Euthanasia

1.0 introduction

The deliberate act of putting someone in great pain known as euthanasia or mercy killing has been a subject of great controversy especially as regards ethics and morals. Some have argued that it is better to free a person who is in such great pain and has no much hope of living well, by killing them. Some others like the Catholics, has argued that it is God that gives life and he also has the absolute right of talking it. Therefore, intentionally killing a person is not allowed for them. Some others may reserve the right to live for the person in question tho is in pain. Hence, until the person decides that he or she has had enough of life, no body has the right to put an end to his or her life. It is true that medical advancements has given much more longer rope to life expectancy. However, there is a more pressing need to die with dignity. While advocates of euthanasia prefer compassion, the opponents make recourse to the sanctity of life. We shall delve more into the meaning, types, implications of euthanasia below

2.0 What is Euthanasia? Meaning and historical background

Euthanasia, act or practice of painlessly putting to death persons suffering from painful and incurable disease or incapacitating physical disorder or allowing them to die by withholding treatment or withdrawing artificial life-support measures.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In ancient Greece and Rome, before the coming of Christianity, attitudes toward infanticide, active euthanasia, and suicide had tended to be tolerant.[[2]](#footnote-2) The ascendancy of Christianity, with its view that human life is a trust from God, reinforced the views of the Hippocratic school [which forbid euthanasia].[[3]](#footnote-3) Since then there has been a hot debate whether if it (Euthanasia) should be allowed or not.

1. Types of Euthanasia[[4]](#footnote-4)

* Assisted suicide: is a condition whereby the doctor helps the patient to end their life by, say, giving them a drug that will do so.
* Active and passive Euthanasia: while active euthanasia refers to the doctor ending a person's life outrightly, passive Euthanasia involves delay or reduction in treatment.
* Voluntary and in involuntary euthanasia: while voluntary Euthanasia refers to when one makes the decision of death themselves, in involuntary, the decision is made by another party.

1. Is Euthanasia allowed ? Ethical problems and implications[[5]](#footnote-5)

Those in favour of euthanasia argue that a civilised society should allow people to die in dignity and without pain, and should allow others to help them do so if they cannot manage it on their own.

Most religions disapprove of euthanasia. Some of them absolutely forbid it. The Roman Catholic church, for example, is one of the most active organisations in opposing euthanasia.Virtually all religions state that those who become vulnerable through illness or disability deserve special care and protection, and that proper end of life care is a much better thing than euthanasia.Religions are opposed to euthanasia for a number of reasons; God forbids it, life is sacred and so on.

According to the cathcism of the Catholic Church; "Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable."[[6]](#footnote-6)

Euthanasia is illegal in most countries, although doctors do sometimes carry out euthanasia even where it is illegal. Coming to the legal position, Euthanasia is illegal in for example Britain. To kill another person deliberately is murder or manslaughter, even if the other person asks you to kill them. Anyone doing so could potentially face 14 years in prison.

1. Conclusion

Euthanasia or mercy killig is an instance whereby one voluntary takes one's life (whether his or another person) in order to terminate suffering. It has been a subject of debate overtime. It also can assume different types. Some people has been advocates of euthanasia. Some others especially religious people, forbids it mostly for the sanctity of life. Many laws has been given to address this. However this remains relative to the society. Globally its morality is still undetermined. Life nevertheless, should be everywhere respected.

Abortion

1. Introduction

Abortion draws varied emotions based on individual and societal beliefs. Often, women known to have sought or those seeking abortion services experience stigma and social exclusion within their communities. Understanding community perception of abortion is critical in informing the design and delivery of interventions that reduce the gaps in access to safe abortion for women. The subject of abortion is multifaceted, involving legal, ethical, medical, and social considerations. Debates around abortion rights, access to safe healthcare, and individual autonomy continue to shape public discourse worldwide. We shall delve deeper into this below.

1. What is abortion?

Abortion is defined as the termination of pregnancy before the fetus is viable. In the medical sense, this term and the term miscarriage both refer to the termination of pregnancy before the fetus is capable of survival outside the uterus.[[7]](#footnote-7)The term abortion is more commonly used as a synonym for induced abortion, the deliberate interruption of pregnancy, as opposed to miscarriage, which connotes a spontaneous or natural loss of the fetus.[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. Brief history of abortion

During the ancient period in Greek settings, there is no much interest in the implications of abortion. It was accepted then as the foetus was regarded as not being a person.

The Old Testament has several legal passages that refer to abortion. The status of the foetus as property in the Bible is shown by the law that if a person causes a miscarriage they must pay a fine to the husband of the woman, but if they also cause the woman to die then they are liable to be killed. However, The New Testament doesn't explicitly deal with abortion.

Abortion rights in America faced restriction in 2003 after the US House of Representatives and the US Senate voted to ban late-term 'partial birth' abortions. The English people had banned abortion long ago. Abortion, however, till date has not been explicitly banned or accepted in some places.

1. Types of abortion

There are two major types of abortion;

1. Medical abortion: this consist of abortion pill or other drugs that leads to miscarriage. The abortion pill is a medicine that ends the pregnancy. The medical name for the abortion pill is mifepristone. The abortion pill is followed by another medicine called misoprostol which caused contraction of the womb and then bleeding which leads to miscarriage. The medical abortion is the most common in developing countries and also relatively very unsafe and dangerous[[9]](#footnote-9).
2. Surgical abortion: this consists of the Vacuum aspiration and dilation and evacuation. Vacuum aspiration removes the pregnancy by gentle suction. Dilation and evacuation is similar to vacuum aspiration. However It is mostly used after 13 weeks of pregnancy (in the second trimester). The procedure is usually done in a doctor’s office or clinic but may be done in a hospital[[10]](#footnote-10). The surgical abortion is relatively more safe.
3. Ethical implications of abortion

Abortion-seekers often explain that their abortion, for whatever reason—including those that are sometimes described as “social reasons”—was not a choice for them, but a necessity.[[11]](#footnote-11)Hence, there is always a reason for abortion. World Health Organization has even granted access to abortion on the ground that everyone has the right to determine what happens to his body.

Pro-life activist on the other hand rejected abortion totally. For them, the foetus has right to life as every other human. According to the cathcism of the Catholic Church; "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life."[[12]](#footnote-12) They used the Scriptural passage as an authority for this; Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.[[13]](#footnote-13) Hence, the issue of abortion has been a controversial topic world wide just like Euthanasia.

1. Conclusion

Abortion is seen removal of the foetus before it is viable. It has types or methods ranging from the medical to the surgical method. Abortion is mostly caused by an unwanted pregnancy. Its acceptability is just like that of Euthanasia relative to the group or society. Why some group accepted it, others rejected it. Its acceptability is undermined worldwide. However, we should put life first before any other consideration.

Cathcism of the Catholic Church

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1. Britannica.com [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A Merciful End: The Euthanasia Movement in Modern America, 2003 as in procorn.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: Killing or Caring?, 1998 as in procorn.org [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.healthline.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/euthanasia/overview/problems.shtml [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cathcism of the Catholic Church, pg 549, paragraph 2277 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/abortion [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.bpas.org/abortion-care/abortion-treatments/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/informedconsent/michigans-informed-consent-for-abortion-law/procedures/dilation-and-evacuation-de [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Janiak, E, Goldberg, AB. Eliminating the phrase “elective abortion”: Why language matters. Contraception 2016;93:89–92 CrossRefGoogle ScholarPubMed. As in https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/cambridge [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cathcism of the Catholic Church, pg 547, paragraph 2270 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid, paragraph 2271. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)