

Issue of euthanasia and medical morals

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Euthanasia is considered to be one of the biggest, most controversial moral issues pressing people today. Many people here in the United States believe that euthanasia should be legal because we live a democratic state and we have the freedom to do what we want which including how we die. However, many other people believe it should not be legal because you are fully aware that what you are doing is going to kill an innocent person which is murder. So it is argued whether euthanasia is morally right because everyone has the right to die, but is intentionally ending someone's life just because they no longer want to live morally right?

Euthanasia is a controversial practice in the United States and many other countries around the world. Another name given to Euthanasia is physician assisted suicide. No matter what the name of this action is, they both mean the same thing. Both practices are defined as “ suicide by a patient facilitated by means or information (as a drug prescription or indication of the lethal dosage) provided by a physician aware of the patient's intent”[1]. Euthanasia can happen in many different types of ways, however they all have the same goal which is ending a patient's life no matter what the reason either being pain or mental reasons or something else. Another type of euthanasia is called stealth euthanasia. Stealth euthanasia is different because it “ can be both an action and an omission: the act of sedating the patient while omitting the provisions of food and fluids so that death is imposed”[2]where euthanasia is just an overdose not an omission. Both of these practices end a person's life prematurely even if the patient requests it.

Euthanasia is a moral issue because it is willingly ending a person's life and being fully aware of your actions even though you are doing it to put a patient out of pain and suffering. Even if death is imminent, killing the person before they naturally die is wrong. When death is imminent providing natural comfortable measures is morally just which is why it is not morally wrong to pull someone off of life support because that is more than a natural comfortable measure. Euthanasia will sometimes withhold those comfortable measures which is why it is morally wrong. Stealth euthanasia will withhold food and drink making it morally wrong because food and drink are comfortable measures needed for life. Letting someone die naturally is more just, because death is not intended in any actions a person or physician may have committed. When someone like a doctor fully knows that what they are doing is going to kill their patient and they still go through with their action is when the moral issues comes in to play.

Euthanasia is considered morally wrong according to the Church. Every human being is made in the image and likeness of God therefore every person is valuable and cannot be killed. To kill someone is to not see that person as valuable even though because all humans were made in God's image every person is valuable. By accepting euthanasia, a patient is erasing their dignity because they are bringing death onto themselves however the "dignity of the sick cannot be erased by illness and suffering"[3]. A patient who is suffering and willing to accept euthanasia begins to see themselves as not worth living and they see themselves as useless or burdensome so they want to die before their condition gets worse. A person who kills themselves is morally wrong because they are essential stating that they are

worthless or at least not worth living and they are also created in the image and likeness of God so by ending their life would not be seeing that as valuable enough to live.

Hospice is a great way to make the patient feel as comfortable as they can be when they are dying. Hospice is a “ special concept of care designed to provide comfort and support to patients and their families when a life-limiting illness no longer responds to cure-oriented treatments”[4]. This care can come to patient’s houses so they can be as comfortable as they can be. Once a patient gets their pain under control through hospice and know they have people there who care for them when they die is when a patient “ requests for assisted suicide and euthanasia commonly dissipate”[5]because the patient feel like people are with them and care for them. Sometime because of all the nurses and people hired to help them, a patient may become to feel like a burden in the people taking care of them. If the patient begins to think this way, they might seek physician assisted suicide that way they are not causing stress to the people taking care of them. There are many ways to comfort someone while they are dying and that is hospices way of figuring out how the patient will be as pain free as possible so they do not start to think of ways to end their life due to pain or stress they feel they are causing on others.

