



TEACHER'S NOTES

WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR PAMELA?

OVERVIEW

Aimed at **key stage 3** pupils.

In this activity, the class will answer comprehension questions after watching the film, **Pamela's Story**.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To learn about the impact of Sickle Cell Anaemia on daily life

CURRICULUM LINKS

KS3: Life processes are supported by the organisation of cells into tissues, organs and body systems

you will NEED

Student worksheets

Activity

This activity can be completed individually or in pairs after watching **Pamela's Story film** on the **Genes Are Us** website.

ANSWERS

1. How does Pamela feel on a day-to-day basis?

Each day varies a great deal. Pamela experiences unpredictable pain - sometimes she feels fine and sometimes she is in immense pain, which can affect her during the day or night.

2. Where does Pamela experience pain most frequently?

Hips

3. How does Pamela describe the pain that she feels?

Pamela describes her pain as intense. She says it can either be very sharp or more like a gentle hammering that builds up, creating pressure until she feels like she's going to snap.

4. Why does Pamela feel that people are not able to understand her condition?

People may find it difficult because there are no visible signs of Sickle Cell Anaemia and so although she experiences pain, no-one can see it and she looks healthy.

5. How did Pamela get Sickle Cell Anaemia?

She inherited it. Both of her parents have the sickle cell trait (which means they are healthy carriers - ie. they have one copy of the gene that causes the condition). Pamela is affected because she has inherited two copies of the gene causing Sickle Cell Anaemia.

6. Why is it important that Pamela receives regular blood transfusions?

Regular blood transfusions reduce the amount of sickle-shaped red blood cells in Pamela's blood.

7. How does Pamela feel when she has to miss school?

Pamela worries about what she's missing and how much work she will have to do to catch up. She also feels guilty for not being able to do any schoolwork when she's at home and she finds it difficult to watch others progress onto university now that she is two years behind them.

8. What is the main message that Pamela wants viewers to think about?

Pamela wants to be believed and make people understand that although she doesn't look like she has anything wrong with her she goes through a lot.

FURTHER INFORMATION

See Pamela's Story Teacher Factsheet on Sickle Cell Anaemia for basic information.

For more detailed information, link to the patient support group:

www.sicklecellsociety.org

FOR MORE RESOURCES LIKE THESE AND TO SIGN UP FOR JEANS FOR GENES DAY, VISIT US AT WWW.JEANSFORGENES.ORG

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A Centre for Genetics in Healthcare



Sickle Cell Anaemia is an inherited blood disorder that affects red blood cells. People with Sickle Cell Anaemia have red blood cells that can become sickle-shaped.

When red blood cells become sickle-shaped, they can block small blood vessels, such as capillaries. This can stop blood reaching some parts of the body. Tissues and organs that do not receive a normal blood flow can be damaged and this can lead to severe pain.

Pamela often suffers from intense pain, which is unpredictable, and can last from hours to weeks.

This can affect her mood, social life and ability to go to school. Although Pamela's pain is not visible, it has a profound effect on her daily life.



- 1 How does Pamela feel on a day-to-day basis?
- 2 Where does Pamela experience pain most frequently?
- 3 How does Pamela describe the pain that she feels?
- 4 Why does Pamela feel that people are not able to understand her condition?
- 5 How did Pamela get Sickle Cell Anaemia?
- 6 Why is it important that Pamela receives regular blood transfusions?
- 7 How does Pamela feel when she has to miss school?
- 8 What is the main message that Pamela wants viewers to think about?

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