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EZZIE HUTCHINSON



NICOLA MCCARTHY



SARAH SETON-ROGERS

Raising awareness of the symptoms of a number of common cancers is an essential part of cancer prevention. Over recent years, several campaigns, especially those centred on cancers that affect women, have become a fun and increasingly productive business.

Everyone is now familiar with the pink ribbons (and other fashion accessories) that herald October as breast cancer awareness month. Not only does the purchase of ribbons raise much needed cash for a number of breast cancer organizations, it also reminds women about the need to regularly check their breasts for signs and symptoms of the disease. Similar tactics are beginning to be used to make us more aware of the symptoms of ovarian cancer.

Although women have embraced these tactics, men have been slower off the mark. The release of the Lance Armstrong yellow wristbands was perhaps a first step along the road to getting men to routinely check for symptoms of testicular cancer, a disease that is highly curable if caught early. But although one of the most prevalent cancers in men is prostate cancer, you don't see many high profile campaigns for prostate awareness. However, this is now changing, with November becoming Movember. Mo is Antipodean slang for a moustache and the idea behind Movember, which originated in Adelaide, Australia, is to have clean-shaven men grow the biggest and best mo's that they can during November. Along the way it is hoped that they will raise not only money for specific charities but also awareness of health issues that face men, such as prostate cancer, and perhaps erase some of the male taboos about discussing health issues. So, in support of raising cancer awareness, and despite the serious lack of a Y chromosome, we've also cultivated our own mo's, with quite interesting results.

#### EDITORIAL OFFICES

**LONDON** NatureReviews@nature.com  
The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street,  
London N1 9XW, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7843 3620;  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7843 3629

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#### MANAGEMENT OFFICES

**LONDON** nature@nature.com

The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street,  
London N1 9XW, UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7833 4000;

Fax: +44 (0)20 7843 4596/7

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**NEW YORK** nature@natureny.com

Nature Publishing Group,

75 Varick Street,

9th floor, New York,

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Tel: +1 212 726 9200;

Fax: +1 212 696 9006

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#### TOKYO

nature@natureasia.com  
Chiyoda Building 5F, 2-37-1 Ichigayatamachi,  
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-0843, Japan

Tel: +81 3 3267 8751; Fax: +81 3 3267 8746

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**INDIA** 5A/12 Ansari Road, Daryaganj,

New Delhi 110 002, India

Tel/Fax: +91 11 2324 4186

**SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER, INDIA:**

Harpal Singh Gill

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Getty Images unless otherwise credited.

Printed in Wales by Cambrian Printers

on acid-free paper