

# Euthanasia

Bc. Lucie Bučková



## **CONTENT**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1 EUTHANASIA .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 FORMS AND TYPES OF EUTHANASIA.....	4
<b>2 EUTHANASIA AND ETHICS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3 REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Why the subject of euthanasia? I would like to start by asking a question that is always a hotly debated topic. So euthanasia is

Ending a person's life at his own request is done by another person out of compassion or pity. Death is an integral part of our lives, and yet many people close their eyes to death and pretend that death does not exist.

This topic is very important, which is why I chose it for my essay.

In my work, I would like to clarify the concepts of euthanasia, types of euthanasia...

In the Czech Republic, there is an effort to legalize this termination of human life, but the decision whether yes or no is not easy at all.

# 1 EUTHANASIA

The word euthanasia comes from the Greek words eu - good and thantos - death. In the literal translation, we are talking about euthanasia, so we are talking about a good death. But what is a good death? Is it death in sleep, after we have lived a peaceful and long life? But we can meet this death only rarely.

So the meaning of euthanasia has many equivalents. We now understand it more as the termination of life of one's own will with the help of a third person.

In professional Czech literature we can find, for example, the interpretation of prof. J. Vozár, who defines this term as "the conscious termination of the life of a terminally ill person, fully capable of legal actions, at his request".

The founder of Czech medical law, Jaromír Štěpán, who deals with shortening life, emphasizes the motive and compassion for suffering. Therefore, the concept of euthanasia cannot be precisely defined.

It is also because it is a medical, ethical and legal issue.

The World Medical Association (WMA = World Medical Association) defines euthanasia as the conscious and intentional performance of an act with the clear intention of ending the life of another person under the following conditions = the subject is a fully informed person with an incurable disease who has voluntarily requested that his life be ended; the actor knows about the condition of this person and his wish to die and commits this act with the primary intention to end the life of this person; and the deed is done with compassion and without personal gain".

The legal order regarding euthanasia varies from country to country. Each state uses a different definition of euthanasia. There are different definitions in professional books, articles and/or the understanding of the term among the lay public. [1,2,3]

## 1.1 Forms and types of euthanasia

It exists several forms of euthanasia and is also reflected in several forms that can be distinguished from each other. Most often, euthanasia can be understood as active and passive.

1) Active direct euthanasia - (voluntary active euthanasia) – administration of lethal means based on a request from the patient. We can also refer to it as the overflow syringe strategy. Direct and active intervention in human life with the aim of shortening it. The patient is autonomous and had sufficient information.

2) Passive indirect euthanasia – VPE (voluntary passive euthanasia) - this is about interrupting the treatment that keeps the patient alive, we are also talking about the strategy of the diverted syringe. We can encounter this type of euthanasia in patients who have interrupted treatment by disconnecting them from the devices that keep the patient alive. The patient's decision is again informed and based on the patient's consent to euthanasia.

The public is more accepting of this type of euthanasia.

3) Assisted suicide - PAS (physician-assisted suicide) is the provision of means that are used to end a patient's life by a doctor at the request of the patient himself. Why the word suicide? What is exceptional here is that the doctor provides a patient, something like instructions, and the actual act is performed by the patient himself, so that the patient kills himself. We may encounter this in patients who are terminally ill or whose disease has a poor prognosis.

4) Unsolicited euthanasia – its variant is active euthanasia. Here, however, the request of the patient himself is missing, because the patient is not able to consent to euthanasia, but it is based on the assumption that the patient would consent to euthanasia.

5) Involuntary euthanasia – this is an unwanted euthanasia where the request and consent of the patient is missing and there is no presumption that the patient would agree to euthanasia.

It is necessary to realize that this is not a definition of the type of euthanasia, but a comprehensive look at euthanasia, as a complicated concept. [1,2,4,5]

## 2 EUTHANASIA AND ETHICS

In 2012, when a symposium was held in the Czech Republic entitled: Euthanasia for and against, where the main theme of this event were arguments for and against euthanasia and the motto was "always help, never harm".

Here are the most common reasons for euthanasia:

- Unnecessary suffering
- Trying to avoid humiliation
- Suffering that is unbearable
- Physical pain

Next, the right to decide is discussed, and someone takes euthanasia as murder and thus a death that a person did not wish for. However, if a person who wishes euthanasia is not harmed, it is not murder.

In democracy, we are concerned with human freedom, therefore the freedom of one person ends where the freedom of another begins. Thus, everyone can live in freedom, as long as their freedom does not limit the freedom of others. So if a person wishes euthanasia or assisted suicide, then we should not prohibit it. For example, if it is Alzheimer's disease or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, then it is understandable that a person wishes euthanasia or assisted suicide. In case of illness, a person is afraid of losing his dignity. The right of a person when and where and under what circumstances to die is up to each individual.

The difference between euthanasia and termination of treatment

If the patient is disconnected from pulmonary ventilation, death will result. So the difference between the end of treatment and active euthanasia is almost non-existent. Everyone has to decide for themselves. When is the pain unbearable, because pain is a subjective feeling that everyone perceives differently. The pain is immeasurable. If the person in question perceives pain as a worse option and does not want to live, he should have the right to decide and choose why to proceed with euthanasia.

