

Euthanasia

Introduction

This essay defines the concept of euthanasia, further describes individual forms of euthanasia, the situation in medicine, and resolves the yes or no question. The essay deals with the right to die, social views, medical view and euthanasia in the Czech Republic.

The word itself comes from the Greek language and consists of two parts: eu (good) and thanatos (death). Where eu is taken as a preposition and thanatos as a noun. The expression of the word euthanasia does not only express a good death, but also an easy, non-violent, painless and happy death. The essence of euthanasia lies in facilitating the departure from the earthly world for persons who would continue to suffer and live a worthless life full of suffering and pain. It is very important to take into account the double combination to which the medical practice and the statements of the survivors belong in the form: he is better that way, it was a deliverance for him. In this case, one can agree that death is desirable if it comes sooner rather than later.¹

Forms of euthanasia

From the point of view of bioethics, the division of euthanasia is extensive. We can talk about requested, unsolicited and involuntary euthanasia. It is also possible to divide into passive and active euthanasia.²

1) Active euthanasia

In this case, a third party intervenes in the course of the patient's life, who mediates the killing of the given person. The act itself is intentional and takes place only at the request of the patient.^{3,4}

2) Passive euthanasia

In this case of euthanasia, the sick patient is left without treatment. These are primarily patients who are connected to devices that maintain individuals with vital functions. Passive euthanasia itself occurs when the patient is disconnected from the devices that maintain the patient's basic vital functions or by not administering medication. The law clearly defines the guidelines for this form of euthanasia.⁵

3) Requested euthanasia

The consent of the requested euthanasia must be given by a conscious patient or a relative who is able to demonstrate as best as possible the fact that the patient, who is no longer conscious, would have consented.^{1,4}

4) Unsolicited euthanasia

It occurs when it is performed without the clear consent of the patient or at the request of relatives.¹

5) Involuntary euthanasia

Euthanasia carried out without regard to the opinion of the patient, but for his benefit.⁴

It is also possible to talk about abortion (prenatal euthanasia). This performance is decided by the mother herself and one cannot speak of a death by grace, as the child does not suffer from pain or a terminal illness. Social euthanasia can be included among another form, which is characterized by the fact of providing care to all people. We encountered social euthanasia in the coronavirus pandemic, when people came to hospitals and were not provided with care. There was a lack of equipment, medical personnel and hygiene aids.^{4,6}

The opposite of euthanasia is dysthanasia. Artificially prolonging life and denying natural death.¹

The situation in medicine

Each of the doctors looks at the forms of euthanasia from their own point of view. The concept of active euthanasia is condemned even at the cost of requiring it by the patient himself. The concept of passive euthanasia is considered meaningless.⁷

First of all, it is a historical and social context based on Nazi Germany. Doctors were forced to introduce euthanasia, which led to the extermination of people. It was mainly undesirable people (race, nationality, gender). This context also contributes to the senselessness of passive euthanasia, as it is characterized by not starting treatment.⁷

According to the legal system, both active and passive euthanasia are considered murder.⁶

Yes or no?

The expansive development of science represented by medicine and biotechnologies contemplates the incorporation of euthanasia. Many questions surface to ponder. Question marks are hidden in human will, in a person's decision about his own death, responsibility for the death of a given person, ethics.^{3,7}

Munzarova promotes the approach of letting go-permission to die. The right to die is distinguished from killing.⁸

The Hippocratic Oath binds doctors to the practice of their profession. At the same time, they promise to help and not harm.³

The patients themselves are often affected by severe pain, which can also affect their mind. These pains can lead the patient to consider euthanasia. It is often enough to simply adjust the medication to stop the death calls. The result is primarily effective treatment.^{2,4}

The second group of people perceives euthanasia as bad. They claim that death is in the hands of God.⁴

Among other things, euthanasia leaves psychological damage on medical personnel from doctors, nurses, orderlies and medics. Taking a human life is a very difficult task.⁴

