, contact us through hello@bloodygoodperiod.com



Periods are normal, regular everyday occurrences, a shared experience for over half of the population. Yet so many of us know so little about them. Typically hidden away from public discourse and spaces, we often don't see, hear or speak about menstruation. With this report, we're setting out to change that.

Bloody Good Period's origins were in the digital space. We were born out of a personal Facebook status, posted by our founder Gabby Jahanshahi-Edlin, asking for donations of period products to an asylum seeker drop-in centre that hadn't proactively thought to provide them. Six years on, this analysis of digital discussions on menstruation uncovers the multiple ways in which, just like that drop-in centre, our societal infrastructure and support systems simply don't factor in the reality of menstruation. It looks at online discussions amongst individuals, activists, academics, charities and brands within the UK in 2022, shedding light on personal and collective experiences of menstruation.

There's a lot to say! The research shows 13 themes each exploring a different aspect of menstrual experience and more than 100 sources. There is undeniably a gap between how periods are experienced and cared for and the support on offer in England.

Periods for the majority are at best an **Often-Unpredictable Everyday Stressor**, where constant considerations require ongoing navigation in public spaces that aren't designed with a monthly flow in mind. Furthermore, all of these considerations can change - both within the monthly cycle and across the life course.

At worst, though, periods and the current treatment of people who menstruate is at odds with the basic human right to respect, dignity, education and a life free of discrimination, as explored within **Navigating New Environments, Health Over Hygiene and Period Poverty**.

These experiences are all intertwined with individual symptoms. Some people will experience mild symptoms, while for others, symptoms will be unbearably severe. Within **Powerful Pains** we look at how the majority of periods are synonymous with some degree of discomfort, ranging from low level abdominal cramps to debilitating pain linked to underlying health conditions. This is further exacerbated by a lack of awareness from individuals and healthcare practitioners, which means many people's experiences are dismissed or disbelieved, and they don't get the crucial help they need.

In **Cyclical Fluctuations** we highlight symptoms that are the proverbial cherry on top of a bloody sundae, including bloating, migraines, hair growth, weight fluctuations, skin changes, shifts in energy levels and mood changes.

All of these themes demonstrate how the simple fact of having a period can shape participation in social, professional and personal lives. We explore this further in **Workplace Worries, Educational Barriers and Staying Active**.

[continues...]

This is all intensified by the **Societal Stigma** attached to periods and the silence that surrounds them. The impact of this affects how those who menstruate partake in daily activities, typically inhibiting their ability to learn, work, exercise and move through public spaces. This inevitably has a toll on bodies, livelihoods and health outcomes.

Throughout the report we provide **Intersectional Nuances** - these are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to provoke and expand thinking about experiences which are often ignored, or forgotten, when discussing menstruation. These 'forgotten' experiences are explored in-depth within inclusive periods, where we acknowledge the specific needs of people with disabilities and all genders who menstruate. We know that the impacts of menstruation are magnified for minoritised groups - so we endeavour to reflect the experience of all people who menstruate.

Finally we reflect on the fact that 22% of British women and girls have relied on free period products from work, school, food banks or other charity. This is the reality of **period poverty** in Britain. At a time when the UK is experiencing a severe cost of living crisis, increasing numbers of people will not have access to safe, appropriate menstrual products, facilities and education. In this report we look at the very real impacts of this lack of access.

On the flip side of these numerous issues are the many potential **Opportunities For Impact**. Just some are:

- Designing public spaces and facilities with the visibility of periods and all bodies in mind
- Including free resources such as menstrual products in these spaces, so that period care is accessible to everyone regardless of their financial situation.
- Working with and incentivising employers, unions, teachers, health practitioners, educational bodies, healthcare bodies and governmental bodies to introduce or follow existing guidance.
- Brands considering how they can shape their audiences' understanding of these issues, and funding into product solutions and research

Crucially, improving current Government provisions - for menstrual products, clean facilities and benefits allocation - which would transform the menstrual experience of students, people in custody, NHS hospital patients and refugee and asylum seekers.

