

## **Women urged to stop shaving for 'Januhairy' and take on Disney's 'smooth' stereotypes**

06/01/2019 17:13 by admin

Women are letting their body hair grow as part of a new "Januhairy" campaign to take on stereotypes perpetuated by the likes of Disney.

Founder Laura Jackson, 21, said she is allowing her legs and armpits to go unshaven this month in an attempt to challenge opinions that women should be hairless.

Ms Jackson, a drama student at Exeter University, said she was inspired to launch "Januhairy" after she embraced her own body hair while preparing for a production last year.

She claimed girls from a young age are being taught to think hairiness equates to masculinity, citing iconic Disney characters such as Cinderella and Snow White as an example.

The 21-year-old said: "We see the stereotype of a woman to be hairless and clean - you get Disney characters and TV shows that children all watch and learn from hairless women.

### **The University of Exeter has attracted support from around the worldÂ Credit: Facebook**

"So, this campaign is about challenging these sorts of opinions. When I was younger I was into Barbie, it is a toy which lot of little girls aspire to be.

"I loved all the Disney princesses, like Cinderella and Snow White, and I wanted do be one of them when I was younger- they were in dresses and completely shaven.

"Young people look up to Barbie as if they want to be that person.

"They have smooth legs and when they grow up they see hairless famous people on Instagram and think that I need to be like that to be accepted and be loved. Some women too do not understand a way to break away from that."

The campaign follows on from the success of "Movember", a health awareness campaign aimed at men to allow their moustaches to grow throughout the month of November, which raises millions of pounds in Britain and across the world.

### **Januhairy aims to combat opinions that women should be hairless**

Ms Jackson told how preparations for a university production resulted in a shift in attitude towards body hair as she challenged more women to follow suit by leaving their razors untouched.

âœI grew my hair out in may 2018 for a production I was in for my drama degree. I felt so uncomfortable at first and

conscious of what others thought, but after a while I loved and embraced it.

"The media has a responsibility to reach a wide audience, and I think maybe one day hopefully a Disney character will have hair that they can embrace."

Although "Januhairy" has attracted support from women in seven countries, Ms Jackson admitted she had received a backlash to letting her hair grow, including friends and relatives who accused her of being "lazy".

She added: "Some of the negative comments a few people said is they do not find it attractive or disagree with it. As soon as a woman starts to embrace their natural hair it goes against society's norms and stereotypes, so people start to freak out."

"The difficulty came when people started staring at me and even family and close friends were asking me if I was just being lazy and I was trying to prove a point.

"I think 'Januhairy' helps people break that stereotype and work to support each other and challenge themselves.

"To critics I say it is 2019 and with so many changes around, why can't women be hairy? It is completely natural."

Ms Jackson said she hoped to raise £1,000 for Body Gossip, an educational charity which campaigns on body image issues.

The 21-year-old, from Kineton, Warwickshire, has attracted support from women in the UK, US, Canada, Germany, Russia and Spain since launching her drive last month.

Fellow drama student Lila Boschert, 21, from California, told the BBC: "I expect that there will be peaks and troughs, moments where I will feel awkward, but it's exciting to see where it takes me."

- The Telegraph