

Should All Governments Legalize Euthanasia?

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Euthanasia refers to the deliberate step to end a person's life after their request. Upon request, the healthcare practitioner administers a lethal substance that ends the life of the individual. Although euthanasia is meant to end the terminally ill patient's suffering, it violates the fundamental principle that life is God-given and only God should decide when to end it. Although people should be allowed to die in dignity and without pain, euthanasia is not an ethical solution to ending suffering since doctors can manage patients using other medical practices. Pollard (2021) noted that pain and suffering alone could not be used as the basis for legalizing euthanasia. He claimed that pain and suffering could not be measured or compared among patients. All governments should illegalize euthanasia and invest in high-quality palliative care.

There is a likelihood of euthanasia being misused or abused. Although different jurisdictions would enact safeguards, procedures, and criteria for societal oversight, flaws have been found in countries where it is currently legal (Tuffrey-Wijne et al., 2018). The United Nations (UN) found that in the Netherlands, where the process is legal, euthanasia law violates the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights because of the risk it poses to the rights of safety and integrity for every person" (Pereira 2011, p. 43). The UN noted that the system established by the Netherlands government might fail to detect and prevent cases where patients were under undue pressure to access or provide euthanasia (Pereira, 2011). Other than that, even with the existence of the safeguards, physicians can circumvent them because of undue pressure, especially from family members. Notably, legalizing euthanasia would change societal values and make the programs that prevent suicide redundant since people wishing to commit suicide

would have a legal way of dying (Clark, 2017; Pereira, 2011). The likelihood of euthanasia being used to kill people who do not want to die means that it should not be legalized.

Legalizing euthanasia would present a significant threat to vulnerable people. The global population comprises people of low socioeconomic status, uneducated, and without access to quality healthcare, among other vulnerabilities. In most cases, these people are likely to suffer from chronic illnesses since they have heightened risks of contracting the diseases. Besides, such people are likely to be uninsured, meaning that the cost of accessing healthcare services is high. In other cases, they might be living in a country where the doctor-patient ratio is low. People with such vulnerabilities are likely to endure more suffering from illnesses that would be treated elsewhere. Additionally, their decision-making ability is low compared to the insured, working-class, wealthy, and privileged. Legalizing euthanasia will present a risk of premature death among the vulnerable population (Tuffrey-Wijne et al., 2018). The government should invest more in palliative care to enable more people to live pain-free lives and eliminate the need for euthanasia.

Deciding when and how to die is a private and personal decision that people can make. Proponents of euthanasia legalization argue that based on the personal nature of the decision of when to die, a patient's request to have their life terminated should not be denied (Fragoso & Saunders, n.d). Nevertheless, individual choices are not, in all cases, justifiable. For instance, governments across the world have legislation to prohibit harm for others and the self. Choices that harm or risk harming oneself, including driving under the influence of any substance, driving without a safety belt, snorting cocaine, or any other activity that threatens physical harm to oneself, are illegal (Fragoso & Saunders, n.d). Besides, if euthanasia is legalized, individuals who are not terminally sick but are experiencing life struggles such as grief for the death of a

spouse, long-term unemployment, or loss of investment will ask to be euthanized (Fragoso & Saunders, n.d). Although people should have the autonomy to decide when to die, legalizing euthanasia is precipitous.

Autonomy and choice are essential values in society, but they are not without limits. Different legislations limit the autonomy and choices of individuals to protect the larger community. In this case, different standards on autonomy and choice concerning the application of euthanasia should not apply. Notably, no compelling reason exists as to why all governments should legalize euthanasia. Instead, the governments should invest in palliative care to develop safe practices that guarantee people suffering from chronic illnesses a pain-free life.

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