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Sexual and reproductive health through a screen: on technology and accessibility in the Arab region**Sohayla El Fakahany***The American University of Beirut, Lebanon*

Statement of the problem: In the Arab Region, the availability and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) resources is directly impacted and hindered by cultural limitations, structural barriers, and conservative social norms (Dejong et al. 2005). In response to these challenges, advocates and organizations have turned to online platforms such as websites, blogs, and social media to improve access to SRHR information, experiences, and services (Al-Rawi, 2014 and Newsom and Lengel, 2012). While these digital initiatives have increased accessibility, they also inadvertently perpetuate inequalities due to limited internet access. This research focuses on examining the influence of social media platforms and technology in disseminating SRHR-related information to youth, while also analyzing the associated disparities in access.

Methodology & theoretical orientation: Drawing inspiration from Asef Bayat's concept of social non-movements (Bayat, 2012; 2013), this study analyzes collective mobilization efforts around SRHR in repressive and conservative settings within the Arab region. The methodology employed includes digital ethnography of four prominent digital platforms and a qualitative survey involving individuals aged 18-30 years.

Findings: By shedding light on the urgency of improved access to knowledge and services pertaining to gender, bodily autonomy, and sexual and reproductive health, it is important to acknowledge that these online platforms should serve as a complement, rather than a replacement, to the urgent need for holistic public healthcare systems and services in addressing SRHR issues in Arab states.

Conclusion: To improve SRHR in the region, recommendations include prioritizing comprehensive sexual education through reformation of educational systems and curricula, normalizing SRHR through media and targeted outreach, enhancing accessibility and support, adapting information to local contextual culture and language, engaging online platforms, and promoting trusted SRHR services.

Biography

Sohayla is a social researcher, medical anthropologist, and sexual and reproductive health and rights specialist, based in Cairo, Egypt. She is a research consultant at the American University of Beirut, and she is also a founding member of the East Mediterranean Federation of Sexual Health (EMFeSH). With her advocacy roles, she is focused on intersectionality, structural violence, and gender justice. Throughout her career, she worked on producing journal articles, technical reports, proposals, case studies, evaluation reports, and training manuals. Her research style merges theoretical and fieldwork approaches. She holds an M.A in Social Anthropology and a B.A in Political Science from the American University in Cairo.