If we collectively acknowledged the realities of menstruation, and factor it into how our society works, the benefits would be countless. More people, more fully able to participate in education, politics, sport, workplaces, life, society. It's time to stop pretending that periods just don't exist, and show that the needs of women and people who menstruate actually matter, with appropriate policies, product provisions, legislation, education, healthcare and other support mechanisms in place.

Rachel Grocott

CEO Bloody Good Period



About the research method...

The Challenge

In March 2022, the UK government released the Women's Health Strategy, a welcome signal of an increased focus on gynaecological and reproductive health.

Whilst menstruation is one of the key areas mentioned, it is talked about only as it relates to specific health interventions and conditions. This is often representative of the way that menstruation is talked about, considered and researched – and that's when it's talked about at all. Bloody Good Period knows that menstruation is not something that is only thought about or experienced when there's a 'problem', but that it is a constant, recurring and ever-present reality for all people who menstruate, through their menstruating lives. There is a real need to start highlighting these everyday experiences, in order to identify unmet needs and drive real change.

The Question

What can we learn from diverse online conversations about how menstruation impacts people during the course of their lives, within the UK?

The Goal

To build a more complete picture of menstrual needs and their impacts across the life course, from puberty to menopause, that are currently not widely acknowledged; and to help expand our thinking about menstrual experiences which are often ignored or forgotten.

What we did and where we looked

- Discover.ai pulled together 105 sources, including websites, academic journals and social media data from 2020 to 2022 of diverse, authentic, and human sources around menstruation and menstrual experiences. This includes the words of everyday people who menstruate, activists and campaigners, researchers and experts, Health Care Professionals, and brands
- We used our platform which uses AI technology to sort through the data, find language and quotes which express emotions and needs, and simplifies the reading process, so that our team of analysts can find the most useful and relevant data to build the project
- We ran a qualitative deep dive analysis into our rich and diverse data set to find the nuggets of insight that express the themes and unlock opportunity

A note on terms we're using:

In line with BGP principles, all the analysis uses gender-inclusive and shame-free language when discussing periods. However, the quotes represent the authentic, unmoderated voices of people online, and therefore may not always adhere to these principles – please take care when reading them.

We have also included a glossary of common terminology to help navigate this work, [which you can find here](#).

Always On, Always There

Highlighting the ways menstruation impacts people’s day to day lives, showing up in their bodies and emotions, we found a range of experiences. Menstruation impacts lives daily - whether due to pain, discomfort, difficulty or inconvenience.

In our research we saw clear expressions of the ways in which menstruation impacts people’s day-to-day lives, showing up in their bodies and emotions. We found that experiences could range from a low-level stressor to debilitating pains, and that the needs and nuances could fluctuate across a month, a year or even the course of a lifetime. The ‘everyday’ nature of these experiences leads to minimisation and normalisation of pain, discomfort, difficulty and inconvenience.

What this means is that people often have to deal with the combination of factors that make up their own menstrual experience in environments which are not designed to support them. This creates a need for constant strategising around product access or toilet locations, adding to the mental load and policing who isn’t welcome in public spaces. It also means constant pain management strategies, to manage symptoms from the low level to the debilitating. The typical lack of understanding, education and provision around how menstrual and hormonal cycles impact people’s lives means many are deprived of knowledge which would empower them to navigate their lives more comfortably. This is especially true at key moments of change, such as puberty or menopause.

What this looks like...

An Often-Unpredictable Everyday Stressor

Periods can make everyday life stressful, and for many, unpredictable. Navigating cramps, leaks, discomfort, remembering products, locating toilets, planning for travel - these are all frequent stressors, and can be exacerbated for those with unpredictable bleeds. Ironically, stress can delay periods and cause greater unpredictability. This is particularly challenging for people with limited financial means, who may not have resources that can ease these considerations.

