



Movember supports men's health every month of the year

7 July 2014 – Movember, the annual moustache growing campaign that takes place in November acts as a reminder for men everywhere to stop and reflect on their health and their lifestyles, but what happens for the rest of the year and how are the funds that are raised spent?

Through various individual, team and network challenges around the country, Movember has raised awareness for the often ignored issues of men's health and raises funds to support the survivorship and research programmes developed in conjunction with Movember South Africa's men's health partner, the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA).

One of these programmes is the Online Patient Support Platform, an online network of professionals who are ready at all times to answer questions and offer guidance to men who have been diagnosed with male cancers.

One of the specialists involved in the pilot phase is Dr Elna McIntosh, a well-known South African sexologist who responds directly to patient inquiries. Either through the "Men's Health Africa" Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mens-Health-Africa/136183446575068?fref=ts> or through email, McIntosh is always ready to answer questions.

"If you have a question, you want answers. You want expert advice, you want facts, you want to know if what you're going through is normal. This platform allows you to get those answers," she said.

However, McIntosh said it is difficult to get men to talk publicly about what they're going through.

"In South Africa there is still this stigma around male cancers. I think a lot of men know something is wrong, but by the time they do something about it, it's too late. We need to be talking about these things," she said.

That's where Movember and the Online Patient Support Platform comes in. The online support platform aims to allow men affected by prostate and testicular cancer to have increased access to information – and not just about cancer, but also about men's sexual health. It's about education and information-sharing, and provides details on counselling and follow-up support.

"I am passionate about Movember. It gets men talking. It gets a conversation going," McIntosh said.

But it's not just the Online Patient Support Platform that Movember funds.

Movember funds have also supported the Patient Navigation Project. It involves funding 100 contracted male volunteers, consisting of survivors from strategic locations throughout South Africa who will inform and educate men in their communities about cancer and help those who have been diagnosed with cancer. At least 3000 men with prostate cancer will be assisted by navigators this year.

Movember South Africa has also funded the Metropolitan Centre Survivorship Project. Currently there are five centres across the country that provide comprehensive support to men with cancer, as well as to their families. The project addresses treatment effects and quality of life during patient recovery. Each patient is given personalised care based on a full assessment of their lifestyle, physical and emotional needs. At the care centres, patients are given access to counsellors, support groups and information that will help them make the right health choices.

While Movember is about getting men to grow a mo for 30 days in November, it's clear that there's so much more to it than just growing some upper-lip stubble. That's why Movember South Africa supports Men's Health Month, and encourages all Mo Bros and Mo Sistas to get involved and support the cause as well. We'll see you in Movember!

How to join the Mo-alition in July:

1. Find out more about Movember. Visit za.movember.com.
2. Find out about your family medical history. Ask the questions!
3. Know your numbers – get tested. (Cholesterol, diabetes, blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and common cancers, based on family medical history)
4. Start a conversation with family and friends on prostate and testicular cancer.
5. Start gathering support - get your team ready to Mo.
6. Register as an individual or a team on za.movember.com from 15 September.

-ENDS-

Note to editors:

CANSA: Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) is a community-driven and volunteer-based organisation that has been fighting cancer for the past 80 years. Started in 1931 by a group of medical professionals concerned about the high incidence of cancer, CANSA has grown to become one of the leading cancer NGOs in the South Africa with 45 offices around the country and more than 12 000 volunteers and 260 staff members.

Movember is an annual campaign in 21 countries around the globe to “Change the Face of Men's Health” that started in Australia in 2003. With the support of their Mo Sistas, Mo Bros start the month with a clean-shaven face and for the rest of November (Movember), groom, and grow their way into the annals of fine moustachery to become walking, talking billboards raising awareness and funds for the often ignored issue of men's health. Mo Bros seek out sponsorship for their Mo-growing efforts and at the end of the month, celebrate by hosting their own Movember party or attending one of Movember's Gala Partés. Individuals, groups and corporates are encouraged to register on www.movember.com from 15 September 2014 and start clean shaven on 1 Movember Join in the fun or follow the campaign on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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