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Until the End of Time

Euthanasia involves a physician who assist in alleviating the pain of a patients by ending their lives. The way that they end the patient’s life is by administering a fatal dose of medication. Euthanasia was first introduced in the 17th century and is referred to as a quick and painless death usually performed by a physician. At the present time, voluntary euthanasia is legal in Luxembourg Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and the following states Vermont, Washington State, Oregon, California, Montana, and Colorado “Assisted Dying in Other Countries”. As John Harris once said, “The harm you do in taking a life is the harm of depriving someone of something that they can value” (Harris pg.9). Most people think that legalizing euthanasia is the easy way out and the best answer to those suffering from an incurable disease but in fact, it is not the easiest solution. A question that is always asked is “Is it always wrong for a doctor intentionally to kill a patient, even if the patient is suffering and ask for death?” (Keown pg. 1). I argue that, euthanasia is contrary to what a doctor or any medical professional is supposed to do. They are supposed to save lives and not end them. They are supposed to find new cures and not give up. Euthanasia is an unethical, unnatural way of dying. It would harm the future investment in health research. For several reasons euthanasia should therefore not be legalized and should be banned where it is already legal.

There is controversy surrounding the use of euthanasia mainly because it can be considered unethical and an unnatural way of dying. It is morally wrong to purposely take a living person’s life. Legalizing euthanasia could impact the world in many different ways, starting with the whole purpose of instead of saving lives, physicians would be concentrating on ending the lives of those terminally ill. The worst part is that the healthcare professionals involved in the process of euthanizing someone think they are helping someone in need. However, the fact is that most physicians involved think they are morally doing the patient a favor. The truth is that because of their involvement they are putting their own career on the line. There are laws and medical oaths that physicians have to follow and euthanasia should be one that must remain illegal because if it does not where will the line end.

Euthanasia is an unnatural form of dying. A person who is terminally ill does not have the mental competence to choose how and when they should end their life. This is because all the person is thinking of is getting rid of the pain and would do anything to relieve it. A person who is sick may not be thinking clearly and may not make good judgement calls. The patient may not trust the professionals who are caring for them. There are other options for terminally ill patients like palliative care, which concentrates on the quality of care rather than the quantity of life remaining. Both religious and non-religious people would agree that euthanasia is an unnatural way of dying. Passive euthanasia on the other hand involves a natural way of dying when the body decides it can no longer go on and it stops living on its own. Most people would argue that passive and active euthanasia are one in the same. But in reality there is a big difference between the two. With active euthanasia one is deliberately killing a patient by administering a lethal dose. Passive euthanasia is more of stopping any treatment and letting the disease take over the body until the body can longer hold on and just shuts down. Where does euthanasia stop if it is legalized? Who gets to choose when people get to die? Yale Kamisar said “Can (should) the right to assisted suicide be confined to the terminally ill? To those suffering unbearable pain? (Kamisar pg. 233). Legalizing euthanasia could be taken out of hand by people who want to commit suicide for other reasons than that of terminal illness and may go the distance as to use this unethically. “The extension of euthanasia to non-physically ill patients is another example of the slippery slope effect” (Twycross pg. 160). Euthanasia is not yet legal and in The Netherlands where it is legal it is out of hand. “Imposed euthanasia already occurs in the Netherlands; indeed, a majority of cases of euthanasia involves no explicit request by the patient” (Keown 1994 pg. 160). The data demonstrates that it could not be controlled in the places that it is legal if it was to be legalized everywhere it would just have a drastic effect in the world.

Using euthanasia is unethical for physicians and can be abused. Euthanasia is not morally right because patients’ family members could abuse it by being quick in trying to get an inheritance or life insurance from the dying patient.  Assisted suicide is still unethical and illegal in most countries. As of now, it is practiced in the Netherlands, but is still considered illegal. The few doctors that still use euthanasia have to go through a certain legal route. Using euthanasia can be considered unethical for physicians because it goes against the oath they took to protect and do no harm to patients. No matter the circumstance it is still illegal. Even if euthanasia became legal it defeats the whole purpose of what the physicians is supposed to do, which is to save lives and give the patient a better life, something they can value. Using euthanasia to end one patients life is still considered murder and unethical. The practice of euthanasia could be abused by the doctors just like it is in The Netherlands. This often occurs upon request from families rather than from the patients themselves. As Daniel A Leone wrote, “One study conducted in 1990 found that in one year doctors killed 2,300 patients who wanted to die, assisted in 400 suicides, and took the life of over 1,000 other patients who did not even request to die” (Leone pg. 28). This data indicates that if it did become legalized, the prevalence of abuse would increase drastically, especially for those families that see it as a burden to have a terminally ill family member in pain who cannot handle the financial burden. Families may abuse the practice for patients such as the elderly, without their consent. In doing so, this can also drastically affect the population. Widening the use of euthanasia would harm the population. “To begin qualifying who should live will ensure our own destruction” (LaHay pg. 29) Palliative care would be the ethical way to go as Dieter Giesen said “Such treatment is held to be ethically justifiable under the doctrine of ‘double effect’, provided that the alleviation of pain is the aim, that the patient (if competent) has given his consent, that death is imminent and that there is a favorable balance between the therapy and its results” (Giesen pg. 205). The reason that palliative care would be the morally right thing to choose is because the patient is given a chance to fight to try and live possible to a time when a cure is available. When family choses euthanasia they are telling the patient they are giving up on them and that is morally wrong. “Implicated in the characterization of medical practice as intervention, it is typically thought that in killing a person one is the direct causal agent of death, while in letting die one simply allows an underlying physiological process to follow its natural course” (Hopkins pg50). Therefor at least allowing the patient to live the physician could fight and research for any possible trials the patient could try to prolong his or her life.

The final reason why euthanasia should not be legalized is because allowing it undermines the commitment of doctors and nurses to saving lives and could harms the investment in state health research. “Many physicians came to think of suicide as though it were a medicine” (Budziszewski pg. 14). Allowing euthanasia could discourage the potential research for new cures and treatments for the terminally ill.  Patients would not only be giving up on life but medical scientist would also be giving up on research that could benefit the prolongevity. “So the idea grew and became deeply rooted in the psyche of the whole society that the sole task of medical science was to prolong life” (Spong pg. 31). The whole purpose of medical science is to research the best possible way to cure disease so that people can live longer lives.

In conclusion the legalization of euthanasia could bring more harm than good. Legalizing euthanasia would be the beginning of the end of the world and mankind. Euthanasia the unnatural, unethical and morally wrong practice of dying could be replaced entirely with palliative care where the body take on the role and decides when to give up instead of a physician deciding. In banning the use of euthanizing could bring more medical scientist to researching and finding cures for diseases. The future of science would benefit from the ban of euthanasia. In result I argue that because people fought so strongly to live in this world that people should not just give up. Instead, society should defend the right for everyone to try and live a long life if at all possible until the end of time.

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