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Should Euthanasia Be Legal?

Euthanasia refers to assisting patients that suffer from a painful disease, an incurable illness or those that are in an irreversible coma to die. Due to the legal, moral and ethical implications of euthanasia, it has attracted a lot of controversy and debate within the contemporary globalized society (Purdy and Ilora 35). Euthanasia can be passive in the form of withdrawing medication, surgery or life support from a patient. It can also be voluntary, such as when requested by the terminally ill, or can take the form of a physician aiding a patient to die through the administration of specific medication (Lesser 332). Regardless of its form, it is argued that euthanasia should not be legal.

Activists who support euthanasia argue that people have an intrinsic human right to choose whether they want to die or live. However, this argument is against the moral and ethical principles on the sanctity of life (Chaloner and Karen 43). It is therefore argued that assisting a person to die is synonymous with deciding that some lives worth less than others. In this sense, legal frameworks should protect the sanctity of life by maintaining that euthanasia is illegal. In addition, those who support euthanasia argue that it does no harm to patients because they are already in a state of suffering. However, scientific arguments, such as the implementation of palliative care reveal why euthanasia is unnecessary and should not be legalized (Purdy and Ilora 36).

Proponents of euthanasia argue that if it is legalized, assisted death could be controlled in a more effective manner. Nonetheless, there is no guarantee that if euthanasia is legalized, there would be no ethical malpractice, such as assisting patients to die when it is not necessary or in cases when it does not serve the values and interests of family members (Lesser 331). Due to the fact that most legal frameworks are drawn from ethical and moral principles of the global society, legalizing euthanasia is tantamount to giving human beings the power to take life. It is therefore argued that legal frameworks should support religious values that state that life and death are decisions that can only be made by God. Societal attitudes and values towards life and death can only remain conservative and pro-life if euthanasia remains illegal (Chaloner and Karen 45).

The scarcity of medical resources and aid should not be used to justify the legalization of euthanasia. This is because people have equal rights and privileges of utilizing resources such as health services, regardless of their conditions (Purdy and Ilora 34). Legalizing euthanasia will limit the implementation of the principles of equity in health care. This will result in a decline in medical and nursing care quality especially for terminally ill patients and the elderly (Lesser 334). It is only through the law that the standards of health care should be promoted. Therefore, legalizing euthanasia should also be opposed because it is likely to result in the commercialization of healthcare services, such as focusing health care resources towards patients who have more chances of recovery (Purdy and Ilora 35). Euthanasia should remain illegal in order to prevent disparities in health care quality among terminal conditions and other diseases.

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