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Suicide Tourism

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Abstract

Euthanasia is one of the issues that has been the subject of intense debate over times. It is a social, religious and humanitarian issue. In this paper we will discuss what Euthanasia is, and also types of Euthanasia and its main causes and remedy will be touched in this paper. Also we will discuss why and how Switzerland is becoming the favourite destination for assisted suicide tourists. Euthanasia is considered as practical, emotional and religious issue.

Keywords: Euthanasia, Hippocratic Oath, Life Support System, Mercy Killing, Monetised, Ventilator, Nuclear and Joint Family

1. Introduction

Suicide Tourism is a form of tourism associated with pro-Euthanasia (right to die) movement which organises trips for potential suicide candidates in the few places of the world, where Euthanasia is permitted, in the hopes of decriminalization in other parts of the world. Euthanasia is popularly taken to mean the practice of helping severely-ill people die, either at their request, or by taking the decision to withdraw life support. It is also known as mercy killing. Suicide Tourism describes the act of travelling another country or other region of the same country for assisted suicide. With the exception of The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxemburg and the US state of Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont, Euthanasia is illegal everywhere in Europe and in the USA, although the law is under review in a number of places. Note that in most countries assisting someone to carry out suicide is also illegal. Assisted suicide laws around the globe are in flux as countries debate the pros and cons of allowing doctors to help patients to die. Difference between Euthanasia and suicide is that, Euthanasia involves more than one person, someone else is needed to perform the killing, by providing lethal injection and drugs or withhold lifesaving treatment because someone is unable to commit suicide on their own.

Suicide Tourism in Switzerland:

Switzerland has become one of the favourite destinations for Suicide Tourism. This is because in Switzerland the laws are very soft regarding this, and it is legal there to assist in committing suicide. According to Swiss laws, there are no hard and fast rules about assisted suicides i.e. what type of procedures will be followed during assisted suicide. Therefore doctors are free to decide the procedure used in assisted suicide. That is why people from different countries travelling to Zurich (Switzerland) for purpose of committing assisted suicide. Between 2008 to 2012, 611 people went to Switzerland to commit suicide. More than half of these were women, many had neurological disorders. They arrived from 31 countries around the world, of whom the majority were from Germany and United Kingdom (U.K). According to reports, out of 611 assisted suicides from 2008 to 2012, 58% were women. The patients who opted for Suicide Tourism were between the ages of 23 to 97 years. According to survey, the average age of suicide tourists in Switzerland was about 69. Out of these suicide tourists, half of them have neurological problems in other cases; they were suffering from painful and chronic diseases, such as Cancer, Rheumatic diseases, cardiovascular diseases or Parkinson's disease. Many of them also have more than one disease. Among the assisted suicides in Switzerland, mainly Sodium Pentobarbital (C₁₁H₁₇N₂NaO₃) was used. This Sodium Pentobarbital (C₁₁H₁₇N₂NaO₃) paralyses the respiratory system, causing him or her to stop breathing. According to survey among 611 assisted suicide cases, Sodium Pentobarbital was used in 607 cases. According to survey, the total number of Suicide Tourism cases dropped from 123 in 2008 to 86 in 2009. But the number of cases doubled to 172 between 2009 to 2012.

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Many terminally ill foreigners now travel to the Dignitor clinic and Exit ADMD Switzerland to commit assisted suicide, taking advantage of the Swiss rules, which are among the world's most liberal on assisted suicide. Normally the average cost of Euthanasia in Switzerland is about 4500 euros approximately. In Switzerland, there are about 6 right to die organisations, which assist in suicide. These organizations assist approximately about 600 cases of assisted suicide per year, out of which 150 to 200 are assisted suicide tourists. That means the rate of assisted suicides is also very high in Switzerland itself.



The body of 74 year old terminally ill Briton is taken from flat in Zurich, Switzerland where his life was ended at an assisted suicide clinic.

Table 2 All cases per year and country

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Germany	59	37	28	67	77	268
UK	23	27	24	23	29	126
France	19	7	8	13	19	66
Italy	2	4	4	12	22	44
USA	0	0	5	9	7	21
Austria	4	3	1	2	4	14
Canada	5	0	5	0	2	12
Spain	2	0	3	1	2	8
Israel	3	2	1	1	1	8
Australia	1	0	3	1	0	5
Sweden	2	0	3	0	0	5
Netherlands	1	0	2	1	0	4
Monaco	0	0	2	1	1	4
Portugal	0	1	0	0	2	3
South Africa	0	0	0	2	1	3
Czech Republic	0	1	0	0	1	2
Denmark	0	1	0	1	0	2
Ireland	0	1	0	1	0	2
Finland	0	0	0	2	0	2
Morocco	1	0	0	0	0	1
Belgium	1	0	0	0	0	1
New Zealand	0	1	0	0	0	1
Poland	0	1	0	0	0	1
Brazil	0	0	1	0	0	1
India	0	0	0	1	0	1
Luxembourg	0	0	0	1	0	1
Zimbabwe	0	0	0	1	0	1
Greece	0	0	0	0	1	1
Croatia	0	0	0	0	1	1
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	1	1
Malaysia	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	123	86	90	140	172	611

