

## Zorgniotti Fund 2022 – Summary proposed project from MESSM

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The creation of the public website was feasible thanks to the ISSM Zorgniotti fund in 2012. Part of the fund was allocated to the creation of the content (translation of scientific articles into Arabic) and another part was allocated to the professional fee of the Webmaster. The remainder was used for the promotion of the website.

Sex and sexual dysfunction have long been regarded taboo subjects in the Middle East. However, this is rapidly changing, as evidenced by the establishment of specialized societies, such as the Middle East Society for Sexual Medicine (MESSM), in the region. Men are less inhibited when it comes to discussing sexual function and dysfunction. However, the sources that they use to gain information remain questionable. These still include myths, traditional healers' advice, friends and relatives often misguided pointers and unverified websites and forums.

On the other hand, female sexual dysfunction (FSD) remains a largely neglected and often banned topic. The worldwide-recognized lack of addressing FSD by both patients and physicians are amplified in the Middle East, given the region's deep cultural views. Indeed, a simple search for providers on the International Society for the Study for Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) reveals only a handful of registered members from the region covered by the MESSM.

To serve its educational purpose and attract users and engagement, an educational website needs a strong public awareness campaign including a YouTube channel that constantly publishes new material and content that is also backed by regular activity on social media.

The above will require a financial budget that the MESSM doesn't have. A new Zorgniotti fund would allow the MESSM to "Promote, maintain and update the MESSM public website" in a region where sexual awareness is lacking, and sexual misconceptions prevail.

Knowing that due to this lack of public awareness, there are disorders that are almost peculiar to the region, such as unconsummated marriages, honeymoon impotence and female genital mutilation. Furthermore, despite the outspread of internet and social media channels, there is a paucity of accurate, reliable online information about sexual health and sexuality in Arabic.

The MESSM believes that patients and physicians in the Middle East require a resource that addresses the specific needs of the region in terms of physician education and public awareness regarding sexual dysfunction. In particular, the MESSM firmly believes there is a need to launch a widespread regional educational campaign, with special emphasis on FSD and the complications of female genital mutilation.

Therefore, our rationale in this application is to get a fund to promote, maintain and update our public awareness website and social media communication to:

1. Provide health providers (physicians, nurses health educators...) with a tool allowing them to educate their patients regarding sexual function and dysfunction.
2. Reach populations who don't have access to proper sexual education
3. Enlighten and motivate public to participate in the campaign
4. Focus on overlooked issues regarding women's rights: FSD, female genital mutilation, conjugal rape, consent, female pleasure, virginity testing, abortion
5. Update and maintenance of the website
6. Create content for the YouTube Channel
7. Translate data to Arabic
8. Social media campaign