THE ISSUE:

Raising awareness of endometriosis in teenage girls (15-20) and their mothers.

Endometriosis is a gynaecological condition which affects 10% of the population. There is an average wait of seven to ten years for a diagnosis, and it can be debilitating, life-changing and is commonly misunderstood. There is very little awareness of the condition in the general public, and even less so in young girls, the age at which most symptoms begin. By raising awareness of the condition in this age-group and in their parents, teenage girls can hopefully seek help earlier and prevent the condition worsening and impacting upon their lives significantly.

OBJECTIVES:

+ To raise awareness of endometriosis in teen girls and their mothers

+ Reduce the average 7-10 year wait for diagnosis

+ To provide information for sufferers

+ To recommend doctors, strategies and services for girls

+ To destigmatise endometriosis

Corina Cannell

PERSONA 1

This persona is based on the majority of teenage girls with endometriosis symptoms, who don't know what endometriosis is, and don't realise their pain is different.

Behaviour

Mia has started having a lot of pain during her period which is **getting worse**, but she thinks she is **just experiencing normal period pain**. She is missing a lot of school and her grades are slipping which is **causing her a lot of anxiety.** She has never heard of endometriosis, and as she doesn't go to the doctor often, she is frightened of discussing something this personal with them.

"SHE THINKS SHE IS JUST EXPERIENCING NORMAL PERIOD PAIN."

This persona is helpful to the topic because they don't know anything about endometriosis, therefore they will need a basic educational campaign to help them realise their symptoms aren't normal and inform them as to what the condition is. The focus needs to be on getting back to normal life.

Name: Mia
Age: 16
Occupation: Student

Primary Motivations:
+ Do well in school & sport
+ Manage her pain better

PERSONA 2

Persona 2 is based on the typical busy, working mother of a teenage daughter, who is not familiar with endometriosis and doesn't know where to turn for help.

Behaviour

Yvonne is a mother of two teenage girls, and has noticed her youngest has **not been herself** - in a lot of pain, and **missing a lot of school**. She spends a lot of time worrying about her, and **uses social media to connect with other mothers** for advice, because she is **unsure of where to turn for help**. She wants to make sure her daughter is healthy and happy, and see her succeed in life.

"SHE IS UNSURE OF WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP."

This persona relates to the topic as she represents most mothers in this situation, who know little about endometriosis and don't know where to turn. As with persona 1, a basic educational campaign is important to inform, as well as advice about where to turn for help with an emphasis on connecting with other mothers.

Name: Yvonne
Age: 42
Occupation: Accountant

Primary Motivations:
+ See her daughter healthy
+ Be a good mother

PERSONA 3

Persona 3 represents a smaller group of teen sufferers who are familiar with endometriosis, but struggle to find appropriate help for treatment.

Behaviour

Ella's period pain has **progressively gotten worse**, affecting her on most days over the last few years. After a lot of research, she and her mother **suspect endometriosis to be the cause**. Her **GP dismisses her pain as normal** and recommends medication which doesn't help enough. This leaves her **frustrated and uncertain** about where to turn. She knows she needs to see an endometriosis specialist, but **can't find a GP to refer her**.

"HER GP DISMISSES HER PAIN AS NORMAL."

This persona will interact with the campain differently to persona 1, as she has a good knowledge of endometriosis already. The focus for this persona is to provide resources, including GP and specialist lists, that will help her access the help she needs.

Name: Ella
Age: 17
Occupation: Student

Primary Motivations:
+ Seek the right help
+ To be heard

PERSONA 4

This persona represents a mother who has endometriosis herself, and suspects it in her daughter. She seeks help and support from other mothers.

Behaviour

Rachel has noticed worrying symptoms in her daughter that r**esemble her own experience with endometriosis**. She is **frightened and upset** that her daughter may have to go through what she did to get treatment. She is **frustrated by the lack of knowledge** and concern by the GPs they have visited, and instead turns to social media to **connect with other mothers** who have similar experiences. She **doesn't know where to go for help**.

