

The slippery slope of assisted suicide

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By Jonathan Imbody

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The news article, “Assisted-suicide advocate Kevorkian dies,” (National, Monday) reports that “Right-to-die groups hope the passing of Jack Kevorkian, who assisted in about 130 suicides in the 1990s, will shine the spotlight on the practice they call ‘aid in dying.’”

So do assisted suicide and euthanasia opponents, because the more evidence is revealed, the more people recognize the injustice and danger of the deadly practice.

As a recently published medical journal article[1] reveals, despite supposedly airtight legal “safeguards” erected around assisted suicide in the U.S. and Europe and euthanasia in Europe:

- Patients are being put to death without consent—an estimated 900 annually in the tiny country of The Netherlands, which formally legalized medical killing in 2001.
 - Depressed patients are dying without help: “In 2007, none of the people who died by lethal ingestion in Oregon had been evaluated by a psychiatrist or a psychologist.”
 - Doctors are hiding euthanasia from authorities: “... in one jurisdiction, almost 50% of cases of euthanasia are not reported.”
 - A requirement for a second, supposedly objective consultation on assisted suicide in Oregon has been filled by one biased suicide-advocate doctor in 58 of 61 consecutive cases.
 - The social slippery slope is expanding euthanasia without limit, now including newborns judged to have “no hope of a good quality of life,” children aged 12–16, the non-terminally ill, depressed patients and, if Dutch organized medicine has its way, anyone who is “over the age of 70 and tired of living.”
 - Palliative (comfort) care is giving way to cost-efficient medical killing. One Dutch physician explained, “We don’t need palliative medicine; we practice euthanasia.”
- Suicide lobbyists often try to paint opposition as solely religious, claiming that Christians are trying to force their beliefs on everyone (as if everyone except Christians had a First Amendment right to voice their values in the public square). Many Americans do see a strong moral imperative in the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.”

Yet even from a purely pragmatic and evidentiary viewpoint, assisted suicide and euthanasia remain the quickest path to a tragic loss of autonomy and a death without dignity.

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