

Euthanasia effectiveness and weakness

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Euthanasia: Effectiveness and weaknesses Contemporary western society is currently in the midst of an ethical dilemma concerning the heated debates related to euthanasia, assisted suicide and self-killing. The medical community and society in general finds itself confronted with two diverse pressure groups arguing against and in favour of euthanasia.

Theoretical Perspectives:

The theories that help in understanding the pros and cons of the process include Kants Ethical Theory (Peterson, 2012; Stewart, 2009; Fernandes, 2008), The natural law theory (Peterson, 2008; Morrison, 2009), Slippery slope or the Domino theory (Manning, 1998; Govier, 2009; MacKinnon, 2010), jury nullification theory (Cavan and Dolan, 2000; Pappas, 2012; Abel, 1995) etc among others.

Strengths and weakness of the arguments:

Euthanasia and/or assisted suicide is a criminal offence in almost all countries throughout the world, however recently various countries have started to open up to consider the other side of the argument, and taken steps to legalize the process. Countries such as The Netherlands, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Belgium and Canada¹ are cases in point.

Opponents argue that voluntary euthanasia is not equivalent to murder and that it is in fact merciful since it helps those suffering from acute illness and pain. Opponents on the other hand including human rights groups and religious leaders argue that killing is against the will of god and an inhuman act and hence must not be endorsed.

Recent cases:

Deaf Belgian twins euthanized for fear of going blind (USA Today, 2012)

Tony Nicklinson - a patient of locked-in syndrome pleads for the right to

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assisted suicide (BBC UK, 2012)

The case of Debby Purdy and the eventual change in law against assisted suicide (The Guardian, 2009)

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