"SHE IS FRIGHTENED HER DAUGHTER MAY GO THROUGH WHAT SHE DID."

Persona 4 relates to the campaign as she has experience with endometriosis herself and therefore knows a lot about it. The campaign will interact with her by providing GP and specialist lists, as well as offering a community for sufferers and their families to connect with each other.

Name: Rachel
Age: 40
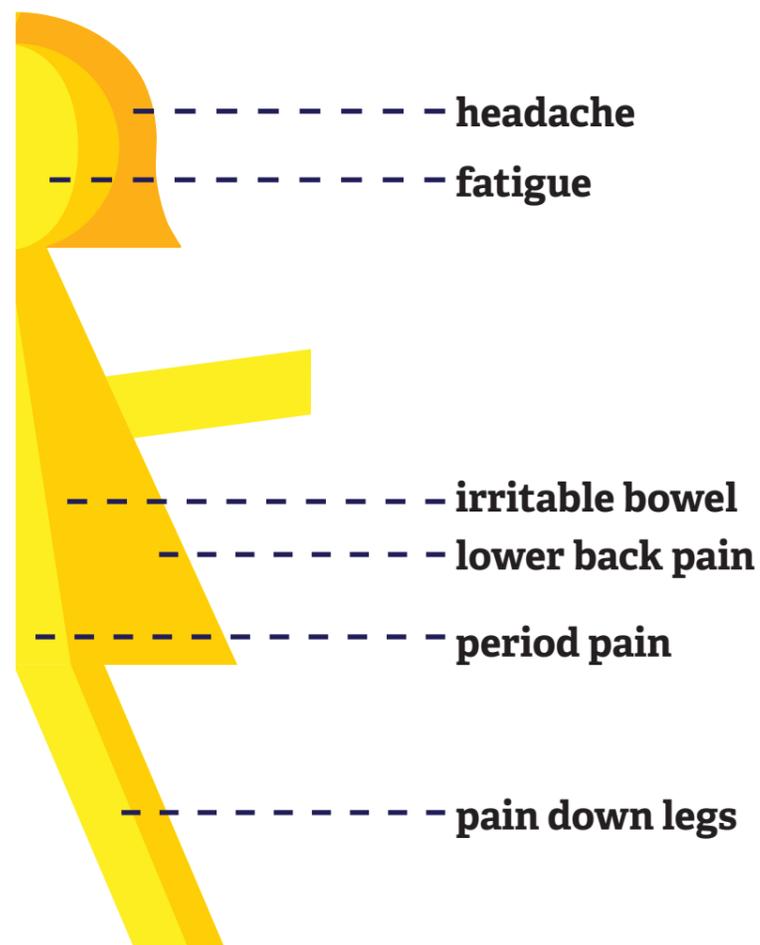**Occupation:** Mother

Primary Motivations:
+ Get help for her daughter
+ Be part of a community

FACTS & FIGURES

The average delay in diagnosis is between

7 & 10 YEARS

The MOST COMMON symptoms are:

- - - - - - - - - - **headache**
- - - - - - - - - - **fatigue**

- - - - - - - - - - **irritable bowel**
- - - - - - - - - - **lower back pain**

- - - - - - - - - - **period pain**
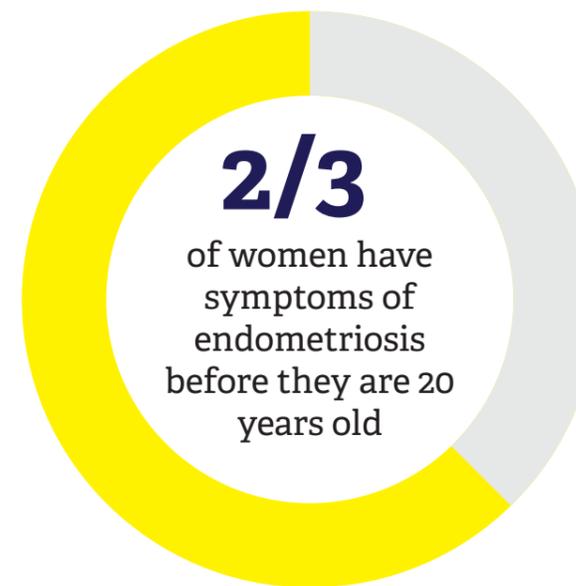
- - - - - - - - - - **pain down legs**

