

EMS Protocol–Friendly Cultural Reference

Patients from Saudi Arabia

Purpose: Support effective communication, informed consent, and safe decision-making while maintaining EMS protocol and medical control requirements.

Communication Guidance

- Use **formal, professional, calm language**.
- Speak clearly and avoid medical jargon.
- Ask early about preferred language (Arabic, English).
- Use interpreters if comprehension is uncertain.

Example:

“I want to explain the care we recommend and the risks. Can you tell me what you understand?”

Assessment Considerations

- Patients may underreport pain or distress.
 - Emotional expression may be mediated through family.
 - Observe nonverbal cues; reassess frequently.
 - Do not rely solely on calm demeanor to assess acuity.
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Gender Considerations

- **Same-gender care preference:** Female patients often prefer female clinicians for physical exams, trauma assessment, or intimate procedures.
- **Privacy and modesty:** Use screens, blankets, or clothing to minimize exposure.
- **Family involvement:** Male relatives may advocate for female patients; female relatives may accompany female patients for support.
- **Communication:** Female patients may be more reserved with male clinicians. Introduce yourself and explain your role clearly.
- **Emergency exceptions:** Life-threatening situations override gender preference. Communicate respectfully if deviations are necessary.

EMS Best Practices for Gender

- ✓ Assign same-gender clinicians when possible
 - ✓ Use chaperones if gender matching is not available
 - ✓ Ensure privacy with blankets, clothing, or screens
 - ✓ Communicate reasons for exceptions respectfully
 - ✓ Document gender preference discussions, chaperone presence, or deviations
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Transport & Refusal Considerations

- Patients may defer decisions to family or clinicians.
 - Ensure:
 - Patient capacity is assessed
 - Risks and benefits are clearly explained
 - Patient understanding is confirmed via teach-back
 - Obtain consent directly from the patient whenever possible.
 - Document discussion and decision per protocol.
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Treatment Expectations

- Patients expect **clear guidance and direction**.
 - Explain:
 - Why interventions are necessary
 - Expected effects or sensations
 - Reassurance should be factual, calm, and clear.
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Family & Bystanders

- Family involvement is culturally important and often expected.
 - Families may advocate strongly; maintain patient autonomy.
 - Set boundaries if family involvement interferes with care.
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EMS Best Practices (General)

- ✓ Maintain respectful, confident, professional demeanor
 - ✓ Provide structured explanations
 - ✓ Use interpreters early
 - ✓ Observe privacy and gender norms
 - ✓ Document consent, refusals, and capacity clearly
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Reminder

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

References

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3. **Al-Shammari, S. A., & Al-Omari, H. (2014).**
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 - Discusses family-centered care and hierarchical respect in hospital and emergency contexts.
6. **U.S. Department of State – Saudi Arabia Cultural Overview.**
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<https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/saudi-arabia/>