Cyclical Fluctuations

Bodies are not static, and how they change both throughout a monthly cycle, and within a lifetime, can seem unknowable. Skin, hair, energy, nutrition, mood, weight and iron levels can all vary and people need support with the side effects of menstrual cycles that go ‘beyond the bleed’. This is particularly felt by people experiencing the peri-menopause or menopause, which can exacerbate these symptoms and be linked to further bodily changes.

Powerful Pains

For many, pain and periods are inextricably linked. Most people who menstruate experience some form of menstrual cramps, and for those with painful conditions, dealing with debilitating pain is a monthly (or constant) reality. Additionally this is typically in a context where they can’t speak openly, or do not even know what condition is causing their pain. Many groups who are historically marginalised, including but not only racially minoritised groups, experience the systemic issue of dismissal or disbelief by medical professionals and peers when sharing their experiences of pain, leading to worse health outcomes and greater mortality rates.

“
Our convos are like lol I’ve randomly been bleeding for four months or like haha my IUD fell out when I pulled out my menstrual cup it was wild and this is just how we live life.

[Source](#)

“
I’ve been experiencing periods every three weeks, and mid cycle I get the most awful day or two of low mood and crushing stress coupled with that gurgling guts...

[Source](#)

“
How old were you when you first realised periods were not meant to hurt so badly it ruined your everyday life.

[Source](#)

Humanising Health

Demonstrates menstruation as a key part of people’s health and wellbeing, and the impact that proper education and care could have on health outcomes.

In our research we saw that menstruation is a key element of people’s health and wellbeing, and the impact that proper education and care could have on health outcomes. There is a clear need to treat menstrual health and wellbeing as part of a broader health conversation, in a way that acknowledges the complex historical associations with ‘hygiene’ - which carries negative, shame-heavy connotations.

What this means is that conversations around menstrual health and wellbeing have to be part of a broader campaign to ensure that the health needs of people who menstruate are understood by healthcare professionals. This also needs to tackle societal challenges such as certain groups being disbelieved about their own health experiences, as well as unequal access to healthcare. This must, however, be done in a way where people who menstruate are not made to feel that their experiences are ‘dirty’ or shameful.

What this looks like...

Health Over Hygiene

Menstrual health vs “feminine hygiene”: debates around the language of sanitation versus core wellness is an important part of fighting stigma.

At the same time, it’s also vital to understand that for those without access to clean water, products or spaces, these issues will be the primary concern.

Health Indicators

Lack of education and research about menstruation and associated conditions means medical professionals can miss the warning signs of heavy, irregular or changing periods, or how they intersect with chronic illnesses - particularly for groups already vulnerable to medical dismissal or misdiagnosis.



To manage menstruation hygienically and with dignity, it is essential that women and girls have access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene; but it’s currently a neglected issue.

[Source](#)



Misdiagnosis surrounding pre-reproductive menstrual conditions has created a culture where women are forced to take a ‘grin and bear it’ approach to the subject of gynaecological pain and distress.

[Source](#)



These products are marketed as making you feel ‘clean’ and ‘fresh’ on your period (side note: periods are NOT dirty).

[Source](#)

Bloody Barriers

Presents the key barriers to accessing equitable and necessary period care, which impact all areas of this research.

In our research we saw that there are key barriers to accessing equitable and necessary period care, which impact all the areas covered in this report. These are period poverty – the lack of access to safe, hygienic menstrual products, facilities and education; and menstrual taboo – the shame and stigma around talking about periods in public and private settings. The Government has begun to recognise this through its Department of Education, Department of Health and Home Office period product provision for people in schools, colleges, custody and hospitals.

What this means is that for every area discussed in this report, the impact is heightened by the culture of shame, judgement and stigma which surrounds the topic of menstruation, contributing to the lack of discussion and support which leads to negative experiences, and slows down the solution of problems. At the same time, it reminds us that true menstrual equity can only be achieved when everyone, regardless of their financial situation, has access to acceptable menstrual experiences, and when considering the themes which have emerged, to always remember that the impact, experiences and difficulties will be heightened for those experiencing period poverty.

