

Physician-assisted suicide

[Experience](#), [Meaning of Life](#)



Physician-Assisted Suicide Euthanasia is a complex and controversial topic in society today. Euthanasia is an action or omission to cause death. One topic that is hotly debated is physician-assisted suicide. Physician-assisted suicide is an act of commission by a willing patient and his or her doctor to end his or her life. I believe that physician-assisted suicide is justified in the terminally ill or those with incurable diseases as long as they're deemed mentally capable of making that decision. Debates concerning physician-assisted suicide have often centered on legal, religious and moral interpretations of suicide and the "right to death". Proponents of the legalization of physician-assisted suicide say that it grants the individual more autonomy, or liberty. One's body and one's life is their own, so they should be able to make decisions regarding their body and life. In the case of the terminally ill, it's the physician's duty to relieve a patient's suffering. It brings the dying process to a merciful end. Opponents of physician-assisted suicide believe that it wouldn't offer more autonomy, but would give doctors more control. One doesn't need assistance to commit suicide. There's concern about abuse of physician-assisted suicide and about what it would lead to. If every time someone gets an "incurable" illness and they decide to commit physician-assisted suicide, there's no pressure to find cures for their disease. All major religions condemn suicide, so there is also a religious resistance to the legalization of physician-assisted suicide. I believe that physician-assisted suicide should be legal with restrictions. Suicide is legal in the United States and those with terminal diseases should have a right to kill themselves if they want to. While some argue that a physician's assistance isn't required to commit suicide, the fact of the matter is that most methods

of suicide are uncertain and traumatic. Why should someone who is dying of cancer have to kill himself or herself in a gruesome way? Shouldn't they have a right to death in a calm and merciful way? If someone is already at the end of their life, they should be able to decide to end their life. If physician-assisted suicide is only legal for the terminally ill, most of the opponent's fears are resolved. There is no "slippery slope" if there's strict legislature regarding the act. There is a clear difference between suicide in the terminally ill and in healthy individuals. Michael G. Bill compares it to blowing out candle that has used up all its wax and is now nothing but a sputtering wick that is just about to go out on its own. Opponents of physician-assisted suicide argue that it's morally wrong for physicians to assist a patient in suicide; I don't believe it's wrong for a physician to assist the terminally ill commit suicide. Physicians take care of dying patients, and one of their principal roles is to reduce the suffering of a dying patient. Once a patient is unable to be cured, reducing suffering becomes the main goal of medicine. If a patient requests for their suffering to be reduced by suicide, isn't a physician just doing his job? Of course there will be physicians who would feel uncomfortable assisting in suicide, and they shouldn't be obliged to. But other physicians certainly will consider it merciful to help patients end their suffering. I also think that allowing physician-assisted suicide would reduce the suicide rate of the terminally ill, because they would be comforted by the help available to them once they are suffering and they would be less likely to give up earlier in their illness. Life is very precious, but sometimes there is such great suffering that it becomes unbearable to live. The terminally ill shouldn't have to resort to violent or painful means to end

their life when there are better options. Physicians should be allowed to fulfill their patients' requests for assistance to end their life. Physician-assisted suicide should be legal. Works Cited Rogatz, Peter. " Physician-Assisted Suicide Should Be Legalized. " At Issue: The Ethics of Euthanasia. Ed. Nancy Harris. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2004. Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. " Physician-Assisted Suicide Should Not Be Legalized. " Opposing Viewpoints: Problems of Death. Ed. James D. Torr and Laura K. Egendorf. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2000. Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center. Gill, Michael B. " A moral defense of Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law. " Mortality. Taylor & Francis Group Ltd., February 2005. University of Arizona. Orr, Robert D. " Is Physician-Assisted Suicide Ever Justified? " The Hospitalist. John Wiley & Sons, April 2006.