

Ethics Term Paper

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Introduction:-

In this term paper, I would like to discuss, what the euthanasia is and types of euthanasia, mainly about the wrongfulness of euthanasia in various aspects. If we go deeper and informal way, I will give a brief info about the justification of suicide, and the role of the physician in formulating it.

Euthanasia, also known as assisted suicide, physician-assisted suicide (dying), doctor-assisted dying (suicide), and more loosely termed mercy killing means to take a deliberate action with the express intention of ending a life to relieve intractable (persistent, unstoppable) suffering.

Some people interpret that euthanasia as a practice of painless ending of one's life. Many disagree with this interpretation because it needs to include a reference to intractable suffering. If we see the laws of many countries, euthanasia is against their individual laws. For Example, In UK, Assisted suicide(voluntary euthanasia) carries a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison. Not only in the UK, but also in the USA and in so many countries it is against the law. So, Unless until it has flaws or some wrongfulness, it won't be against law. So before moving on to prove wrongfulness, we need to know the complete picture of euthanasia in detail.

Classifications:-

There are mainly two classifications of euthanasia:-

i) Voluntary Euthanasia

It is just a person makes a "conscious decision" to die and asks for help to his relatives/doctors to do so. Voluntary euthanasia is legal in some regions but illegal in most of the regions in the world. It is legal in Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and the states of Oregon (USA) and Washington (USA).

ii) Involuntary Euthanasia

This type of euthanasia is basically conducting the act without taking the patient's consent. This method comes when the patient is unable to give the word of her willingness to live at that stage (when a patient in the coma) and another person takes the decision on behalf of her.

To implement these classifications, there are two procedural wise classifications of euthanasia:-

i) Active Euthanasia

Active euthanasia entails the use of lethal substances or forces, (such as administering a lethal injection) to end up the life. It can also be termed as "mercy killing".

ii) Passive Euthanasia

Passive euthanasia entails the withholding treatment necessary for the continuance of life. That means life-sustaining treatments are withheld from the patient. Active type is more controversial than the other because there, it can mislead to easy outcomes if anything goes wrong.

*** Physician-assisted Suicide ***

According to “Kant’s deontology, fundamental principles of meta-physic words”, Kant held that suicide itself violates the categorical imperative since the maxim of suicide is not universal. Just as questions raised to the suicide, some questions were raised to the physicians (or others who helps for suicide). Generally, doctors take the oath as “ Don’t harm”. So it is violating their own oath. Also, there are some other arguments for physician-assisted suicide, that doctors can misuse if we make it as legal. Because some doctors are unable to treat the patient suffering from a particular disease. They will suggest euthanasia as a cure as if it is legal. For Example, There was a one well practitioner on physician-assisted suicide technique named Dr Jack Kevorkian. He helped people who wanted to die by providing the means to kill themselves. He discovered so many methods to implement euthanasia like suicide machine and some other methods by using potassium chloride and carbon monoxide. In just a span of 8 years, he assisted 100 suicides in Michigan. Here, this happens because physician-assisted suicide was legal there. But my argument is, this also wrong because let’s say a person approaches a physician who wants to die with some problem which is curable. But, due to doctor’s selfishness or for any other reasons (ex:- bribes), the patient may lose the life which is ethically also wrong and also unjustifiable. In the same way, the government failed to take action against the Kevorkian as he always used to say that the patient wanted to die, I just assisted for that. He also used to record videos of the patients in which patients are saying, that they are willing to die. But my argument was if at least some of the patients were given better medical care, then they would have been alive. So, final point was though we see some cases where some were in serious distress or serious illness where they may think that death is preferable. However, allowing physicians to participate in assisted suicide would cause more harm than good. This practice is changing the role of the physician as they are to be as a healer but this method would cause at most societal risks.

Instead of practising euthanasia, there are some measures which can be taken as

*** Palliative care ***

WHO defines palliative care as an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. One of the main goals of palliative care is for the patients and families to accept as dying should be a natural

process. Palliative care strives to offer a support system to help patients live their remaining time as actively as they can and to help families bereave and deal with the illness of a loved one. This is one method which reduces euthanasia.

→ My argument is though there are some arguments that euthanasia is necessary but, in the same way, there are many arguments proving it is not necessary.

→ My impression is that euthanasia - the idea - if not the practice- is slowly gaining acceptance within our society. The acceptance is much more likely to be the result of unthinking sympathy and benevolence. We see sometimes, a person is just with life without having any movements (in the coma) with no cure for years. We all think that he/she and his/her family would feel better if he/she dies. Although I respect the compassion that leads to a conclusion, I disagree with the conclusion. It is not only inherently wrong, but it is also wrongly judged from the standpoints of self-interest and practical effects.

Some of my arguments which prove the wrongfulness of euthanasia:-

i) ***Role of doctor (Argument from the perspective of practical effects)***

Doctors and nurses are committed to saving the lives of the patients. A life lost is an insult to their skills and knowledge personally. Here, Euthanasia plays a very crucial role. It could have a corrupting influence so that in any case, that is severe, they may not try their best. The result would be an overall decline in medical care. This may cause the patient to take their lives based on the opinion of the doctors. If Euthanasia is made legal, then cases of involuntary euthanasia will increase, But in such a case the patient has not authorized others to act in this situation. It is the society that has decided. Thus, the judgement is based on other.

ii) ***Moral religious argument (Argument from the perspective of nature and god)***

Every human has a natural tendency to continue living. Involuntary reactions and reflexes show that we resist attacks not only physically but also biologically. Euthanasia denies the basic human character. It goes against the natural response of humans to live longer. In religious perspective, one who believes that all virtues of humans are governed by God (supernatural power), will also go against it if he takes his life. Several religions also pose euthanasia as a form of murder and morally unacceptable. One thing we can say for sure that euthanasia weakens society's respect for the sanctity of life.

iii) ***Argument from Self-Interest***

We need to talk about the perfection in medical methods used to approve Euthanasia. Though medical advancement has produced miraculous results, it is still not perfect. This error may cost the life of a person and his utmost happiness. We can justify this on utilitarian view but not on deontological view. There may be cases where a patient can recover even from a very critical situation. Also, there may be medical advancements and cure for a disease may be invented in near future for which Euthanasia was legal. Thus, we are reducing the chance of a person to live. Is it ok?

iv) **Guilt which patient feels**

There is a risk patient may feel they are a burden on resources and are psychologically pressured into consenting. They may feel that the burden - financially, emotionally, mentally - on their family is overwhelming. Even if the costs of treatment are provided by the state, there is a risk hospital personnel may have an economic incentive to encourage euthanasia consent.

→ *There are so many other arguments also such as:-*

If we design proper care like palliative care centres we can reduce thoughts which leads to euthanasia, finally, the patient might recover from all the odds and can be normal.

***** Conclusion *****

In any argument I propose might happen. Life is so valuable and in my opinion, euthanasia is not just dying it is killing. In this much number of odd cases, my suggestion is, if we need to implement euthanasia we have to take rigorous steps and approvals to execute this.

From the deontological point of view we can say that the intention is correct that patient should feel painless, but in the process, if anything, goes wrong we will feel so much worse. So if we see the utilitarian point of view then implementing euthanasia is not advisable.

So, my proposal is that euthanasia is not advisable in this day-to-day advancement world when for every disease there is a cure, although today if it has no cure, it might get medicine tomorrow.