Euthanasia may also be an option for people with mental illness. If someone is depressed and they had the opportunity to accept euthanasia they most likely would so they could end their life. Someone with severe depression who was offered physician assisted suicide as an option would not be

thinking clearly when they accept it to end their life. If a doctor was to offer a legal 'justified' way for someone who is already suicidal an 'acceptable' way to end their own life, they would quickly accept it so their death would not be as frowned upon. People with mental disabilities can also sometimes be offered physician assisted suicide. In some cases, people with mental disabilities can feel like they are a burden on their family and if they had the opportunity to not cause their family unnecessary stress, they would accept it. Doctors may also be very influential and people are likely to listen to them because they think they know the best thing for them to do. If a doctor was telling them that euthanasia is the best option, a person with a mental illness or disability might not fully think about it and agree with the doctor to go through with euthanasia.

Mental illness is not the only illness that people have the option to accept euthanasia. Because someone can be very sick and there is no chance for life, they can choose to accept euthanasia. A patient who is conscious may want to accept euthanasia as a way to escape pain and suffering. However, in today's day and age with all our medical advances, a patient will not have to experience pain. There are so many different pain management medications to help a patient feel as little pain as possible. A patient may also be unresponsive so the family may have to make the decision to accept euthanasia or not without the patient's consent. There are so many factors that would play into the family's decision on if they should accept euthanasia or not. If their loved one was in a very sick for an extended period of time, the medical bills would become so high that they family may not be able to afford them. There was a recent case of this in Florida to a woman named

Theresa Marie Schindler. She suffered from “ cardio respiratory arrest and hypoxic encephalopathy-neurological injury caused by lack of oxygen to the brain. She remained in a severely compromised neurological state and was provided a PEG tube to ensure the safe delivery of nourishment and hydration. She later died of marked dehydration following more than 13 days without nutrition or hydration under the order of Circuit Court Judge”[6]. The state of Florida did not see her getting better so they refused to give her food and drink for 13 days until she died. Terri experienced stealth euthanasia against her will and consent. This is morally wrong because she was not provided a comfortable means to life which is the reason for her death.

Brain dead patients will not get to make the decision if they accept euthanasia or not so their family members and doctors have to make the decision for them even though it is their life. Because a brain dead person cannot speak for what they want, physician assisted suicide would be murder because the patient cannot consent to their death and murder is morally wrong. Just because a patient is brain dead does not mean they are not conscious and aware of what is going on around them. One in five brain dead patients are still alive. There is a lot of pressure on families and doctors to declare patients dead who are, in fact, still alive and could recover. However, a doctor might encourage families to euthanize them so the patient’s organs can be harvested. There are even people who are like “ coaches or sales and marketing experts who teach transplant coordinators to use different tactics to play on the emotions of vulnerable family members to

convince them to euthanize”[7]their loved one. It is a moral issue when a doctor kills a patient let alone without even gaining that person consent.

Doctors may want to commit euthanasia to harvest the patient who is dying’s organs to help another patient. This is morally wrong because the doctor is basically stating that one patient’s life is more valuable than another’s which is not right. A doctor must only wait two minutes after a patient’s heart stops before they harvest that patient’s organs. A patient can sometimes be revived for as long as forty-five minutes after their heart stops and be revived successfully. Brain cells do not begin to die until the brain has not received blood for at least four minutes. For doctors to begin harvesting organs after only two minutes from someone could actually be killing that patient because they could still be revived. If a patient is dying and a doctor knows they are an organ donor, they can stress euthanasia to the patient or their family. If the patient or family agree to euthanasia, a doctor will evaluate them and determine how long it will take them to die and make sure it fits the time frame to harvest organs. There is a one-hour limit between someone dying and their organs being harvested so a doctor will make sure their patient fits the time frame before and during the physician assisted suicide. Although a doctor may say they are euthanizing some who will die very soon anyway to harvest their organs to save another, “ 20% of patients don’t die fast enough”[8]to fit the one hour time frame for harvesting. A doctor can try to tell themselves and the public they are ending someone’s suffering and saving another to make it seem what they are doing is just, however one in five patients organs cannot be harvested.

This is also morally wrong because the doctors are killing one patient so they can keep another alive which is valuing one person's life over another.