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1 in 5 teen girls suffer severe pain with periods

The condition is commonly misunderstood by doctors, particularly when dealing with teenagers. Many doctors say their pain is **'part of being a woman'** and others will only recommend the pill, which is often ineffective. This leaves sufferers and their mothers **frustrated** and **confused**, often having to see multiple doctors before a diagnosis can be made.

1 in 10 women in Australia suffer from endometriosis

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26 % of teen girls miss school with their periods

Either due to pain, or a mix of other conditions.

2/3
of women have symptoms of endometriosis before they are 20 years old

A significant proportion of the general public has **limited or no knowledge** about endometriosis. This may increase the feeling of social isolation which is experienced by many women with endometriosis.

'The presence of a family member or close friend who **"took their compaints seriously"** is the most common catalyst that led women to seek help'. This suggests that **increased public awareness** could help facilitate earlier treatment for endometriosis, which could reduce emotional suffering and long-term complications, such as pain and infertility, associated with it.
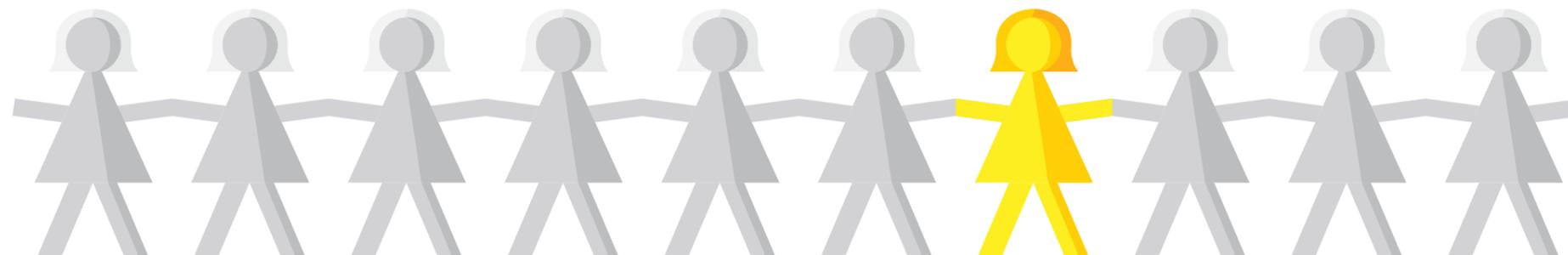
RESEARCH RELEVANCE

The research presented thus far is relevant in identifying the statistics — fully understanding the scope of the issue. This quantitative data is offset by the qualitative data — how the sufferers feel, the problems they face in relation to the issue, and obstacles that prevent them from getting help. Looking from the perspective of the mothers of these girls, similarities can also be identified, as well as unique issues which affect them. Knowing this information now will aid in the creation of a campaign design which addresses these and communicates to them effectively.

CAMAPAIGN BENEFITS

This research will benefit the campaign strategy in a few ways. The first is that knowing what the disease is, and how and who it affects will help create more realistic personas, based on an understanding of how this affects real girls and women in Australia. This in turn will make the campaign design user-centred, which will create a design response which is appropriate for the identified target markets, and will communicate in a way which resonates with these markets.

