

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Caring Behaviors Among Palestinian Nurses in Neonatal Intensive Care Units: A Cross-Sectional Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and caring behaviors among Palestinian Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) nurses in governmental hospitals across the West Bank.

**Background:** The NICU is a high-stress environment that presents significant challenges for nurses. Emotional intelligence has a significant role in helping nurses manage environmental stressors and influences the quality of their caring behaviors.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional design was employed in line with the STROBE guidelines, using a convenience sample of 208 nurses working in level II and III NICUs. Data were collected between January 5 and March 10, 2025, using paper-based surveys that included the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the Caring Behaviors Assessment Tool Nursing Version–Short Form (CBAN-SF).

**Results:** Participants had a relatively high emotional intelligence level, with a mean score of 117.5 (SD ± 11.4). Similarly, the mean caring behaviors score was 98.8 (SD ± 10.1), suggesting strong satisfaction with caring behaviors. A strong positive correlation was found between emotional intelligence and caring behaviors. Age, work experience, and educational level were also associated with caring behaviors. Emotional intelligence and educational level were significant predictors.

**Conclusion:** NICU nurses are adequately equipped to deliver empathetic, high-quality care in challenging clinical environments.

**Implications for Nursing and/or Health Policy:** These findings underscore the need for policymakers and hospital administrators to prioritize continuous professional development and the regular assessment of emotional intelligence

## 1 | Introduction

Survival rates in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) have significantly improved over the past two decades, largely due to advancements in medical technology and healthcare practices. These include the availability of specialized neonatal

care, improved technologies, evidence-based clinical protocols, and better-trained healthcare professionals (Marlow 2024). As a result, infants born after 28 weeks of gestation now have a survival rate exceeding 90% (Abdul-Mumin et al. 2020; Taha et al. 2023). However, death rates for preterm infants born before 25 weeks of gestation vary widely across countries, ranging