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ENG 1101

Pros and Cons of Euthanasia

Revision: I have edited my annotated bibliography according to the criteria that was provided to us in week 7 and based on the annotated bibliography handout. I used the criteria given to us in week 7 to ensure that my bibliography entails all the necessary components that I will be graded on. I have used the annotated bibliography handout to structure my source entries and ensure that my bibliography fulfills the purpose of annotation as stated in the handout. I have corrected grammatical errors, run on sentences and have changed the organization of my work. Before revising I had two ideas in one paragraph and after revising I have split these ideas into their own paragraphs.

Introduction

Euthanasia is defined by Oxford dictionary as the “painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma”. I first heard the term euthanasia while binge-watching 'Grey's Anatomy'. After further research about what euthanasia is, I became really intrigued by the idea that people can legally commit suicide as long as the appropriate paperwork is filled out. Euthanasia is very similar to suicide, the only distinction is that it is done in a painless way with the assistance of a medical professional, yet this is legalized in some areas while suicide has a negative stigma surrounding it. Generally, terminally ill patients are euthanized to release them from their pain, this is sometimes known as mercy killing. Euthanasia is only legalized in 9 states in America and its status in Montana is undetermined. Some states and countries are torn on whether or not to legalize euthanasia because of conflicting arguments made for and against it.

The topic of euthanasia has sparked many debates and is considered to be controversial. To further my understanding about euthanasia and the debates surrounding it, I decided to research the topic. In my research process, I expect to learn about the benefits and drawbacks of euthanasia from patient testimonies, patient relative testimonies as well as video recordings of their testimony so I can see the emotion behind their words; Since this topic is controversial, I also expect to find books, articles, editorials and, data reports on the topic. Editorials may be useful during my research process because they debate a topic with evidence to support their views and provide an explanation for their views. Data reports would also prove useful in my research because it would show how many terminally ill people choose to be euthanized and complete the process versus patients that choose to wait to succumb to their illness. Despite my expectations I am aware that I am not guaranteed to find the documents that fulfill my expectations. In the event that I am unable to find documents that I expect I am willing to use the sources that I find as long as I can clearly differentiate between the pros and cons of euthanasia.

Euthanasia is a controversial medical practice that allows terminally ill people to plan their death, this practice has sparked a large debate which highlights the various pros and cons to euthanasia. In my research I will be learning about the various arguments surrounding euthanasia and reporting on them in this paper

Source Entries:

Ana Alina Ionescu Dumitrache, and Nelu Gheorghiță. “The Value of Human Life a Divine Right in the Judicial European Space Pros and Cons of Euthanasia.” The International Conference “The European Integration - Realities and Perspectives,” vol. 15, no. 1, Danubius University, 2020, pp. 382–92.

Ana Aliana Ionescu Dumitrache is a senior lecturer and a faculty of law member at Danubis University of Galati and Nelu Gheorghita is a 4th year student at the Danubis University of Galati. These two individuals collaborated to write an article titled ‘The Value of Human Life a Divine Right in the Judicial European Space Pros and Cons of Euthanasia” that discusses the importance of human life and the pros and cons of euthanasia. The authors begin their article by explaining that human life is invaluable, on page 2 it states “The human person is biophile, life loving. It would be abnormal for humans to hate life and to wish to escape from it.” This quote clearly highlights the author position on euthanasia by stating that they believe it is abnormal to want to end life. Further into the article the authors discuss the pros and cons of euthanasia however, mainly focusing on the cons. The only pro mentioned in Dumitrache and Gheorghita article is that “euthanasia allows patients a dignified death” (3). This statement is then followed by a list of cons, for example it states “the legalization of euthanasia and MAS will undermine medical care” (9).

 Dumitrache and Gheorghita’s article was intended to inform readers that the cons of euthanasia outweigh the pros. The article is geared towards proponents of euthanasia in order to convince them to change their point of view. Due to the intended audience the source is less credible because it is biased towards the opponents of euthanasia and is meant to persuade readers opinions to match their own.

The article was very enlightening about the various reasons that people are opposed to euthanasia. From this source I learned that people were opposed to it because doctors occasionally misdiagnosed people and that it is difficult for close relatives of the euthanized person to watch them choose to die. In addition to this I also learned that people are also opposed to euthanasia because they believe that patient autonomy will decrease, that instead of patients trying to get treated they will elect to be euthanized and that they believe euthanasia cannot be controlled once legalized.

