

Medics in pink: Dubai launches women-only ambulances

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Four women in pink remain on standby 12 hours a day, seven days a week, to come to the aid of their "sisters" in the Gulf emirate of Dubai.

The four—two medics and two drivers—are leading a pilot project for a [women-only pink ambulance service](#) that aims to expedite medical care by helping patients feel more at ease.

"In our society, Arab Muslim society, when patients call for help, they want privacy and they want to feel comfortable," said Bashayer al-Rimm, an emergency medical technician (EMT).

"A male first responder can and of course does respond to all patients," she told AFP.

"But the logic behind this was, 'How can we make women feel more comfortable?', to speed up giving them [medical care](#)."

The government-run Women Responders unit operating in the district of Deira has had 25 callouts since it launched three weeks ago, none of them major emergencies.

Staff specialise in obstetrics and gynaecology and pediatrics, and they refer to each other—and their patients—"sisters".

Ten years ago, Dubai launched "Ladies and Families Taxis," a pink fleet of cabs driven by women and serving women and their children.

The service is still available, and popular, across Dubai, a member of the United Arab Emirates.

Maria Lagbes, a longtime medic who was tapped to join the Women Responders team, said the ambulance service has already helped improve patient care.

"Female [patients](#), especially in this country, are more hesitant when there are male medics around," said Lagbes, who is originally from the Philippines.

"I can tell the difference, having worked before with a male partner and now with a female partner," she said. "I think an all-female team can provide more efficient medical service here."

For now, the [pilot project](#) targets Deira, a bustling, old district of a city state known globally for its modern opulence.

The next step is to expand to Bur Dubai, another of Dubai's older quarters that lies across the Dubai Creek, a water canal historically used by fishermen and pearl divers.

"We've had so much positive feedback," said Rimm. "People have been saying this is really helpful".

But despite temperatures soaring above 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit), the next batch of EMTs is trained and eager to join the pink fleet.

"We're all used to it. Not just as first responders—as Emiratis," Rimm chuckled. "Keep hydrated."

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