

EUTHANASIA

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EUTHANASIA

- Euthanasia is defined as the painless killing of a patient suffering from a painful disease or irreversible coma.
- This is also known as mercy killing.
- Physician-Assisted Suicide is when a doctor intentionally provides a patient with an overdose of prescription drugs.
- Assisted Suicide is suicide with aid.
- Voluntary Euthanasia is when the patient makes the decision to request Physician-Assisted Suicide.
- Involuntary Euthanasia is when a person's life is ended without their consent.
- Active Euthanasia is when a person's life is ended through the use of drugs, possibly with the aid of a physician.
- Passive Euthanasia is when a doctor does not take the actions required to sustain the life.

HISTORY

- The actions of easy death have been applied for hopeless patients who have been suffering extreme pain since ancient ages.
- In the old times incurable patients were drowned in the River Ganges in India. In ancient Israel, some books wrote that frankincense was given to kill incurable patients.
- In the Jewish religion, they believed in the sixth commandment "thou shall not kill". They considered shortening the life of those who were sick and incurable, handicap or disadvantaged as murder because they considered life to be sacred.
- In Sparta, it was a common practice to examine newborn males for any signs of disability or sickness, which would led to their death. This practice was regarded as a way to protect the society from unnecessary burden, or as a way to 'save' the person from the burden of existence.
- Throughout the years there have been arguments on the topic of euthanasia. Many believe that ending the life of someone who is suffering is not considered murder but many, especially the church, believe it is a sin.

COURT cases

- Washington vs. Glucksberg: The state of Washington had previously banned assisted suicide. Glucksberg said that this denied his 14th amendment right to due process. Glucksberg stated that the ban denied patients their right to choose death over life. The court decided in favor of the state of Washington.
- Vacco vs. Quill: The federal government does not protect the right to assisted suicide. Under the equal protection clause of the US constitution, the terminally ill do not have a right to physician-assisted suicide. But, if people refuse treatment, this is not considered suicide.

COURT cases

- Sampson vs. Alaska: Sampson wanted Alaska to waive the law that stated physician-assisted suicide was illegal. The court ruled in favor of Alaska even though Sampson and Doe were mentally competent.
- Gonzales vs. Oregon: The attorney general was against the Death with Dignity Act and said it violated the death with dignity act so he prohibited physician-assisted suicide. Court ruled against the attorney general because he did not have the authority to prohibit these doctors.
- Baxter vs. Montana: The court ruled in favor of Baxter because nothing in Montana's laws that states Physician Aid in dying is against public policy. The Montana constitution supports the right of a terminally-ill, mentally competent patient to die with dignity and that includes the right to a physician's aid.

FACTS

- In 1998, the state of Oregon legalized Physician-Assisted Suicide
- Texas legalized passive euthanasia but only in some situations in 1999.
- In 2000, the Netherlands legalized Physician-Assisted Suicide
- In 2002, Belgium legalized Physician-Assisted Suicide
- In 2008, Washington legalized Physician-Assisted Suicide
- Luxembourg legalized Physician-Assisted Suicide in 2009.
- Almost every medical and nursing organization in the US finds Physician-Assisted Suicide unethical.
- All organizations recognize the patients right to refuse treatment.

Pros & Cons

Pros

- Legalizing euthanasia would help alleviate suffering of terminally ill patients.
- In case of individuals suffering from a disease or in conditions where treatments would not affect their quality of life; they should be given the liberty to choose induced death.
- Euthanasia should be a natural extension of patient's rights allowing him to decide the value of life and death for him/her. Maintaining life support systems against the patient's wish is considered unethical by law.
- Health care cost is and will always be a concern for the family irrespective of euthanasia being legalized.

Cons

- Mercy killing is morally incorrect and should be forbidden by law. It's a homicide and murdering another human cannot be rationalized under any circumstances.
- Family members influencing the patient's decision into euthanasia for personal gains like wealth inheritance is another issue. There is no way you can be really sure if the decision towards assisted suicide is voluntary or forced by others.
- Even doctors cannot predict firmly about period of death and whether there is a possibility of remission or recovery with other advanced treatments. So, implementing euthanasia would mean many unlawful deaths that could have well survived later.

EUTHANASIA VS. END OF LIFE care

- The drugs for assisted suicide cost about \$35.00.
- The cost for full regular health care is \$35,000 dollars.
- The cost for end of life care is even more than the cost of health care, and the price continues to rise when a terminal illness is involved.
- The 2008 Dartmouth Analysis on end of life care examined the varying costs of end life care taking age, gender, and illness into consideration.
- The hospital in the University of California, Los Angeles charges \$93,000 for end of life care.
- The hospital in New York University charges \$103,000 for end of life care.
- These extremely high prices for end of life care is a dominant factor in the reason why people support euthanasia.
- Many euthanasia supporters believe that euthanasia will not make any changes to current health care, and that the time and money spent on caring for someone who is dead, or on the brink of death, only holds America back economically.

EUTHANASIA and HUMAN RIGHTS

- It can be argued that certain clauses in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights support Euthanasia.
- "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family"...
"everyone has the right to life and all are equal before the law..."
- Pro Euthanasia activists claim that the decision as a natural right.
- Thus by the pretext of natural rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, once a person makes the decision or gives the choice to a family member than the act is justifiable.
- The main issue lies in the religious and moral standpoints.

EUTHANASIA AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS

- The Catholic Church states that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is a moral vision for our society.
- In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by euthanasia and the use of the death penalty everyday around the world.
- The Catholic Church believes that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
- "We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person."

CATHOLIC CHURCH VIEWS ON EUTHANASIA

- The Catholic Church believes that no one, no matter how ill, has the "right to die", because we do not have a claim to death.
- When a person is dying, we do not have the right to put them to death. We do however, have the the right to preserve their life.
- Everyone is responsible for life since God has given life to us as stewards. God is the only master of life. We should accept and respect life if we want to achieve salvation.
- Life is not ours to dispose of.
- Euthanasia is considered suicide in the eyes of the Catholic Church.
- Euthanasia contradicts the biblical principle of "Thou shall not kill".
- All death should be natural; humans should not interfere with the process process of death.

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