“Jil's Last Day - YouTube.” *YouTube*, Mercury News, 17 Jan. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnaZa1P69cY.

 Mercury News is a daily newspaper based in Los Angles, California. On January 17, 2018 they uploaded a YouTube video to their YouTube channel that follows Jil Finnegan in her last days before she is euthanized. Jil Finnegan is an environmental engineer that developed cancerous tumors on her vocal cords, in her neck, back and stomach. Finnegan took methadone and oxycodone to ease her pain, however these pills were causing her to be unconscious and forcing her to sleep a majority of the day. Jil and her husband Geoff Finnegan decided that euthanasia is the best route for them because Jil wanted to be in control of how she died, this is a pro to euthanasia because it allows patients that have had control taken from them to regain it. The couple agreed that Jill would pass away sleeping at home in their bed with her husband and two dogs.

 The YouTube video follows Jil and her husband Geoff in the last days of Jil’s life, detailing how the couple and their closest friends were handling Jil’s decision, her last moments, feelings and thoughts were also captured in the video. The video was created to provide insight to the feelings and thoughts of someone that has chosen to be euthanized. She recorded her journey because she wanted to help people in similar situations to hers that was struggling with the decision to be euthanized and she wanted to express her gratitude for California’s End a Life act. In the video when Jil is asked what she would like viewers to know she says that she is extremely grateful for the option to be euthanized because she no longer has to suffer, if she did not have that option, she says that she would be terrified. This can also be seen a pro for euthanasia because it has helped Jil to regain a peace of mind and eliminated her suffering. Jil’s video detailing her last moments is a credible firsthand resource that accurately captures the feelings people facing euthanasia experience.

 While watching Jil’s video I was overwhelmed with feelings of sadness for their family. I watched as her family and closest friends celebrated her birthday and death in one big party, but what really surprised me the most was that nobody was crying or actively mourning it was just a celebration of her life. If I was related to Jil I am unsure that I would be able to be happy for her because I would be aware that she is going to die in a couple days. It was hard for me to watch Jil calling her nurse for the lethal dose of pills and also seeing her husband distraught because he knew that in a couple hours his wife would be dead. It became easier to watch after Jil had explained that she was in fact nervous to die but excited to not be in pain anymore. I was no longer sad; I was contented for Jil because she will no longer be suffering. This video was very useful in my research because it showed me the impact that euthanasia can have on people and just how important having the option to die peacefully is. I also learned about two new pros to euthanasia, I learned that it helps patients gain control of their lives and allows them a peace of mind. One con I learned from Jil’s video is that although the patient feels content with their choice, their family members are sometimes distraught.

Pakhu, Joseph. “Debate on Euthanasia.” *[Solved] Pakhu, J.(2015). Debate on Euthanasia (Pros and Cons) (Pp. 1-66) [Thesis]. Universidade Catlica Portuguesa. | Course Hero*, [www.coursehero.com/tutors-problems/Nursing/35477275-Pakhu-J-2015-Debate-on-euthanasia-pros-and-cons-pp-1-66/](http://www.coursehero.com/tutors-problems/Nursing/35477275-Pakhu-J-2015-Debate-on-euthanasia-pros-and-cons-pp-1-66/).

 Joseph Pakhu was a student at the Catholic University of Portugal that wrote his thesis paper on the pros and cons of euthanasia in 2015. His thesis paper was intended for the religious studies department at his university in order to fulfill a graduation requirement. In writing his thesis Joseph received guidance and knowledge from the staff of the university religious studies and, father Fausto Gomez. In Pakhu’s research paper he examines both sides of the debate and explains the rationale behind the reason. He examines the various reasons for and against euthanasia in two chapters, in the first chapter he lists the reasons for and against euthanasia from a standpoint based on autonomy, rights, compassion and mercy. In the second chapter he lists the reasons from a standpoint that is based on dignity, suffering and the quality of life. Joseph’s paper reinforced the same reasons that were presented in previous sources. For example, Joseph presented dying with dignity, elimination of suffering and autonomy as a pro for euthanasia similar to Jil’s video. As a con he listed the sacredness of life and, going against god’s will. Some of Joseph’s cons are similar to that of Dumitrache and Gheorghita, both sources listed the sacredness of life as a con.