A paradox can arise in the case of abuse of euthanasia to gain an inheritance.⁴

Right to death

There are many reasons that lead people to consider euthanasia. Above all, it is helplessness, the inability to take care of oneself, a great burden for loved ones. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or Alzheimer's disease can be included here, which progress to a state where the patient is unable to perform any activity in the terminal stage. A poor health prognosis associated with cancer is one of the other negatives, when the sick and suffering begin to think about a peaceful departure.¹

In order for a person to undergo euthanasia, he must be registered with the relevant organization. The registration must be approved, and then the medical record is sent to the doctor. The documentation is evaluated by a doctor and a personal meeting between the doctor and the patient is necessary, who will then assess the euthanasia request. Patients from abroad must accept the rules of the country in question. They have to stay in for 3 to 4 days beforehand and then the procedure is scheduled within a day or two. The registered patient signs a wish to die on the day of the procedure. He takes a substance that prevents vomiting and is subsequently administered a lethal substance. Everything is documented that the given patient acted according to his requirements and thinking. Sleep occurs first, followed by death within 30 minutes. The family can be present at the procedure with the organization's staff providing support. After examining the deceased, the death is reported to the police as an emergency.⁹

All patients are entitled to euthanasia for whom conventional medical procedures cannot be used to improve their health. These are cancer, diseases affecting the nervous system, dementia and multiple sclerosis.^{1,8}

Social views

In my opinion, the company is very dynamic and constantly evolving. Of course, opinions discussing euthanasia are also constantly evolving. Belief, environment, profession, culture influence the individual's attitude towards euthanasia.

In 2019, the Czech Statistical Office noted that 2/3 of the Czech population is in favor of euthanasia, a tenth did not know, and less than a quarter are against assisted suicide. Disapproval was often expressed by people of the Roman Catholic faith.¹⁰

A religious view

People professing a faith follow its written law. The dying person should be surrounded by loved ones when leaving the earthly life. The believer must recite the creed before his departure, so that the angel separates the soul from the body and accompanies it to the court of first instance.¹¹

Medical view

The Hippocratic Oath has a tribal position in medical ethics. It consists of ethical principles that must be followed by practicing physicians. Medical ethics includes the doctor's attitude towards the patient, interpersonal relations in the healthcare sector, deals with theoretical and clinical medicine, solves the issue of reproduction and dying, which is related to euthanasia and palliative care. If there is a violation of the above ethical principles, the doctor is obliged to appear before the ethics committee.¹²

Medical ethics prohibit a doctor from killing a patient. The main task of the doctor is to find out the clinical condition of the individual and to try to cure it. Palliative care is a compromise in euthanasia. Complications caused by a terminal illness are alleviated with the help of palliative treatment.^{3,8}

Euthanasia in the Czech Republic

Euthanasia is prohibited in the Czech Republic. It is possible to use alternative care in the form of palliative medicine. The World Health Organization defines palliative care as a specialized form of medical care that aims to alleviate patients' suffering and optimize the quality of remaining life. For patients who are in the terminal stage of the disease, it is very important to use sedative treatment in the form of analgesics and opioids in a timely and effective manner, which relieve the individual from unbearable pain.¹³

Palliative care itself deals not only with the relief of pain, but also with the physical, psychosocial and spiritual aspects of patients in the terminal stage of their illness. The palliative care team consists of professionals in the form of a palliative care physician, nurse, social worker, chaplain and pharmacist.

The immediate goal of palliation is to relieve a person in the terminal stage of the disease from the unbearable pain caused by cancer.¹⁴

Conclusion

The goal of this essay was to give the reader comprehensive information related to the issue of euthanasia. The essay explains the concept of euthanasia. The work also deals with forms of euthanasia, which include active, passive, requested, unsolicited and voluntary euthanasia. The concept of abortion and social euthanasia is also outlined.

Furthermore, the work describes the situation in medicine. It addresses the question of yes or no to euthanasia. Describes the right to die, social views, religious view, medical view.

The last paragraph deals with the issue of euthanasia in the Czech Republic. Euthanasia is prohibited and palliative medicine is used instead.

The diseases mentioned above are very limiting to human life. In such situations, I lean towards euthanasia, because suffering from an incurable disease is very difficult. The person himself suffers, but so do the relatives. In these cases, from my own point of view, I approve of euthanasia.

Resources

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