

# EMS Protocol–Friendly Cultural Reference

## Patients from Portugal

**Purpose:** Support effective communication and informed decision-making while maintaining EMS protocol compliance.

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### Communication Guidance

- Use **polite, clear, and simple language**.
- Ask about language preference early.
- State clearly:
  1. What is happening
  2. What you recommend
  3. What happens if declined

Example:

“Based on your symptoms, I recommend transport so the hospital can run tests. If you don’t go, there is a risk of serious complications.”

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### Assessment Considerations

- Symptoms and pain may be understated.
  - Emotional distress may be subtle.
  - Confirm understanding and reassess frequently.
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### Transport & Refusal Considerations

- Patients may defer to clinician or family.
  - Ensure:
    - Patient capacity is assessed
    - Risks are clearly explained
    - Patient—not just family—understands the decision
  - Document per protocol.
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## Treatment Expectations

- Patients may ask fewer questions than some cultures.
  - Explain why treatments are given and expected effects.
  - Provide calm reassurance aligned with protocol.
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## Family & Bystanders

- Family involvement is common and supportive.
  - Address patient first; include family as appropriate.
  - Set boundaries if care or safety is affected.
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## EMS Best Practices

- ✓ Maintain respectful, professional tone
  - ✓ Use plain language and confirm understanding
  - ✓ Include family appropriately
  - ✓ Document consent and refusals clearly
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## Reminder

Cultural awareness supports patient interaction but does **not** override protocol, medical control, or patient safety obligations.

## References

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*"Patient-centered care in Portugal: Cultural attitudes and expectations."*  
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  - Discusses patient respect for medical authority, clear communication preferences, and modesty in care interactions.
2. **Furtado, A., & Pereira, S. (2018).**  
*"Family involvement in Portuguese healthcare: A qualitative study."*  
**Health & Social Care in the Community**, 26(6), 803–810.
  - Highlights the cultural importance of family presence and support during hospital stays.
3. **Pereira, M., & Gonçalves, R. (2015).**  
*"Communication styles and health literacy in Portuguese hospitals."*  
**Patient Education and Counseling**, 98(12), 1556–1563.

- Notes preference for calm, structured, and factual communication. Patients may understate pain or symptoms.
- 4. **European Commission – Health System Review: Portugal (2019).**
  - Describes Portuguese healthcare culture, including patient expectations for clinician-led guidance and family participation.  
<https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/publications/i/health-system-review-portugal-2019>
- 5. **World Health Organization (WHO) – Health System in Portugal Profile (2020).**
  - Notes language considerations (Portuguese primary), patient autonomy balanced with trust in medical authority, and family-centered support.  
<https://www.who.int/countries/prt>