

# Candidate 9 evidence

Essay 12

Morality & Medicine

Voluntary euthanasia is when a person asks to be euthanised and it is in the wishes of the dying person to be euthanised and they fully understand the consequences of doing so. This is usually requested in case of someone suffering from a terminal illness. Non-voluntary euthanasia is when the decision is not made by the dying person but by others often in the case of terminal illness with no hope of recovery.

A moral issue arising from this is the right to die. This means that a person's life is there to do as they please and they should have the choice over death. A religious response to this as from the Roman Catholic Church who do not believe humans have the right to die. They believe that life is a gift from God and only he can decide when it ends. The catechism states "no man has the power of retention of the spirit or power over the day of dead" This implies that God gives his life and that euthanasia is a grave violation of God's law as only he has the power to make life and death decisions. I disagree with this response as I believe in personal autonomy and how all humans should be allowed to make their own decisions regarding such a personal matter as life and death.

Another moral issue from euthanasia is that it is a final act of kindness and compassion. This means that people who are suffering a prolonged and undignified death should be entitled to a compassionate end with loved ones. A religious response to this is the Roman Catholic Church who believed that alternative methods should be used over euthanasia and that no one should be able to take the life of an innocent person as is morally wrong. In the Bible it states "whoever sheds the blood of man by man, shall his blood be shed for in the image of God, God made man," This implies that death should not be brought about unnaturally and that euthanising someone is against God's will. However some Christians believe that in a desperate state of suffering euthanasia is a moral act to relieve suffering of a person who has a terminal illness and to fully understand the consequences of their decision and would be considered an act of compassion. I agree with the Christian response to this moral issue as I believe that people who are suffering and facing a loss of dignity should be given the freedom to decide on a dignified and compassionate end to relieve their pain.

A third moral issue arising from euthanasia is that it can create a slippery slope. This means that a voluntary euthanasia is made legal, then how long would it be before involuntary euthanasia began? A religious response is the Roman Catholic Church who believe that euthanasia is in no way an acceptable or moral act and agree that voluntary euthanasia will bring about involuntary euthanasia and cause a risk of people who want to continue with their lives being unrightfully killed. The

catechism states “we are stewards of the body God has entrusted to us not owners” an implication of this belief is that legalising euthanasia and making it readily available would pose too much of a risk for people who do not want to be euthanised. I disagree with this response as there is no evidence from countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium who currently have laws in favour of euthanasia that their law is present a slippery slope. Consequently we can use countries like this in order to design strict and secure safeguards that will eliminate the risk of a slippery slope.

A final moral issue is that it puts vulnerable people at risk. This means that the elderly or disabled could be taken advantage of with these laws and is too dangerous to be legalised. A religious response to this is the Church of Scotland who believe that the most vulnerable in society should be protected at all costs. The Church of Scotland states that “they have always followed the teachings of Jesus in helping those in the margins.” An implication of this is that the vulnerable people in society will not benefit from legalising euthanasia and will be made to feel like a burden on those around them. In addition, the catechism states “those whose lives are weakened or diminished deserve special respect”. This implies that it is a societal duty to protect the most vulnerable amongst us and not allow them to be targeted by the law which the Catholic Church believe will happen in the face of legalising euthanasia. I disagree to an extent with this response. Although I believe it is important to protect vulnerable people and not make them feel like a burden, I believe that euthanasia will not allow this and should be an option to those who want it. For example in the case of Tony Bland who was in it persistent vegetative state (PVS) with no hope of recovery and the significantly weakened quality of life then for people like him euthanasia should be an available option if the person is sure they want it and fully understand the consequences of doing so.