Euthanasia is closely linked to ethics

Every individual has the right to life, a philosophy of life, and everyone has their own ranking of values and priorities. If there is more unhappiness going on in a person, then he is just waiting on his deathbed to die. If there is nothing after death, then there is no reason to

fear death and one is responsible to accept one's deeds and actions. Death cannot be avoided anyway, and there is no point in thinking that death is an evil to be avoided.

Euthanasia as an expression of mercy

If non-voluntary or involuntary euthanasia was performed without the patient's consent and despite the fact that it was performed according to the patient's best interest, there is no reason why it should not be performed.

Euthanasia was even performed, but it is not legal and therefore doctors had to give another reason for death.

Another argument why euthanasia is yes is that it makes no difference if an animal or a person suffers. If they both had the same type of cancer, for example. When a dog has cancer and its pain is unbearable, the owner puts it to sleep. However, if a person has cancer and is in unbearable pain, doctors try to alleviate his condition, but why can't they also offer euthanasia in this case. [1,2,3,4,5]

Arguments against euthanasia

I think that nowadays the trend is to help all the sick to live as long as possible. And that is also the reason why young people apply to medicine, they want to help and take care of people and prolong their lives at the highest possible level. Therefore, euthanasia should not be administered to patients.

No state should allow anyone to be killed. It should probably never happen that the state would allow patients to be killed by euthanasia, because the doctor's mission is to heal.

It is said that if euthanasia were to be legalized, a new field should be created to deal with euthanasia. This field would be created so that euthanasia would not be abused.

From psychology, there are cases that if a patient requests euthanasia, he does not always really need it. It should be important to find out why the patient wants it, what the reason is. Whether it is, for example, a young student with whom a girl broke up.

When we talk about euthanasia, it is assisted suicide and it is necessary for someone to perform it, but who would want to perform this feat? Or with what conscience he would perform this activity. I personally could not do such a thing with a clear conscience.

In addition, this act also affects the entire family of the euthanasia applicant.

Another argument against euthanasia is that it is not a good example for the younger generation, that human life is losing its value.

There are many prohibitions in the Czech Republic, such as the use of hard drugs, smoking in restaurants, or the ban on slot machines in city centers. The fact that euthanasia is not legal is not always good or bad, rather the state tries to protect us from our decisions that can harm us.

Euthanasia is not treated with as much dignity as peaceful dying, for example, in hospices, where the family also participates in the care.

In euthanasia, you would be assisted in dying by a person who barely knows your name, but does not know your life, has no memories associated with you.

A patient who is bedridden for a long time may feel that he is a nuisance to everyone. He may also feel that if euthanasia were possible, people would not be inconvenienced and everything would be solved. This is not true at all, if the patient has such feelings it would be good if he talked to a psychotherapist.

I think that there would be many applicants who would rather use euthanasia than to look for other solutions and there would be misunderstandings and distorted ideas of the applicants. [1,2,3,5]

## Euthanasia and religion

### Buddhism and euthanasia

Buddhists believe in something between life and death and therefore reject medications that numb pain and consciousness. Most therefore wish to be conscious and in their bodies at the end of their lives. They believe that such a death leads to a better rebirth. Buddhists believe that we experience death several times and it is a powerful experience for them. So they reject euthanasia and according to them no one should be killed. They also see death as the fulfillment of their life and death is an integral part of life.

### Judaism and euthanasia

The attitude towards euthanasia is absolutely unacceptable. God is the creator of life and no one has the right to harm or interfere with the human body in any way. A doctor who would perform euthanasia would be a murderer in this case. In Jewish law, it is possible to use



palliative care and painkillers in the terminal stage. Prayers for death and for death to occur are permissible. God has the right to decide life and death.

#### Christianity and euthanasia

The views on euthanasia coincide with Judaism. God is the creator and man is only the steward of the container that God created for him. Life is a gift and you cannot solve the pain of a sick person by killing them. Death is the beginning of the new and it is an encounter with God. Christians do not reject either palliative care or painkillers. [1,2,4,5]

### 3 REFERENCES

- [1] Emanuel EJ. Euthanasia: Historical, Ethical, and Empiric Perspectives. *Arch Intern Med.* 1994;154(17):1890–1901. doi:10.1001/archinte.1994.00420170022003
- [2] MUNZAROVÁ, Marta. *Eutanazie, nebo paliativní péče?*. Praha: Grada, 2005. ISBN 80-247-1025-0.
- [3] DOLEŽAL, Adam. *Eutanazie a rozhodnutí na konci života: právní aspekty*. Praha: Academia, 2017. Právo - etika - společnost. ISBN 978-80-200-2687-3.
- [4] POLLARD, Brian. *Eutanazie – ano či ne?* 1. vyd. Praha: Dita, 1996.
- [5] Euthanasia, *Euthnanasia[online]*, citace[24.11. 2022] Dostupné z: <https://medicine.missouri.edu/centers-institutes-labs/health-ethics/faq/euthanasia>