

Evaluation essay essay

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



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Introduction

Euthanasia - varying opinions; legal status.

Thesis statement - In short, euthanasia is a controversial issue because despite its more widespread acceptance now more than ever before, it still raises the issue of whether we are ever in a position to decide who lives and who dies.

Conclusion

Euthanasia is a modern-day controversial issue concerned with the ethics of whether it is acceptable or not to voluntarily end the life of a terminally ill or elderly individual in a controlled, medical environment. In essence, it is a measured form of suicide which can provide relief to the individual in question but in many legal states it is still classified as being an act of manslaughter. There are, however, two different forms of euthanasia: passive and active. The former is more the idea of 'doing nothing' to prevent the death of an individual and the latter refers to an action which directly ends the life of an individual (Gorman et al. 32). There are many varying opinions concerning euthanasia ranging from it being totally morally

incomprehensible to being the choice of individuals and like all medical controversies, it has been discussed in both private, public and political spheres. Currently, in Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Uruguay and some North American states, it is not legal but is also not breaking the law which means those met with a resulting homicide charge could claim a ' euthanasia plea' (Cavan & Dolan 14). Its humanitarian considerations are often the first thought of many who are uncomfortable with the idea of ending the life of someone before it occurs naturally. There are many considerations with regard to euthanasia including the cost of keeping an individual alive, regardless of the expense and the effort that is detracted from other patients. In short, euthanasia is a controversial issue because despite its more widespread acceptance now more than ever before, it still raises the issue of whether we are ever in a position to decide who lives and who dies.

Seemingly, the main argument against euthanasia is its moral and ethical implications: the question of whether it is ever acceptable for a doctor to kill a patient, even one who is suffering extreme pain and discomfort causes a significant amount of debate (Keown 2). The central argument is that the doctor's Hippocratic Oath states that it is their duty to maintain and prolong the lives of their patients. However, in modern terms, this oath may need re-addressing as more and more people feel that it is their choice to end their life or not. Commonly today, patients can sign a ' do not resuscitate' order which for dangerously ill people who are having surgery, for example, this means that they elect to end their life if the operation does not go according to plan. However, this is not technically euthanasia in the active sense but

rather the passive form, elected for by the patient and therefore, it removes the decision from the hands of the doctor in charge.

It is important to differentiate between suicide and euthanasia too. The main difference between the two is the level of control. Often, suicide is an erratic and dangerous action which can backfire and often the person will inflict a lot of pain upon themselves before their body eventually shuts down.

Equally, suicide is equated with depression and other psychiatric disorders which cause the individual to not want to live any more. Whereas euthanasia is far more controlled - it is carried out by a doctor, in a sanitary environment and in a humane manner which limits the amount of discomfort at the end and does not draw out the end for any great length of time.

Another major difference is that suicide is often an act of desperation - acted upon impulsively and as a last attempt to procure some control over a depressed situation. However, euthanasia involves a great amount of discussion beforehand: "The physician's agreement to perform euthanasia or assisted suicide, then, involves a complex series of judgements about which lives are worth living." (Manning 83). In reality, it is not a decision which is entered into lightly and generates further debate with regard to what is acceptably classified as a life that is not worth living.

The argument for euthanasia is one which revolves around the idea that the choice to live or die should rest solely with the individual whose life is in question. For many, suicide has some larger implications: for Catholics it means a denial to enter into heaven, for example and as such, euthanasia is often viewed in the same terms. Many view suicide as being an incredibly

selfish act but unlike suicide, euthanasia is something which happens as the result of an individual's unwillingness to live in pain any longer and is often a decision that is taken to try and act selflessly: many terminally ill patients take the view that their on-going life could interfere with the happiness and freedom of their loved ones - children giving up work to care for their terminally ill parent, for example. In this sense, euthanasia needs to be viewed more openly and as an entirely separate concept from suicide.

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