

Euthanasia in Dementia Cases: An Interview Study of Dutch Physicians' Experiences

Authors : J. E. Appel, R. N. Bouwmeester, L. Crombach, K. Georgieva, N. O'Shea, T. I. van Rijssel, L. Wingens

Abstract : The Netherlands has a unique and progressive euthanasia law. Even people with advanced neurodegenerative diseases, like dementia, can request euthanasia when an Advanced Euthanasia Directive (AED) was written. Although the law sets some guidelines, in practice many complexities occur. Especially doctors experience difficult situations, as they have to decide whether euthanasia is justified. Research suggests that this leads to an emotional burden for them, due to feelings of isolation, fear of prosecution, as well as pressures from patient, family, or society. Existing literature, however, failed to address problems arising in dementia cases in particular, as well as possible sources of support. In order to investigate these issues, semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 Dutch general practitioners and elderly care physicians will be conducted. Results are expected to be obtained by the end of December 2017.

Keywords : dementia, euthanasia, general practitioners, elderly care physicians, palliative care

Conference Title : ICAMEEAS 2018 : International Conference on Application of Medical Ethics, Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : April 12-13, 2018