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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### IMMORALLY AND UNETHICALLY FACILITATING THE DIVINE: MEDICAL ASSISTED SUICIDE, DR. DEATH, AND PLAYING GOD

David S. Fowler, Ph.D.  
Newberry College.

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#### Abstract

This article is a medical ethics opinion piece regarding the historical and questionable exercise of medical assisted suicide. As this is a practice involving significant debate over many years, opinions of those who follow a divine-led path should be voiced with cognition. Thoughts are expressed and specified concerning the ethicality and morality of humanly facilitating God's plans of life expectancy for individuals. It is not proper, nor is it inspired by our Creator to define life cycles based on our own wishes or perceived entitlements.

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#### Introduction:-

"In June 1997, the US Supreme Court unanimously ruled that there is neither a constitutional right nor a constitutional prohibition to euthanasia or PAS" (Emanuel, 2002, p.142). Physician assisted suicide is an ethical and moral dilemma, and the practice is also a quandary for the judicial system of the United States. The argument whether physician assisted suicide is right or wrong, or at best whether it is legal or not, is a discussion that appears to have no concrete rectification.

#### Playing God

A significant argument, in the context of this discussion, is physician assisted suicide is the act of "playing God". "Should humans be allowed to play the role of God? Legalizing euthanasia would do just that! The power to play with people's lives should not be handed out under a legal and/or medical disguise. Thus, euthanasia should not be legalized" (Hassan, 2008, p.1). As a people of faith, we possess robust opinions regarding this specific contention. It is not man's entitlement to decide when to make passage into eternity. When this is facilitated, man takes away the Divine's prerogative of decision on lifespan and plans for humanity. Is a physician assisting with suicide "playing God" when they hand a patient a lethal drug injection button to facilitate their exit from life? Of course, they are. What if the doctor gives the person a loaded gun and asks them to pull the trigger, would this be construed as enabling man into the role of our Creator? I believe this to be the case. Man should not facilitate the decisions concerning when it is "time to go". That is something our Maker has in His hands, and we should not construe attempts to take that authority away.

There is also an argument dictated addressing the rights of a patient to refuse life sustaining treatment. Is this scenario in the same "ballpark" as physician assisted suicide? When man refuses treatment, he is not merely causing his own death, however, he is demonstrating faith by putting his life in God's hands and will. When a patient pushes the button on a self-induced lethal injection, they are making the conscious decision to take our own life, and in a sense, manufacture a verdict that only the All Powerful has the right to make. Doctors are not God, and do not have

the authority to proclaim, "Hey, it is your time to go, and here is your way out." Jack "Dr. Death" Kevorkian did not own a moral compass regarding this issue. He never believed in God (Gaylor, 2011).

### **Hippocratic Oath Validity**

Another issue realized, in the quest for solid cognition in this matter, is that assisted suicide veers against the Hippocratic Oath, which doctors must abide by to practice medicine. "The prohibition against killing patients... stands as the first promise of self-restraint sworn to in the Hippocratic Oath, as medicine's primary taboo: 'I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect'" (Kass, 1989, p.40). When a doctor assists a patient with executing his own "mercy killing", the physician blatantly eradicates a sworn oath. The Hippocratic Oath should be adhered to, at all costs, by those who practice under its authority and moral edict. Because of this simple, yet significant pledge, the public places trust in healthcare professionals. When this creed is violated, it diminishes the credibility, validity, and honesty of the medical field. When is the oath acceptable to break? That is a difficult question to answer. However, if the rules can be deviated from in one scenario, should it not be allowed for another?

### **Legality and Ethics**

Because of the strength and validity of the Hippocratic Oath, as well as the moral implications concerning physician assisted suicide, this practice is currently legal in only a handful of states. Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont, Colorado and California, and Washington D.C all have legislation in place legalizing this form of death. Hawaii will allow the practice beginning in 2019 (Herreria, 2018). Because of these facts, I believe assisted suicide is legally questionable. According to the United States federal judicial system, it is against the law across a majority of the land. Is it "legally" wrong in the other states previously mentioned? Obviously, some court rulings prove otherwise (Lo, 1991). Regardless of legalities, there is a sincere problem with the unethical and immoral decision of giving the patient a loaded gun, metaphorically speaking. Man should not trample on God's playground. The Creator makes the rules, and when man alters a Divine formula, he diminishes the role of The Almighty and consequences will be realized.

### **Kevorkian Video Evidence and Moral Opinions**

Across the sea of the World Wide Web, there are many instances of "Dr. Death" Jack Kevorkian assisted suicide, or mercy killing videos for review. However, after watching a mere few videos, my stance on this subject is only solidified with opposition concerning the perceived ethicality of this act. Was he exercising his idea of mercy? In his mind he was. However, one must remember that Dr. Kevorkian had no moral or ethical dilemmas with committing these acts. He did not believe in a higher power. Obviously, he held no ethical stance on the oath he swore when he became a medical professional. He destroyed it. Dr. Kevorkian was convicted appropriately of misconduct during his acts of premeditated murder. He not only assisted in the suicide of patients with terminal illnesses, but he also pulled the trigger.

### **Conclusion:-**

If any of us were to be in a dark alley, and happened upon a manic-depressive person that begged us to kill them to relieve them of their misery, and we acted upon that wish, would we be accused and convicted of murder? Of course, we would. However, in many states, this has become legal practice by providing medical professionals a venue to legally dispatch terminally ill patients into eternity. Suicide is wrong. "Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?" (Ecclesiastes 7:17, English Standard Version). Assisting with someone's suicide does not make it right; it is the antithesis of what God teaches (1 Corinthians 3:17). While legality may come into question with assisted suicide, it does not diminish the fact of its immorality. Man should not play God.

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