What this looks like...

Period Poverty

Period poverty is when you don't have access to safe, hygienic menstrual products, facilities or education. It is a complex societal issue which intersects issues such as shame, financial access, healthcare and wellbeing. The current treatment of people who menstruate is at odds with the basic human right to respect, dignity, education and a life free of discrimination.

Societal Stigma

Menstrual taboos are the normative beliefs across various cultures and traditions that menstruation should remain hidden and not spoken about. Taboos create stigma and shame, where people feel, or are made to feel, uncomfortable, unhappy or judged for discussing or seeking help for a common and natural bodily process and the ways menstruation might affect them. This means people might lack vital support and education around menstruation, leading to a lack of awareness of serious conditions and health indicators. The shame this creates is one of the key factors which contributes to this and exacerbates period poverty.



In the UK we have significant challenges with period poverty, despite being one of the richest countries in the world.

[Source](#)



In a society where periods are suffocated in stigma, surely the best route is to educate women from school age that there is nothing to be ashamed of
Period Poverty: Where Will the Fight Go Next.

[Source](#)



1 in 4 UK women and girls struggle to afford period products as cost-of-living crisis takes its toll.

[Source](#)

Periods in Public

A view of the experience of periods within public spaces and the broader impact on the social, professional and personal lives of people who menstruate.

In our research we saw that the experience of having a period in a public space, such as work, school, or out exercising, has its own nuances, norms and challenges. This is not just confined to the day-to-day reality of the period itself, but the broader impact on the social, professional and personal lives of people who menstruate. We saw that this experience can impact people in familiar, every-day environments, and those who are navigating new and unfamiliar spaces and contexts, such as refugees and asylum seekers within the UK.

What this means is that our public spaces and institutions need to find ways of supporting the needs of all the people who menstruate within them. They might need support and resources to help them provide what's needed in the best and most effective ways. Looking at the day-to-day reality of periods in public, but stepping back and seeing the plethora of difficulties faced over a lifetime, shows forms of inequality which hold back people who menstruate - going beyond the fact of having a period.

What this looks like...

Education Barriers

For young people who menstruate, there is a troubling overlap between period shame, poverty and access to education. Young people, for whom periods are already often a time of stress and anxiety, may find their access to education, either via attention or physical presence, reduced when they start periods.

Workplace Worries

In the majority of workplaces, many people find themselves navigating menstrual shame and access to products. Using up leave for period pain, or gritting their teeth and working through it because they cannot afford to lose a day's pay - this can have a real effect on people's workplace wellbeing and professional success. This is particularly challenging for individuals in low paid and insecure employment which may include shift work, unpaid leave and monitored breaks - none of which support fluctuating menstrual needs.

“

We're at a turning point in England period poverty is worse but schools aren't taking up the government's free products. Our cultural attitudes haven't caught up.

Source

“

58% respondents under 25 years old told employers they had the flu or a stomach bug as justification for absenteeism when they were in fact experiencing period related discomfort.

Source

What this looks like...

Staying Active

Exercise is a space in tension with menstruation. There are practical product challenges, alongside the broader societal issue of whether, from teenage years, regular bleeding is causing people who menstruate to define themselves as 'not sporty'. This often leads to them opting out of activities that can benefit period symptoms (easing cramps and improving mood), but negatively impacts on health and life outcomes.

Navigating New Environments

There are significant challenges when menstruating as an asylum seeker or refugee. Fleeing from one's own home country and adjusting to a new one, and even having your freedom limited within a Home Office Detention Centre, exacerbates many menstrual health needs. Navigating unfamiliar health systems, a new language, limited and inadequate cleaning facilities, obtaining period products with limited financial resources or autonomy, and the continuous fear created by a hostile environment all have substantial and wide-ranging implications on a person's menstrual cycle.