Joseph is a student similar to me that is taking the information he learns from other credible sources and compiling them into a paper that answers his own research question. In Joseph’s paper he is unbiased and presents both sides fairly by providing adequate explanations for both sides. I thought Joseph’s paper was well organized and that made it easier to determine the grounds that the beliefs were founded on. Overall, Joseph’s paper was useful in my research because it reinforced pros and cons that were already stated and introduced some new cons.

Simion, Mihaela. “Euthanasia, Pros and Cons in the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.” *Fiat Lustitia*, no. 2, Feb. 2019, pp. 172–180.

 Mihaela Simion is a principal analyst in data standard and governance with extensive understanding in clinical drug development processes. Currently Simion works for Biogen a medical tech company that specializes in the development, delivery and discovery of treatments and cures for neurological diseases. In February of 2019 Simion published a journal intended for individuals that have not chosen a side about euthanasia and are looking for more information. Working for a company that specializes in the delivery of treatments for neurological diseases Simion sees first-hand how patients’ lives are affected by their illnesses. Interacting with these patients may sway Simions to advocate for euthanasia making her bias in her writing. Her position may also be swayed by her work with clinical drug processes, euthanasia involves the use of a clinical drug to cause the painless death of an individual. Her relationship with clinical drugs may also influence her position further decreasing her credibility.

In her journal titled ‘Euthanasia, Pros and Cons in the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights’ she analyzes European laws about assisted suicide and three various kinds of arguments that can be made for and against euthanasia. In her journal she states that she intends to “analyzes the legal, ethical and scientific arguments” that can be made in regards to euthanasia. In her analysis she clearly states a reason that an individual may or may not be a proponent of euthanasia and then proceeds to explain the logic behind the reasoning. For example she states “stopping the suffering of terminally ill patients and offering a quiet, dignified death” (3) as a pro to euthanasia and explains it as “ The most common humiliations that would justify euthanasia are: physical suffering, the person becomes a burden for others, the inability to cope with daily activities, spending the last period of life in a hospital or a home for the elderly.”(3) This is a pro for euthanasia because it allows the person to be independent and regain their dignity. On page 4 Simion states “the desire to be euthanized may be the result of depression or misinterpretation of the diagnosis.” This represents a con for euthanasia because doctors do sometimes misdiagnosed patients and this diagnosis is only corrected after they have been trying to cure the patient.

 After discussing the various arguments made about assisted suicide Simion also provided examples of assisted suicide in Europe and how the court ruled on matters of assisted suicide. For example, in her journal Simion explained how the European court was undecided on euthanasia and let the domestic court decide. According to Simion this case highlights the attempt of the European court to legalize euthanasia.

Overall while reading Simion’s journal I was pleased to see that she maintained a neutral standpoint by equally analyzing the opposing sides logic for their reasoning and providing an equal number of reasons for both sides. In her analysis about the European court’s ruling on euthanasia she effectively explains why the high court allowed the domestic court to rule on euthanasia showing that the high court was unclear about the choice they should make because it is covered under the law but many people are opposed to it due to their personal beliefs. Mihaela Simion journal proved to be very useful in my research for the various pros and cons of euthanasia and even provided me with the logic behind these reasons.

Conclusion

In conclusion, euthanasia is a controversial topic that has caused a great debate. Proponents of euthanasia argue that it should be legalized for a multitude of reasons, the first being that euthanasia offers the terminally ill a dignified death and allows them to regain autonomy. Euthanasia allows patients a dignified death and autonomy because it provides them with the opportunity to choose when, where and how they would like to die and prevent them from becoming a burden to others. In addition to this people support euthanasia because it eliminates the suffering of terminally ill patients and allows them to pass on peacefully. Opponents of euthanasia argues that it undermines medical care and decreases autonomy. They believe it undermines medical care and decreases autonomy because a terminally ill patient would choose to be euthanized in order to save money rather than continue treatment in hopes of recovering. Opponents have also argued that if euthanasia is legalized in more places it will become uncontrollable allowing the elderly and terminally ill kids to be euthanized like they are in the Netherlands. They are also opposed to euthanasia because sometimes patients are misdiagnosed and it is often their diagnosis that causes them to turn to euthanasia so that they do not suffer. Lastly, opponents argue that life is invaluable and, euthanasia can cause great sadness amongst family members. Opponents use religion to justify that life is invaluable by rationalizing that it goes against god’s will. Euthanasia gives family members the knowledge of when and how their loved one will pass on and sometimes some of them have a hard time accepting the fact that their loved one has chosen to die, which occasionally results in them becoming increasingly sad.