NEXT STEPS

+ Develop the design concept to reflect this research
+ Refine the scope of campaign delivery
+ Identify appropriate media platforms to be used
+ Create a logo and slogan which reflect the campaign
+ Define the scope of the campaign for mothers vs daughters
+ Explore options for creation of an online community
+ Refine and develop the overall campaign strategy
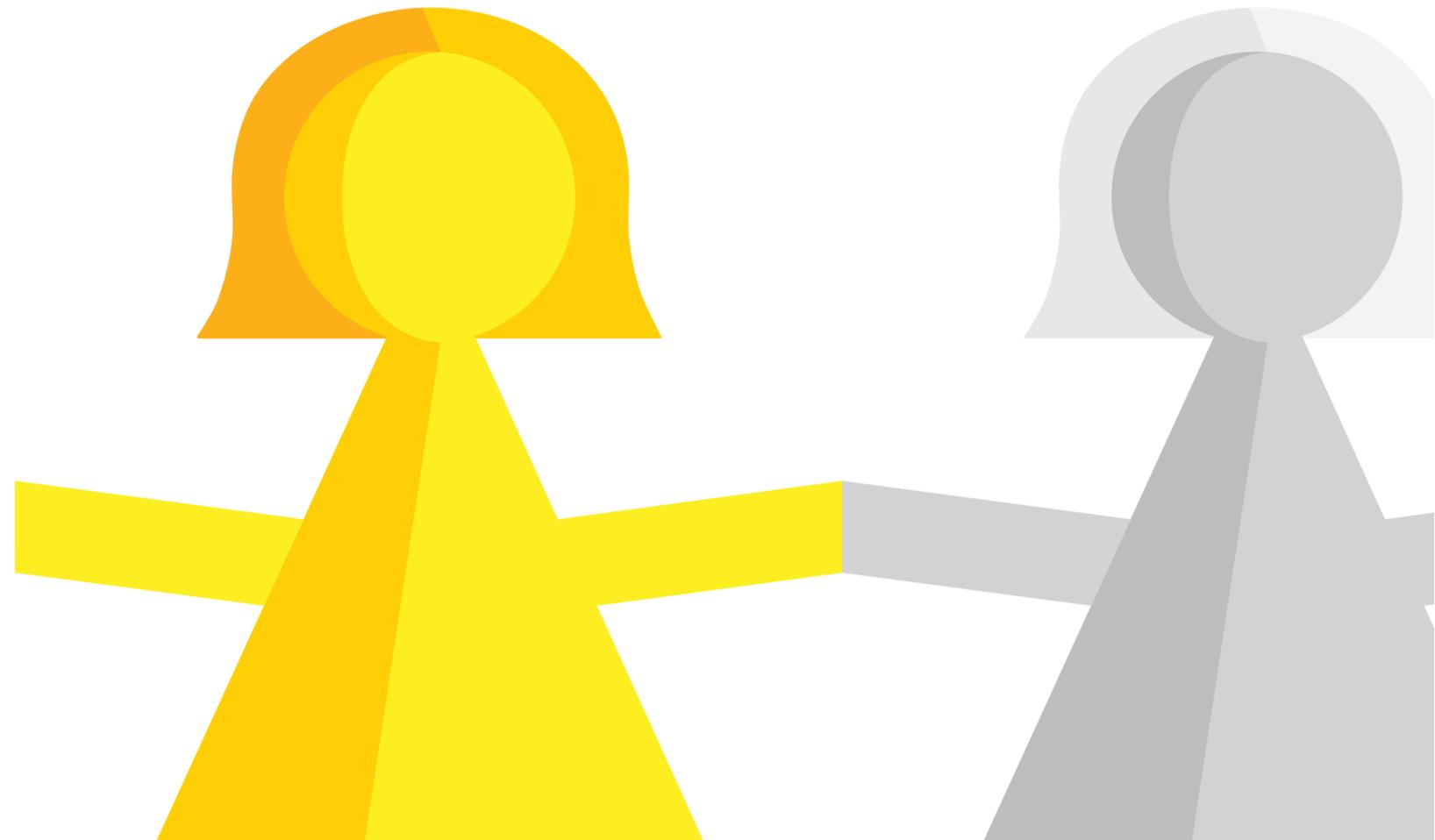
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