

# Euthanasia

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Euthanasia Euthanasia Euthanasia is the intentional ending of a living being's life by act or omission to ease pain and suffering. Euthanasia by action involves an action such as giving a lethal injection to induce a person's death. The cause of death by omission euthanasia occurs when the necessary and ordinary care or food and water are intentionally not provided. It may include tough choices like either to prolong someone's life or relieve him of his suffering by performing 'mercy killing'. In most cases the practice of euthanasia is performed if the suffering individual requests for it, but there are special cases where euthanasia administered to a person who is unable to make such a request. There are different categories of Euthanasia such as voluntary, involuntary and non-voluntary. I am going to talk about Voluntary Euthanasia although its practice is still opposed by many people. According to McDougall, Gorman and Roberts (2008), unlike voluntary euthanasia, Involuntary Euthanasia is done by taking someone's life without his consent to relieve suffering. Sometimes, non-voluntary is also categorized as involuntary, but the two are different. This is because non-voluntary euthanasia occurs when the patient is unavailable like in child euthanasia. There is a lot debate on this issue since this practice occurs because of someone else and not the patient. In most cases, involuntary euthanasia is considered a crime in legal perspective and this fact has made it difficult for other categories of euthanasia to be legalized. Involuntary Euthanasia can further be classified as either active or passive involuntary. Involuntary active is where actions are taken to cause death without the consent of the patient. Involuntary passive is where treatment to the patient is withheld or omitted to cause death without the patient's wishes. In the two scenarios, the doctors argue that the actions were in the best interests of the

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patient (McDougall et al, 2008). Legalizing involuntary euthanasia is likely to be opposed by legal enforcers for many reasons. One of the reasons as explained by LaFollette (2002) is that people may shy away from hospitals and trained medical experts for fear of being killed against their wishes. Another reason for denial of legalizing it is the fear that unconscious persons will be terrified to be taken into hospitals and be killed against their will. These reasons have made it hard for euthanasia to be legalized because of the possibility that people may avoid hospitals whenever they get life threatening ailments. Based on a poll conducted in April 8th to 11th in 2005 by the Polling Company, 15% of interviewed persons agreed that doctors should be allowed to withhold life support machine, 77% said patients should be able to get the life support machine while the remaining 8% are undecided. With these results, it only shows how difficult it will be when it comes to legalizing euthanasia because it is clear that many people are opposed to its legalization. Many people believe that life is sacred and the strong argument that is favored, in my opinion, is that life is inviolable and it is wrong to take it away from someone without his or her consent. The suffering of one person does not give the other the right to help him or her die. I believe nature should be left to take its course. The responses are shown in the table below. References McDougall, J. F., Gorman, M., & Roberts, C. S. (2008). *Euthanasia: A Reference Handbook*. California: ABC-CLIO. LaFollette, H. (2002). *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell Ltd. The Polling Company. (2005 April). Lifepoll. Retrieved from <http://www.nrlc.org/euthanasia/willtolive/lifepoll.pdf>