Euthanasia is not the only way to end someone's pain. There is so much medicine today that would relieve people of pain so they could die pain free. There is a "Living well" campaign, which encourages people to consider euthanasia to avoid pain for patients. This campaign believes that "if death is inevitable, why not end their life before the patient starts to experience real pain and suffering"[9]. The campaign believes everyone has the right to die and you cannot take that away from someone however the right to die has gone way beyond just terminally ill people. People started taking physician assisted suicide into their own hands because they believe if someone really wants to die they should be able to kill themselves. A woman in California was selling suicide kits and a depressed man bought one and killed himself with it. The president of pro-assisted-suicide Hemlock society in San Diego said if he were the man's mother, "I don't think I would be very upset because somebody provided a peaceful means to end his life"[10]in reference to the man who bought the suicide kit. The woman who is selling these kits is morally wrong because she is giving someone a way to kill themselves fully aware that what she is giving these people will be used to end their lives and no other purpose.

Euthanasia is not only seen as a controversial here in the United States but in many other countries as well. It is so controversial that it is only fully legal in three countries. Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg however assisted suicide is partially legal in a few other

countries. Assisted suicide is legal in Switzerland, Germany, Japan, Albania, Canada, and in the US states of Washington, Oregon, Vermont, New Mexico, Montana and California. It is only legal in some states in the United States, but not all. In the states that it is legal in, there are also restrictions you can not just euthanize anyone. One restriction was made in 1998 named the ‘Death with Dignity Act’ and it is “regulating physician-assisted suicide for terminally ill patients who have a life-expectancy of not more than 6 months”[11]. The people that support physician assisted suicide believe that if the patient is competent and terminally ill, getting prescription medications that would end their life, would give the patient a peaceful death and everyone deserves to have a peaceful death. Everyone does deserve to have a peaceful death however taking lethal medication is not the only way to have a peaceful death. If the patient is terminally ill, they are going to die soon so that does not give a physician the right to speed up the process and kill them right then.

In the early 1990’s, a man named Dr. Kevorkian because very interested in euthanasia after hearing about doctors performing it in the Netherlands. He invented two different ‘death machines’ for people who are ill and want to die before their condition gets really bad. His first patient was a woman names Janet Adkins, 59, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and wanted to die before the disease started to get bad. She used his first ‘death machine’ in the back of his van in a park and die from heart failure within five minutes due to the poison she injected into herself. He was then arrested for killing Janet Adkins, however he argued “a person may not be found guilty of criminally assisting a suicide if they administered medication with the ‘intent

to relieve pain and suffering,' even if it did increase the risk of death".[12]He was then freed and the state of Michigan, where he was researching euthanasia and practicing it, changed their laws to make euthanasia illegal. Kevorkian was the first big doctor to perform physician assisted suicide in the United States and he received a lot of press from it. He was imprisoned a total of four times and he was not ashamed of his arrests because he believed he was doing a good thing and shedding light on how our country is hypocritical when it comes to death. He struck many people who have very strong opinions on euthanasia and caused much attention.

Euthanasia is a very controversial moral topic because it is intentionally killing someone even if it is ending suffering. A physician is fully aware of their actions and that what they either do or give to a patient will end up killing them but they still do it. A physician would be relieving the patient of pain which is morally good, however the way they are relieving the pain is by killing the patient. There are so many ways besides death to relieve a patient from pain without intending to kill them. All of the medicines we have today will relieve a patient of any pain they are facing. Euthanasia is morally wrong even if a physician is ending someone's pain because they are also intentionally ending that person's life.

Bibliography

" Arguments Against Euthanasia | American Life League." American Life League. Accessed April 03, 2016. [http://www. all.org/learn/euthanasia/arguments-against-euthanasia/](http://www.all.org/learn/euthanasia/arguments-against-euthanasia/).

<https://assignbuster.com/issue-of-euthanasia-and-medical-morals/>

“ Consciously Walking the Fine Line: Thoughts on a Hospice Response to Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia.” American Psychological Association. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1994-18983-001>.

