

The Price of Comfort: Investigating Willingness to Pay for Medically Assisted Suicide

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Abstract

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Motivation

In recent decades, mental health has become a focal point of health research. This is warranted given the spike in diagnoses of diseases like depression, anxiety, or other more severe afflictions. Cases of suicide have also grown to a massive degree, with people feeling the need to take their own life as an escape from their disorder. Traditionally, this has been a private event, which is seen as an act of emotional desperation. However, in recent years, countries like Spain, Portugal, and Canada have implemented medically assisted suicide policies which seek to grant agency over death to those with incurable diseases or otherwise those in tremendous pain with no hope of alleviation.

1.2 Problem Statement

These policies raise interesting questions. Of course, morals are of concern to some, but in an economic sense there are key factors which warrant research. Of interest for this paper, what is the willingness to pay of the terminally ill to put an end to their life if a policy like this was put into place in the United States? This kind of procedure, of course, requires pharmaceutical resources, and thus would come at cost. Beyond the landscape of implemented policy, it would be interesting to determine the moral hazard of a policy like this. For instance, if a person with severe depression and chronic suicidal ideation engaging in riskier behavior as they pursue death by either risk or medically assisted suicide.

1.3 Contributions

1.4 Paper Organization

2 Related Work

2.1 Previous Approaches

2.2 Limitations of Existing Work

3 Methodology

3.1 Problem Formulation

3.2 Proposed Approach

4 Experimental Evaluation

4.1 Experimental Setup

4.2 Datasets

4.3 Results

4.4 Analysis

5 Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Results

5.2 Limitations

5.3 Future Work

6 Conclusion

Acknowledgments

A Additional Experimental Results

B Mathematical Proofs