Exploring inequalities in managing menstrual symptoms using shopping data

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Background

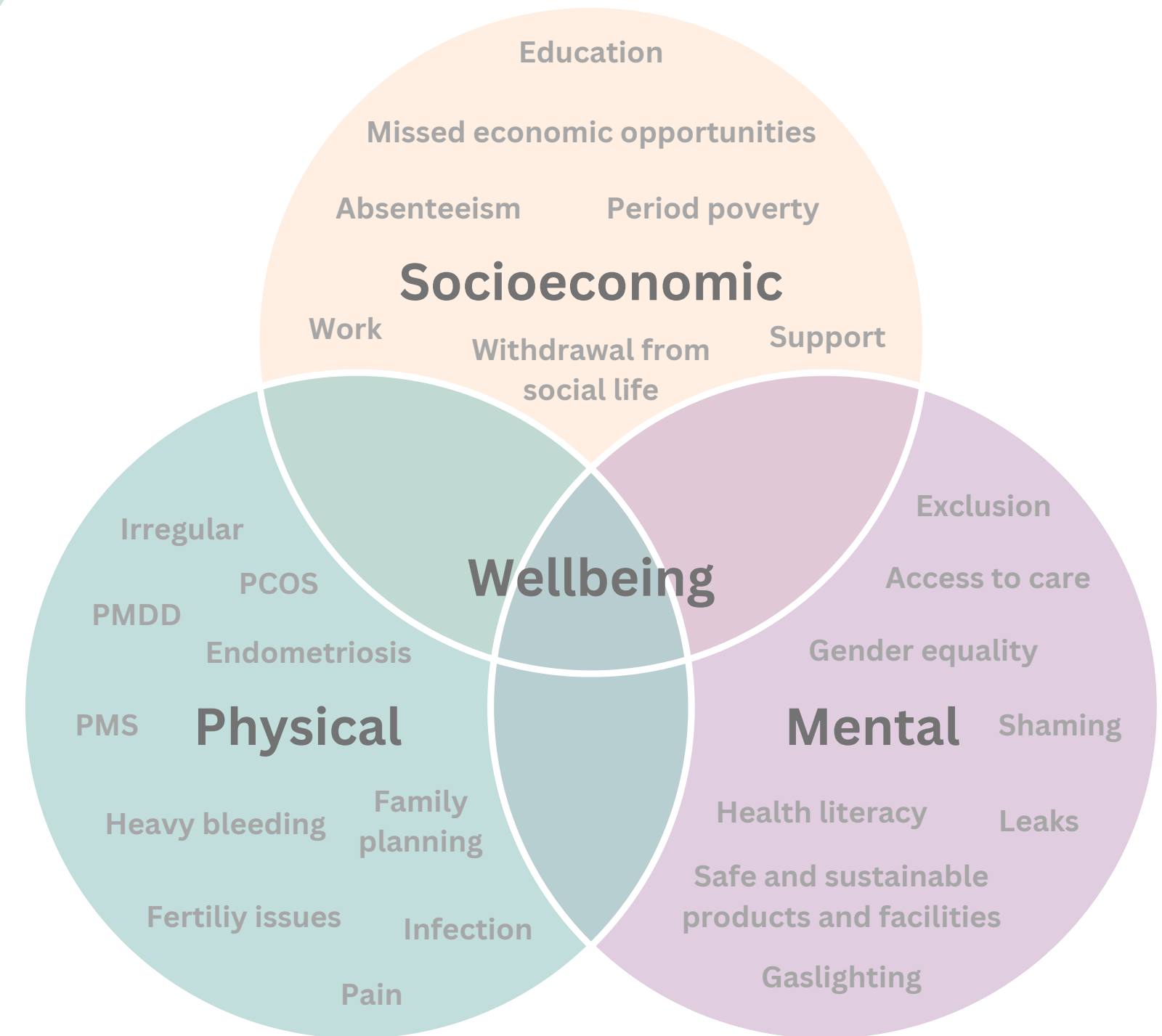## Menstrual education

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The gender data gap

- Women, on average, live longer but spend less of their lives in good health
- Menstruation is an important vital sign yet its patterns and management are poorly understood
- Menstrual symptoms can impact physical, mental and socioeconomic wellbeing

Socioeconomic
- Education
- Missed economic opportunities
- Absenteeism
- Period poverty
- Work
- Withdrawal from social life
- Support

Wellbeing

Physical
- Irregular
- PCOS
- PMDD
- Endometriosis
- PMS
- Heavy bleeding
- Family planning
- Fertiliy issues
- Infection
- Pain

Mental
- Exclusion
- Access to care
- Gender equality
- Shaming
- Health literacy
- Leaks
- Safe and sustainable products and facilities
- Gaslighting

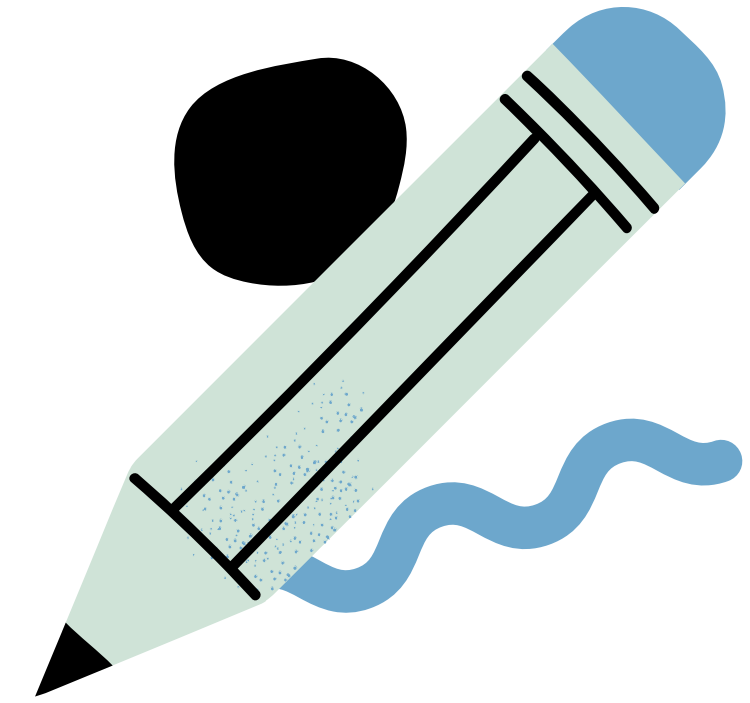poppy.taylor@bristol.ac.uk

Approaches

Research questions

- What strategies are used to manage menstrual symptoms and what inequalities may be linked to these?
- What are the public attitudes?
- How useful is shopping data as a tool for researching health?
- Could we identify areas which might benefit from dedicated pain clinics?

Methods

- Review the literature
- Consult the public for guidance and interpretation of the findings
- Study retail data to identify products and patterns in purchasing
- Conduct surveys and data analysis with linkage to shopping data at a national level in the UK

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Reviewing the literature

Scoping review:
- Prevalence of menstrual symptoms
- Menstrual management strategies

Prevalence estimates

Dysmenorrhea affects 17-91% of people who menstruate (NICE, 2023)

Discuss reasons

Explore why estimates vary so widely

Management strategies

What questions have been asked so far and how are people managing

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Summary

I would like to thank my

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  - Professor Laura Howe
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  - Bristol Medical School (PHS)
  - The Health Foundation
- Colleagues at Digital Footprints Lab

"When I first had my period I thought I was dying"

Menstrual education study participant

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