“ Dignitas.” Dignitas. Accessed April 03, 2016. http://www.dignitas.ch/index.php?option=com_content.

“ Euthanasia Terms and Definitions | American Life League.” American Life League. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.all.org/learn/euthanasia/definitions/>.

“ History of Suicide Laws and Developments | American Life League.” American Life League. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.all.org/learn/euthanasia/historic-review/>.

“ Jack Kevorkian.” Bio. com. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.biography.com/people/jack-kevorkian-9364141>.

“ Law and Suicide | American Life League.” American Life League. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.all.org/learn/euthanasia/law-and-suicide/>.

“ One in Five ‘ brain Dead’ Patients Still Alive, Claims Lawsuit.” EuthanasiaFree NZ Care without Assisted Dying Assisted Suicide Voluntary Euthanasia or End of Life Choice. 2012. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://euthanasiadebate.org.nz/one-in-five-brain-dead-patients-still-alive-claims-lawsuit/>.

“ Organ Donation: Crossing the Line.”, by Nancy Valko, RN. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.prolifehealthcare.org/nancy-valko-rn-organ-donation-crossing-the-line-12-2011.html>.

“ Physician Assisted Suicide – Euthanasia | American Life League.” American Life League. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.all.org/learn/euthanasia/physician-assisted-suicide/>.

“ Result Filters.” National Center for Biotechnology Information. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16294446>.

“ Terminal Illness.” And Euthanasia. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.life.org.nz/euthanasia/abouteuthanasia/abouteuthanasia4>.

“ Terri Schiavo.” Life & Hope Network. Accessed April 03, 2016. http://www.lifeandhope.com/terri_schiavo.

“ The Dark Heart of Euthanasia: Selling Death.” By Nancy Valko, RN. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.prolifehealthcare.org/nancy-valko-rn-the-dark-side-of-euthanasia-selling-death-2011.html>.

[1] *Oxford Dictionary*, sv.” Euthanasia,” accessed 03 April 2016

[2]“ Organ Donation: Crossing the Line.”, by Nancy Valko, RN. Accessed April 03, 2016.

<http://www.prolifehealthcare.org/nancy-valko-rn-organ-donation-crossing-the-line-12-2011.html>.

<https://assignbuster.com/issue-of-euthanasia-and-medical-morals/>

[3]“ Result Filters.” National Center for Biotechnology Information. Accessed April 03, 2016.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16294446>.

[4]“ Consciously Walking the Fine Line: Thoughts on a Hospice Response to Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia.” American Psychological Association. Accessed April 03, 2016.

<http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1994-18983-001>.

[5]Ibid.

[6]“ Terri Schiavo.” Life & Hope Network. Accessed April 03, 2016.

http://www.lifeandhope.com/terri_schiavo.

[7]“ One in Five ‘ brain Dead’ Patients Still Alive, Claims Lawsuit.” LifeSiteNews. Accessed April 03, 2016.

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/one-in-five-brain-dead-patients-still-alive-claims-lawsuit>.

[8]“ Organ Donation: Crossing the Line.”, by Nancy Valko, RN. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.prolifehealthcare.org/nancy-valko-rn-organ-donation-crossing-the-line-12-2011.html>.

[9]“ Terminal Illness.” And Euthanasia. Accessed April 03, 2016. <http://www.life.org.nz/euthanasia/abouteuthanasia/abouteuthanasia4>.

<https://assignbuster.com/issue-of-euthanasia-and-medical-morals/>

[10]“ The Dark Heart of Euthanasia: Selling Death.” By Nancy Valko, RN.
Accessed April 03, 2016.

<http://www.prolifehealthcare.org/nancy-valko-rn-the-dark-side-of-euthanasia-selling-death-2011.html>.

[11]“ Dignitas.” Dignitas. Accessed April 03, 2016.

http://www.dignitas.ch/index.php?option=com_content.

[12]“ Jack Kevorkian.” Bio. com. Accessed April 03, 2016.

<http://www.biography.com/people/jack-kevorkian-9364141>.