Girls in the programme will be offered free girl-focused exercise sessions and gym memberships as well as free period products and digital resource packs from Hey Girls to help them feel confident enough to take part in sport.

[Source](#)



My Ukranian friend asked for menstrual wear from her refugee coordinator and received a roll of toilet roll and a bottle of bleach.

[Source](#)

Inclusive Periods

Looking at those who might be forgotten, ignored or discriminated against in the conversation for period care and equity, and the intersectional needs of different groups.

In our research we have seen that there are specific people or groups who might be forgotten, ignored or discriminated against in the conversation for period care and equity, and that different groups have different intersectional needs. In the full report, each theme is supported by an exploration of different intersectional considerations which are not exhaustive, but are intended to provoke and expand thinking about experiences which are often ignored, or forgotten, when discussing menstruation.

What this means is that moving towards menstrual equity means considering the specific needs of different groups, and making sure to include those who might not have their lived experiences considered. Here, we focus specifically on gender-inclusivity in one section, and people with disabilities, people with additional needs, and neurodivergent people, as two groups whose specific pragmatic, access and emotional needs are often ignored, but who were particularly represented in the online data.

What this looks like...

People Who Menstruate

Acknowledging and serving the needs and experiences of people who menstruate who are not in cis bodies, from trans men (including any accompanying dysphoria), trans women (who may have hormonal cyclical fluctuations) and non-binary people, is vital to achieving menstrual equity.

Designing for Disability

People with disabilities, people with additional needs and neurodivergent people with periods face a range of challenges which need to be inclusively and sensitively met. Additional barriers for these communities include an increase in shame and stigma, barriers to education, and lack of access to products and services.



Trans men have experienced periods and pregnancy scares, have known what it's like to be capable of and not want children, and have even experienced miscarriage.

[Source](#)



We conducted a survey on 'Periods & Disability' which found that two in every five Disabled people who responded are dissatisfied with the period product they use.

[Source](#)

Opportunities for Impact

This research, and the many opportunities it highlights, speak directly to the ambitions and actions outlined within the UK's Women's Health Strategy 2022.

That they complement each other is no coincidence. The call for evidence public survey carried out by the government heard from diverse groups of women across the lifecycle - much as this research has through its social listening tool. It is therefore key that the UK Government enacts its commitment to delivering these ambitions and actions over the next ten years. This is especially true given the government's previous slow progress on period poverty, with commitments made in 2019 (including a spend of £250,000) having not yet been delivered - as highlighted by BGP's ['Paying for a Period' campaign](#) (May 2022).

Research

Fund and conduct comprehensive research on:

1. The impact of menstruation on the individual, society and economy, including GDP
2. The relationship between low-level pain, impact of stress, exercise and other factors on menstrual experiences
3. Build in collecting data on menstrual health from existing systems and reports (for example, The Office for National Statistics Health Index and Producer Price inflation)
4. Monitor key indicators of period poverty
5. Improving clinical trial standards so they take into to account the menstrual cycle, factoring it into both participant recruitment and data collection
6. Developing a better understanding of the barriers faced by all genders and historically marginalised groups, within public, private and healthcare settings. Disseminate findings to be embedded into future healthcare provision, health policies and economic plans.

Policy

1. Learn from existing menstrual health policies developed by [Scotland](#), [India](#), [Kenya](#), [Australia](#), and [the UN](#).
2. Develop menstrual policies and supporting guidance at a governmental level which take into account hormonal cycle fluctuations and clinical standards such as [pain management](#). These should be implemented in healthcare, workplaces, education settings, public buildings, detention centres, prison and probation services and beyond to improve menstrual health at scale.
3. Work with UK local authorities to embed period care as part of their legal responsibility to ensure residents have their right to private life (which encompasses economic, social, cultural and leisure activities) met, as an essential part of health care. Ensure local authorities and other key stakeholders acknowledge the importance of this, and understand the risk of not acting. Government to incentivise employers, unions, teachers, health practitioners, educational bodies, healthcare bodies and governmental bodies to introduce or follow existing guidance on menstrual health.
4. Policies should consider appropriate standards including free product provision, bathroom facilities and design, toilet infrastructure and healthcare provision, in addition to accommodating individuals to navigate the changes of cycle fluctuations.
5. In the workplace, embed menstrual health into appropriate policies and practices, including flexible working and sick leave.
6. Policies should use gender inclusive language.

