

Free end of life ethics essay sample

[Life](#), [Death](#)



Following the American Psychological Association's Guidelines

Part one: Individuals should have the right to request mercy death under specific circumstances. For example, they must qualify for medical autonomy. They must be of a sound state of mind, coherent, and able to make their own decisions. Autonomy is defined medically as having the independence or will over one's actions, further suggesting a physician, family member, friend, or other such party must not coerce the individual. They must make the decision for themselves. The right to make these medical decisions concerning one's treatment should be left up to the individual alone. Mercy death is not the same as assisted suicide, or murder, as many like to believe. It is the individual deciding the best way to end their life. To deny them the right to do so would be the real ethical crime.

Other ethical reasons mercy death should be granted are simpler. For instance, it is a right we grant even our pets. When a family pet, whether it be a dog, cat, or any other such animal becomes too sickly to care for themselves in a manner of speaking, quality of life is examined. If it is deemed that the animal no longer enjoys life, or no longer is able to do most of what they were able to do previously, in most cases the family will grant the animal a mercy death. It is often referred to as "putting the animal down." If we are so quick to grant a merciful death to family pets that are in pain, and incurable, why is it so unethical to grant the same rights to a human who can make the decision for themselves?

Part two: I do feel as though Oregon's "Death with Dignity" law, and any such laws similar to it, are ethical. The "Death with Dignity" law, specifically,

grants terminally ill patients the option to receive life-ending medication to take within six-months of their estimated deceased date. They are able to decide whether to take advantage of the law when they still have all of their faculties in place, or remain autonomous. The law has been used for individuals with a variety of terminal illnesses, ranging from cancer to brain tumors, all of which would leave the patient suffering toward the end of their life regardless of hospice care. Losing grip not only on one's body, but on one's mind, can cause them to feel as though they will be a mental and financial drain on resources for friends and family, hence the comfort of dying by their choice. This method of death is also where the name "Death with Dignity" came from, and one of the primary reasons why it is considered ethical. Not only is the patient making the decision for himself or herself, but also they administer the medication themselves in many cases. The life-ending medication is also only given to patients who are terminal, and because of the small window, six months, between the time the patient is allowed to take the medication and the estimated deceased date, there is little time for the popular, "But what if there's a cure?!" argument to gain any ground against the movement. The patient is able to choose a painless death in lieu of a death that would be sure to make them suffer. The "Death with Dignity" act also spares family and friends from seeing the patient suffer, allowing them to remain with only the fondest of memories instead of memories of the patient deteriorating slowly and painfully. It is because of the ethics behind the "Death with Dignity" law, and my belief that I should have the right to choose if I or anyone else were faced with a terminal illness, that I would support this type of law in my state.