Ethics of Euthanasia

Student’s Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course Name& Code

Instructor

Date

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The problem that our group is focusing on is the ethics of euthanasia. Euthanasia, also known as physician-assisted suicide, is the practice of intentionally ending a person's life in order to relieve suffering. This practice is controversial and raises significant ethical questions, as it involves intentionally causing the death of a patient.

The significance of this problem in terms of patient outcomes is that euthanasia can be seen as a way to relieve suffering and improve the quality of life for those who are terminally ill or experiencing unbearable pain (Avci, 2022). However, it can also be argued that euthanasia goes against the principles of preserving life and autonomy, and could potentially be abused or misused.

The PICOT question that we have developed in support of our group topic is: "Should human medicine follow veterinary medicine by including euthanasia or medically assisted suicide as an option for end-of-life care?" (Hurn & Badman‐King, 2019). This question highlights the fact that euthanasia is already a practice in veterinary medicine, and raises the question of whether it should also be a option in human medicine.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the ethical considerations surrounding euthanasia, including the potential benefits and risks, and to consider the potential implications of including euthanasia as an option in human medicine. We will examine the current debates and research on this topic, and consider the perspectives of various stakeholders, including patients, healthcare providers, and policymakers. We will also consider the potential impact on patient outcomes and the role of informed consent in decision-making about euthanasia.

**Levels of Evidence**

The type of question being asked in this case is an ethical question, which is concerned with determining what is morally right or wrong in a particular situation. Ethical questions often involve considering the values, beliefs, and principles that guide our actions and decision-making. Although we may all have our own personal opinions about what is morally right or wrong, ethical questions are ultimately concerned with determining what is true. In order to answer this question and make a definitive claim about whether euthanasia should be allowed in medicine or not, we must establish a standard of proof (Hurn & Badman‐King, 2019). We must determine how much certainty there is in the truth of our statement, and whether any doubt exists. The ethical questions that give rise to this case are of the highest ethical importance, and therefore require very high levels of evidence. These questions relate to medical ethics, and center on the balance between preserving life and granting autonomy in a society that operates under principles of equal treatment and human rights. It is therefore very important that all sides of this debate are represented, and their arguments have to be considered critical with as much evidence as possible. Conversely, we do not expect to believe with absolute certainty that euthanasia should not be allowed in human medicine.  
 The best type of evidence to answer ethical questions can vary depending on the specific question and context. In some cases, qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and case studies can be useful for exploring and understanding the values, beliefs, and perspectives of various stakeholders on an ethical issue. These methods can provide insight into the lived experiences and subjective perspectives of individuals, and can help to uncover the complexities and nuances of ethical debates.  
 In other cases, it may be useful to draw on quantitative research methods such as surveys or observational studies to gather more objective data on the prevalence and impacts of an ethical issue. For example, a survey could be used to gather data on the attitudes of healthcare providers towards euthanasia, or an observational study could be used to examine the outcomes of patients who have received euthanasia compared to those who have not. Overall, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods can be useful for answering ethical questions and providing a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand.

**Search Strategy**

For our search on the topic of euthanasia and the ethics of euthanasia, we used the following search terms: Euthanasia, Physician-assisted suicide, Ethics, End-of-life care and Human medicine ,Veterinary medicine, informed consent, autonomy, suffering, principles and values. In addition the databases used included CU Library, PubMed, Cochrane Library, JSTOR, and Google Scholar.

In conducting our search, we linked our search terms to the PICOT question: "Should human medicine follow veterinary medicine by including euthanasia or medically assisted suicide as an option for end-of-life care?" We searched for articles that addressed this question and explored the ethical considerations surrounding euthanasia in human medicine.

To refine our search results, we used a combination of filters and limits. We included only articles published within the last 5 years to ensure that our results were up-to-date and relevant. We also limited our search to articles that were written in English and peer-reviewed to ensure the quality and credibility of our sources.

Two most relevant articles:

Avci, E. (2022). The Goals of Medicine and Compassion in the Ethical Assessment of Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: Relieving Pain and Suffering by Protecting, Promoting, and Maintaining the Person’s Well-Being. *Journal of Palliative Care*, 08258597221078371.

Hurn, S., & Badman‐King, A. (2019). Care as an alternative to euthanasia? Reconceptualizing veterinary palliative and end‐of‐life care. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, *33*(1), 138- 155.

These articles address the ethical considerations surrounding euthanasia in the context of human and veterinary medicine, and provide a thorough analysis of the potential benefits and risks of this practice. They draw on a range of research and literature, including qualitative and quantitative studies, to provide a well-rounded perspective on the topic.

References

Avci, E. (2022). The Goals of Medicine and Compassion in the Ethical Assessment of Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: Relieving Pain and Suffering by Protecting, Promoting, and Maintaining the Person’s Well-Being. *Journal of Palliative Care*, 08258597221078371.

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