Learning, Guidance and Training

1. All materials and training should acknowledge the importance of menstrual health and wellbeing in meeting the basic human right of respect, dignity, education and a life free of discrimination.
2. Create and implement training for healthcare professionals specifically those in primary care, around menstrual, gynaecological and uterine health and specific conditions. Include training on pain management and clinical empathy which is rooted in the reality of lived experiences.
3. Update National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines on menstrual health conditions for healthcare professionals and primary care.
4. Improve the national guidance for educators, HM Prisons, Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Office of Refugee Resettlement's managerial teams to improve training and knowledge, and signpost to appropriate services.
5. Work with local education authorities to revisit the curriculum around menstrual health and wellbeing in schools to ensure that it is up-to-date, free of judgement or shame and educates all young people, inclusive of gender, disability and culture.
6. Provide information on menstrual health and care for adults and individuals outside of educational settings - including through public awareness campaigns, social prescribing pathways, building into existing health checks, brand messaging and utilising tech solutions.

Review existing provision

1. Review:
 - a. the effectiveness of the current provision from the Home Office's free period product provision to people in custody and NHS England's to patients in hospital
 - b. menstrual experiences in HM Prisons and NHS hospitals to identify concerns and ensure all people have access to accessible menstrual health services and products.
2. Review the current support available to asylum seekers and dependents for menstrual care.
3. Ensure that all current government interventions -including VAT removal on products and Department of Education's period product schemes for schools and colleges - are meeting intended outcomes, working effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of people who menstruate. This should include education and support being offered alongside product provision, safe and clean private toilet and shower facilities. Ensure adequate and ongoing evaluations are in place, and finance improvement of schemes if necessary.

Introduce new provision of period products and work towards accompanying culture change

1. Implement the provision of free period products in community centres, public spaces and buildings, accompanied by information and guidance on best practice, as well as data collection relating to the uptake of products - helping to ensure organisations provide resources in meaningful ways.
2. Adjust benefits for households with multiple people who menstruate.
3. Implement shame-reduction strategies in parallel with poverty-alleviating strategies, which establish new cultural norms and behaviours to normalise periods being present in public spaces.
4. Build within health services the use of technology to support personal understanding of cyclical changes, menstrual care and health, helping to capture possible underlying or chronic issues linked to periods.

There's a space for brands to:

1. Shape their audiences' understanding of the issues within this report, including the shame and stigma surrounding periods. Through the funding of research, marketing campaigns and branding, begin to proactively address these issues.
2. Fund innovation of menstrual products which would better support people with physical disabilities, people with additional needs and neurodivergent people, which centre their voices and account for different experiences of menstruation.

