

Euthanasia: A controversial debate

To the Editor,

As the word indicates, euthanasia is derived from the Greek word “euthanatos” meaning “early death.” This term has such countless debates that it has incited emotive reactions both among the clinical practitioners and people in general. According to the House of Lords Select Committee on Medical Ethics, the correct definition of euthanasia is “a deliberate intervention undertaken with the express intention of ending a life, to relieve intractable sufferings.”^[1] As of March 2021, active human euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands, Belgium, Colombia, Luxembourg, Western Australia, Canada, and Spain. As a matter of concern, there are many incurable diseases such as dementia and multiple sclerosis, yet my fundamental spotlight is about dementia.

People affected with dementia become unaware of their surroundings as their cognitive efficiency decreases progressively (Cheston and Bender; Kitwood), along with that they become anosognosic and adapt to a lack of decision-making capability. Thus, they live their lives through unbearable sufferings. Therefore, in the research reported by Dröes *et al.*^[2] and Smith *et al.*,^[3] it is stated that the caregivers can enhance the confidence and quality of life of people with dementia by providing them access to their autonomy. Therefore, in 2004–2006 assent for geriatric care was brought in contact for cognitively impaired patients. However, in this practice, only the decision taken by the demented person before his worst condition will be taken in the subject. Thus, the result of this study showed that even after the collaborative efforts tried by the caregiver, it did not mitigate the moral dilemma; instead, it escalated the conflict.^[4]

However, according to a new study, many medical organizations have accentuated to improve palliative care. The International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care stated that no country or state should consider the legalization of physician-assisted suicide-euthanasia until it ensures universal access to palliative care services and appropriate medications, including opioids for pain and dyspnea.^[5]

Therefore, after going through these studies, it has raised significant concern as Pakistan is a third-world country and Islamic country where Muslims solely believe that only God should end their lives, and killing a person who is undergoing unbearable sufferings by euthanasia is forbidden.^[6] As we think of Pakistan, which is a poverty-stricken country, people are confused about whether to continue treatment, which has unpredictable efficacy or to go through euthanasia that will question their lives with a moral dilemma. Thus, they live their lives between Scylla and Charybdis. Not only this, as Pakistan is an underdeveloped nation, it has very few effective therapeutics, hence we should give our prior attention to the palliative care and the conduction of rehabilitation programs to solve this issue. Therefore, the implementation of these new findings in Pakistan will surely help and improve the lives of terminally ill patients.

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