

Should Mercy Killing for Terminally Ill Patients be allowed?

Name

Institution

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The era of science has brought with it various challenges that people need to comprehensively deal with in order to bring some level of coherence to medicine. Some of these issues include the presence of untreatable diseases. In most cases, these diseases lead to cases of terminal illness as the patient can stay for quite a long time with a disease without succumbing to it. There have been fervent discussions, especially in the field of medicine, about the principle of mercy killing. The debate rages on even after some countries already enacted laws that made the practice legal. Societies with a sense of human life and dignity argue based on the aspect of whether the act itself constitutes murder or suicide. The suicide aspect comes in because most of the terminally ill patients agree to have their lives terminated to end their suffering. It is in this hindsight, that this paper seeks to establish whether indeed mercy killing for the terminally ill should be allowed or made legal. The argument for or against the idea of mercy killing will depend on an array of factors including the issue of consent and the economic impact of maintaining such terminally ill patients.

Normally, a person with a terminal illness undergoes much pain and suffering. The respite in such conditions is the hope that somehow they might get well with time, but recovery and getting well is rarely an outcome for this category of patients. The fact that the disease is incurable presents a complicated scenario for the doctors, the patients, and the close family alike. The suffering associated with terminal illnesses like cancer is intense and unprecedented. Therefore, the solution is to afford the individual a quiet and convenient exit by instituting euthanasia (Friedman, 2010). In fact, most of the patients are pro-euthanasia, but the law, concerns of the extended family, and the medical personnel halts such ideas. Overall, the process of euthanasia would be ideal to help end the suffering of a majority of patients.

Maintaining and keeping the patient in hospital strains the family and the society. The cost of medical supplies that keep the patient alive together with the general cost of maintenance has the capability of eating into the family savings and even leading to a condition where the family becomes impoverished. It would not be in the economic interests of the majority to become poor while caring for one terminally ill patient at the expense of the majority of the family members (Preston, 2007). Apart from the economic perspective, a couple of other reasons support mercy killing for terminally ill patients. For example, a terminally ill patient knows that the only remaining thing in life is death. For this reason, the act of mercy killing would speed up the process and relieve such a patient from the agony of waiting to die.

Many individuals take the contrary position arguing that mercy killing is immoral and illegal and terminally ill patients should not go through it. The main argument presented is that mercy killing constitutes murder, thus, constitutes an illegal act. The fact that the patient has given his or her consent should not be a reason to conduct euthanasia as that patient could be suffering from delusions due to the effects of the illness (Friedman, 2010).

In conclusion, the arguments placed forth in support of euthanasia have bordered on the aspects of cost and the economy. The claim is that euthanasia should be allowed to forestall the emergence of high hospital bills and maintenance costs. The pro-life proponents dismiss this argument that individuals should not permit an immoral act such as mercy killing under any circumstances, even under extreme economic hardships. However, mercy killing should be allowed as long as the consent of the patients or next of kin has been sought and given.

References

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