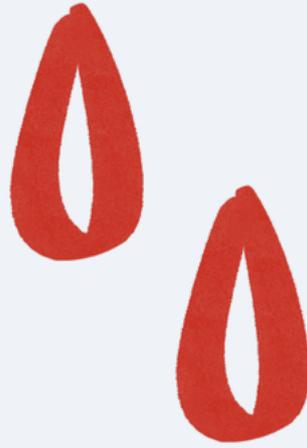
Conclusion

One of the greatest contradictions created by the fact that menstruation is a taboo topic is that on the one hand, it is silenced, underacknowledged and ignored, and on the other hand - it's everywhere, if you know where to look. We have used this whitepaper to show that menstruation is not an exceptional experience, only considered when something is wrong, but part of so many people's everyday lives. Discover.ai have been honoured to use our expertise in online research to help navigate this contradiction and bring it to life. For a long time, online has been a space where people have been able to talk about the things that might be silenced or shamed in professional, personal or insecure contexts, and this is what we have brought together. It's messy - we've seen brilliant healthcare professionals offering important guidance and genuine personal stories of misdiagnosis and dismissal right next to each other. We've seen the work of activists and charitable organisations alongside brands and corporations. We've seen brilliant examples of generosity and care, but also fear, isolation and trauma. But menstruation is a messy topic, and this whitepaper is designed to look at this mess head on, give it shape and voice, and provide clear and actionable steps on where to go from here.

The work that Bloody Good Period does, and continues to do, is crucial to ensuring that no one is at a disadvantage just because they bleed. This whitepaper shows the importance of talking openly and honestly about this taboo topic, raising the voices of those who are already talking about it - whether campaigning activists, or individuals sharing their experiences - and then learning from those conversations to create real impactful actions.

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Acknowledgements

This report explores the different ways menstruation is experienced and perceived with the aim of sharing real experiences and inspiring action. It was written by **Hannah Marcus** and **Rose Crabb** at **Discover.ai** and was born out of a collaboration with **Emma Defoe** at **Bloody Good Period**.

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Read the full project

This report is based on findings from a Discover.ai Springboards project. In particular, the research unearthed important insights into the everyday experiences of menstruation, and their impacts across the life course, that are currently not widely acknowledged. These are supported by opportunities for impact in research, policy, learning, guidance, training, public provision and infrastructure. If you are interested in understanding these impact opportunities more deeply and reading further quotes, including both consumer verbatim and expert opinion, get in touch with [Discover.ai](https://discover.ai) or visit bloodygoodperiod.com for a copy of the full project.

Glossary of Key Terms

Adenomyosis is a condition where the tissue that normally lines the womb starts to grow within the muscular wall of the womb, causing debilitating pain in the lower abdomen and pelvis.

Cis means ‘on the same side as’. A cisgender person identifies with and aligns with the gender identity they were assigned at birth.

Dysmenorrhea is a condition which causes severe cramps and pain during a person’s period.

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows in other places, such as the ovaries and fallopian tubes, often causing debilitating pain and heavy periods.

Fibroids are non-cancerous growths in or around the womb which can cause heavy, painful periods and long-term pain.

Global majority - a collective term for people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as ‘ethnic minorities’.

Intersectionality is defined by the Oxford dictionary as “the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Originally coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Menarche is a person’s first menstrual cycle or period.

Menstruation is when blood and tissue from your uterus comes out of the vagina. It usually happens around every month.

Non-binary - a non-binary individual indicates a person whose identity is neither male or female

(though may include aspects of one or both) and exists outside the gender binary. Non-binary is often used as an umbrella term for people who identify as genderfluid, gender-questioning, gender non-conforming or in any way challenging established social constructs of gender. Non-binary is sometimes shortened to NB or “enby”.

PCOS, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, is a common condition that affects how the ovaries work. It can cause symptoms such as irregular periods and excess facial or body hair.

People who menstruate - a term to include the experiences of women, girls, trans and non-binary people who have periods

PMS, Pre-Menstrual Syndrome, is a combination of symptoms that many people who menstruate get about a week or two before their period.

POI, Primary Ovarian Insufficiency, or **premature ovarian failure**, are both terms for early menopause - when a person’s ovaries stop making normal levels of certain hormones, particularly the hormone oestrogen.

Pre-Menstrual Dysphoric Disorder is a severe and chronic condition which can cause extreme emotional and behavioural symptoms which can lead to suicidal thoughts.

Transgender can apply to any group or individual whose gender identity differs from what they were assigned at birth. Transgender can also apply to a group or individual who has transcended culturally defined categories of gender. Transgender is often shortened to “trans”.

All medical terminology has been defined using the NHS website as a reference.