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# **Unspoken Truths: Cultural Control and The Fight for Sexual Knowledge in The Arab Region**

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## **Abstract**

In Egypt and across the Arab region, silence about sex and sexuality is not a passive cultural trait but a powerful strategy of social control—one that is especially devastating for LGBTQ+ youth living with or at risk of HIV. This paper argues that the intersection of queer identity and HIV status produces a unique and compounded vulnerability: both are rendered invisible by religious and patriarchal norms, criminalized by law, and stigmatized in public health and educational institutions. Through ethnographic fieldwork, policy analysis, and case studies, the paper reveals how the lack of comprehensive sex education and the active erasure of queer and HIV-positive experiences perpetuate misinformation, isolation, and violence. Drawing on firsthand accounts from clinics like Abbassia Fever Hospital and the work of grassroots organizations, the study centers the lived realities of LGBTQ+ youth navigating these intersecting silences. Ultimately, it calls for an anthropology that not only documents harm but also amplifies resistance, arguing that meaningful change requires dismantling the structures that conflate queerness and HIV with shame and danger.

**Keywords:** Sexuality, Sex Education, Cultural Silence, LGBTQ+, Youth, Egypt, Arab World, Stigma, HIV, Patriarchy, Gender, Social Control, Religious Norms, Public Health