

# Perception of Nurses' Knowledge about Palliative Care in West Bank/ Palestine: Levels and Influencing Factors

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## Abstract

**Objective:** Healthcare professionals particularly nurses should be professionally prepared with knowledge about the standards of palliative care and their roles in providing palliative care. Nurses' knowledge about palliative care and influencing factors has not been examined adequately in Arab countries including Palestine. Thus, this study aimed to assess the adequacy of knowledge level and influencing factors (socio-demographic) about palliative care among nurses in West Bank/ Palestine. **Methods:** A descriptive-correlational design was utilized. A cluster random sampling method was applied to select 12 hospitals from the three regions in West Bank. Then, four hospitals were selected from each region using a simple random method. All registered nurses working in critical care units and medical and surgical wards in the selected hospitals were recruited. The sample consists of 424 registered nurses and data were collected using Palliative Care Quiz for Nursing (PCQN). **Results:** The Findings revealed that nurses' level of knowledge about palliative care was low/inadequate ( $M = 7.75$ ,  $SD = 2.96$ ). Knowledge about palliative care was influenced by age ( $B = -.106$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), gender ( $B = -.223$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and hospital ward ( $B = -.597$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), in which younger nurses, females, and those who work in critical care units reported higher levels of knowledge about palliative care. **Conclusions:** Findings of this study emphasized the need for developing educational and training courses, seminars, and workshops on palliative care to increase nurses' knowledge in order to enhance the quality of patient care. Also, policymakers should develop national strategic plans and policies regarding palliative care and apply these plans in all hospitals in West Bank/ Palestine.

## Keywords

knowledge, nurses, palliative care, socio-demographic factors

## Introduction

Palliative care is an approach to providing interdisciplinary care and has two branches; primary (general) and specialized.<sup>1</sup> Primary palliative care is the care provided by all healthcare team members to address the holistic needs of patients with serious illnesses and their families to improve the quality of life of patients through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other symptoms, in addition to providing physical, psychological, social, and spiritual support.<sup>2,3</sup> While specialized care is provided by healthcare professionals with advanced training/certification to address complex needs and provide interventions. Additionally, end-of-life (terminal) care directed to patients in their final days or weeks of life and involves the patient's physical, emotional, and spiritual comfort by management of symptoms and providing support for the patient's family.<sup>4</sup>

The need for primary palliative care becomes essential due to increased number of people who suffer from serious illnesses like cancer, heart failure, renal failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and others.<sup>5</sup> The patients with these serious

diseases require this type of health care, in which they receive their usual medical care or treatment accompanied by palliative care that focuses on enhancing their quality of life as well as their families.<sup>6-9</sup> It is suggested that more than 56.8 million people are estimated to require palliative care yearly worldwide,

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