

An euthanasia essay: do terminally ill patients have a right to choose death?

[Philosophy](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Euthanasia The Right to Die with Dignity

Everyone, at one point in his or her life, has thought about death or dying. Most of us think of dying quickly and/or painlessly. What if it doesn't work out that way? What if you or someone you know becomes terminally ill and has to live with great pain and discomfort. No one wants to die a slow painful death, but people are doing it everyday. Not because they want to, but because they have no choice. There is much to be said about dying with dignity. Many people believe in the Right to Life, but what about the Right to Die. This essay will show that it is a humane choice, not a barbaric one.

I believe rational adults with a terminal or irreversible physical illness involving great suffering have the right to end their suffering. I will discuss the patient's quality of life versus the quantity, and then the family's needs versus the patient's needs.

Sadly, people, more specifically, family members of terminally ill patients, tend only to think of their loved ones quantity of life. They are just grateful to have mom, dad, granny, or grandpa around for as much time as possible. Does this sound selfish? It is, but unfortunately we are a selfish race. This way of thinking, has forced health care professionals to keep the terminal patient alive for as long as possible. It isn't until death is imminent, perhaps a day, a week, or a month away, that the families begin to verbalize, that they wish they and their loved one had another choice. It is a sad truth that I have witnessed many times as a palliative nurse. I think it may be a good thing that families don't see the oozing bedsores that have rotted to the bone. That they don't witness the hourly lung suctioning, so their loved ones can

breathe. That they don't know how much morphine the nurses must give the patients to keep them comfortable. That they don't know that it is the nurse turning, and re-positioning the patient every hour and a half, because they can no longer move on their own. They can be content in their ignorance, not knowing that their loved one has become completely incontinent. Is this quality? Yes, maybe it is better that they don't see these truths. The visual reminders and the permeating odors, can be haunting, but being aware of what happens to the body during the event we call dying, could help families understand the need for a choice euthanasia.

I touched on the families needs in the beginning of this essay. Their needs run parallel with the patients, just on different levels. The families need to be with their loved ones for as long as possible. Patients need to be with their families for as long as possible too, as long as they are pain free and cognitive. Everyone needs closure. It is equally important for both parties. With euthanasia, there could be a planned event, or two, or three, to celebrate the patients life, to say goodbye, and to forgive past hurts. There is nothing quite as sad than watching a family member beg for forgiveness from their comatose loved one. The planned event could eliminate this as well as the missing family member scenario. The one who can't be there for the death, to say goodbye. These people never have full closure, and never really heal from their loss. Have you heard the expression Dying with Dignity? It is something that most patients want to do. They fight to keep their dignity until the end, but unfortunately most of it is gone, days or weeks before they die. It is heartbreaking to have a human being, a shell of their former self, crying because a nurse now has to change their diaper.

<https://assignbuster.com/an-euthanasia-essay-do-terminally-ill-patients-have-a-right-to-choose-death/>

Crying because they can no longer walk, talk, or breathe on their own. Crying because they can no longer drink, eat or wash their selves. Crying because they believe they are an emotional burden on their family, or because now they have trouble recognizing their family due to all the drugs coursing through their body. Crying because they just want the pain to end. Crying because now they have to wait for death. How can this be dying with dignity? It is not. A person should have the right, to die on his or her own terms. They need to die with dignity.

Now that I have you thinking of euthanasia, I need to discuss how to implement it. I would like to see it as part of a living will. This would ensure that the decision is made while the person is completely lucid. The person who will have power of attorney should witness and sign too. I would like to stress the point that it must be the patients choice for assisted suicide, not the families. Although I believe it is a personal choice, I think that there should be some regulations put in place that can be amended at anytime. Regulations would include, where it is to be done, how it is to be done, by whom, and what diseases this can be used for. Counseling would also be mandatory, for the patient as well as for the family.

People may say that assisted suicide is wrong, that it is cruel, that it is murder. I beg to differ. It is a humane act to do if a terminally ill patient wishes it. I believe it is cruel to deny a person an end to their suffering. To prolong suffering is wrong and cruel. I cannot accept the argument that it is murder. It is a patients choice. If death is emanate, why not let a loved one go, on their terms, with their dignity intact, and their soul full of inner peace?

I am not saying this is for everyone, but when your time comes, wouldnt you like to have the right to choose?