Types of Euthanasia:

There are two types of Euthanasia:

a. Active/voluntary Euthanasia: It is the term given to the situation where the patient is given some drugs or some other procedures which causes his or her death, or when the medical professional or other person deliberately do something that causes the patients to die e.g. giving lethal injections to patients or some other procedure. Active Euthanasia is legal in Netherland, Belgium, and Luxemburg.

Assisted suicide is legal in Switzerland, Germany, Albania, and Columbia, Japan and in the few states of U.S.A.

b. Passive/involuntary Euthanasia: passive Euthanasia is alternative name of withdrawal of treatment-the doctor withholds life sustaining treatment. Passive Euthanasia occurs when the patient dies because the medical professional either do not do something necessary to keep the patient alive, or they stop doing something that is keeping the patient alive, e.g.:

Switching off life support machines

1. Disconnect a feeding tube.
2. Don't carry out a life extending operation.
3. Don't give life extending drugs.
4. Switching off a respirator.
5. Taking patient off the ventilator.

But there is no real difference between active and passive Euthanasia, since both have the same result: the death of the patient.

Main Causes of Euthanasia:

- a. Unbearable pain/ no remedy of the disease.
- b. Right to commit suicide.
- c. People should not be forced to live.
- d. Disability caused due to disease.
- e. No social bonding and responsibilities, no family support.
- f. Too high cost of treatment. Having no main source of income.
- g. Fed up with their life.
- h. No one to take care of the patient.
- i. Don't have faith in religion.
- j. Prolonged painful illness or prolonged coma.
- k. When doctors fail to give hope to the patient.
- l. When the patient is taken as far granted by the doctors.
- m. To get fed up with diseased and paralysed life.
- n. Moral degradation of the society.
- o. Everything has been monetised, even life and death also.
- p. Value and moral degradation of some of medical professionals, not even respected Hippocratic Oath.
- q. Fighting with nature.

Remedy:

However ethically, these doctors are not allowed to help someone to commit suicide. In fact these doctors should give hope to these patients and further makes the patient to believe that above all there is a supreme power i.e. god who can change the miseries of these patients, so that their will power will be strengthened. Medical science should come forward to subsidise the pain and suffering of patients from different chronic diseases. New innovations not only in medicines, but also in technology should be encouraged so that these types of patients could get some kind of hope and relief in their life and miseries respectively. Further the assistance of religious institutions should be also taken to curb this menace. Rich

people such as industrialist and the government should come forward to help the needy patients to get their costly treatment done. They should tell these patients to believe in religion firmly and god has chosen these miseries and pain for them in order to test them. Nature has chosen the destiny of every person and that it should be obeyed. One should not take this type of extreme step; in fact he or she should wait for their natural death. NGO'S should come forward to curb this menace, not only legally but also financially. Laws which favours assisted suicide should be amended. More and more money should be spent on medical research, so that miseries of these patients could be subsidized. The cost of treatment and medicines should be make affordable to a common people. Helping hand should be extended from government and other agencies to the needy people. Monetized culture should be discouraged and moral culture should be encouraged. Further the students in the school, colleges and universities should be make strong enough to face any kind of adverse situation in their life. These students should be given well moral education, so that the society and nation will become moral based. Social bonds should be strengthened and Joint family should be encouraged instead of Nuclear family. If we ratify suicide we may be helping a very few, but we neglect many. We fail to emphasize quality life, at the end of life, by good communication, good planning and good care. We fail to demand of doctors and the medical system what is possible. We discard the potential to live, learn and love in the last days, or weeks or months and instead say your life is worthless, make it easier on all of us, take this pill and die.

Conclusion:

Euthanasia degrades the moral values of the society. Euthanasia takes physicians and medicine beyond their fundamental role of caring, healing and curing whenever possible. It is the mass violation of the Hippocratic Oath by the the doctors. It involves them, no matter how compassionate their motives, in the infliction of death on those for whom they provide care and treatment. We must consider the damage to medicine if physicians are allowed to kill. Physicians and nurses absolute rejection of internationally inflicting death is necessary for maintaining people and societies trust.

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