

Honduras



COMMUNICATION

Languages and Dialects

- Official spoken languages: Spanish
- Some Honduran people speak in an Amerindian dialect as their first language, especially in rural areas.
- People of higher socioeconomic status often learn English as children.

Greetings

- Shaking hands while smiling is a common form of greeting.
- As you shake hands, say '*Buenos días*' for morning, '*buenas tardes*' for afternoon, or '*buenas noches*' for evening.
- Women may hug or 'air kiss' as part of a greeting.
- Before shaking hands, men may offer an *abrazo*: a hug accompanied by hearty slaps on the back.
- Withdrawing from gestures of greeting may be perceived as an insult.

Names and titles

- Titles are important to Honduran people. Address a Honduran person by an appropriate title and last name.
- First names are reserved for family or close acquaintances.

Non-Verbal Signals

- Hondurans may stand close to one another while in conversation.
- In Honduras, eye contact indicates interest in a conversation. Let your patient know if notetaking during an exam precludes consistent eye contact.
- Hondurans may 'point' by aiming their pursed lips in a particular direction.

CULTURAL NORMS

Patient and Provider Interaction

Communication in clinic

- Respect is important in this culture. Honduran people expect healthcare professionals to be unhurried, friendly, and attentive to emotional and spiritual issues.
- Honduran people may expect healthcare professionals to communicate with them in Spanish.
- Some Honduran people may avoid an outright 'no' in conversation, preferring an indirect response such as 'maybe' or 'we'll see'.
- Hondurans may not adhere to standard concepts of time and punctuality – in fact, they consider it rude to be early.

Family and cultural issues

- Medical decision-making may involve extended family members. Before making a treatment plan, ask the patient who should be present at the meeting.

- While men are traditionally head of household, women play a major role in decisions involving health and disease. Very often, the mother, grandmother, or oldest daughter will carry out medical instructions.
- Extended family members may look after the diagnosed person.

Visiting the Home

- Hondurans value immediate and extended family ties.
- Children often stay at home until they marry; married couples may also continue to live in the family home.
- Adult female children often provide care for aging parents.

Medication

- In Honduras, people may seek healthcare advice from pharmacists.
- Hondurans often purchase over-the-counter medications as part of home treatment, including antibiotics (without prescription).

TRADITIONAL IDEAS AND BELIEFS

Beliefs about TB

- Honduran patients may believe that an individual symptom of tuberculosis (for example, a cough) is the problem that requires attention.
- Hondurans often delay treatment for TB while they treat symptoms; for example, they will use cough syrups or teas and wait for results.
- Honduran people may also attribute TB to one or more of the following:
 - Smoking cigarettes;
 - Walking in the rain with a fever;
 - Breathing in fabric dust or thread dust in garment factories.

Some Honduran people, including patients, may believe that TB could be transmitted by sharing utensils (and food) with an infected person.

Stigma and TB

Although stigma and stigmatizing practices continue to exist, do not assume all Honduran patients and their families will believe the misperceptions listed here.

- Hondurans may view a TB diagnosis as a sign that the diagnosed person is deficient morally, ethically, or spiritually.
- Traditionally in Honduras, TB patients were isolated from others by both family and community.
- Today, Honduran people are more likely to believe that people with TB are impoverished or practice poor hygiene.

Common Terms for TB

A Honduran person may refer to TB by the word *tisis*, or 'cough'.

Traditional Beliefs

These points could be used to provide context for a range of health issues, including inherited conditions, sudden onset illnesses, and other diagnoses.

- If asked to provide a sputum sample, a Honduran person may believe the healthcare center lacks the resources necessary to treat the illness.
- Medical equipment may indicate 'good medical care' to a Honduran person; they may be reassured to see equipment related to x-rays, bronchoscopy, and blood samples.
- People in rural areas may not understand that germs are a direct cause of disease.
- Some indigenous Honduran people may believe TB is caused by the curse of a sea witch. Indigenous communities may seek care from traditional healers.
- Some people may view TB and HIV as the same disease; they may assume that someone with TB will have HIV as well.
- Hondurans living in urban areas do not often visit traditional healers; instead, they rely on Western (allopathic) medicine.

Traditional Remedies

Some Honduran people may believe that TB can be cured by a return to acceptable behavior; this would include quitting smoking or drinking.

In general, Honduran people may try home remedies and other traditional curative practices before seeking treatment from the medical establishment. Some believe TB may be cured by treating the symptoms of the disease using alternative medicines or treatments.

These treatments could include one or more of the following items:

- Herbs and roots, including eucalyptus, valerian, or ginger;
- Cough syrups;
- Fibrous mangoes;
- The flower of a plant (or *flor de izote*) cooked with eggs.