

Euthanasia is an ethical issue because there are strong views 'for' and 'against' this moral, controversial issue in society. This is a current issue in New Zealand due to the legal case from Lecretia Seales, who wanted the right to die (or to be helped to die) on her own terms (1) and although it is illegal, most New Zealanders want euthanasia to be allowed.

1

Two main groups 'for' euthanasia in NZ are [...]

Two main groups 'against' euthanasia are The Catholic Church – Nathaniel Centre and Hospice NZ. The Nathaniel Centre is the bioethics part of the Catholic Church in NZ. They believe that dying is a part of life and any form of interfering with the natural course is seen as killing (5). They believe that the medical profession is equipped to ease any pain, so no one needs to suffer (a view shared by Hospice). They value the sacredness of life; that God gives and takes away life (5). They believe that it is important to grow compassion in our relationships and in society, and care for people, rather than take the 'easy way out'. The second group is Hospice NZ and they provide care for people who are dying. Hospice believe that it is important to invest money and resources into palliative care such as what they provide, rather than legalising euthanasia (6). Hospice values providing high quality care and support to people with terminal illnesses and their families. Hospice care involves not hastening or postponing death, so like the Catholic view, it is about allowing nature to take its course. From the hospice website, their philosophy is:

2

- people who are dying can still live life well
- no one has to die in avoidable pain and suffering
- care is given to whoever needs it, whenever and wherever it is needed
- carers and the bereaved get the help and support they need
- people accept that dying is part of the experience of living (6).

As stated before, euthanasia is illegal in NZ. I will explain implications of this situation at personal, interpersonal and societal levels.

Personally [...]

Interpersonally [...]

Societally, euthanasia being illegal means that few people will choose this option in NZ. This means that more people will require care from hospices, and funding will be needed in order to provide high-quality care. According to Hospice NZ (5), "palliative care should be routinely available to all who need it, and Government should ensure that public funding is made available to increase the availability of palliative care, whether provided by the hospital, at home, in residential aged care facilities or in hospices." With an ageing population, this will be an increasing cost to the taxpayer in the future. On the other hand, there is a law up for consideration to legalise euthanasia. IF the law was to change, this means that the opposite might occur, where people use euthanasia and less funding is needed for hospice care. This ends up costing the taxpayer less, BUT also means that less funding will be given for end-of-

3

life care, and therefore people may feel pressured to use ethanasia as they do not want to be a burden to families and society (this is known as the 'slippery slope' argument – 13).

Note that a chart was provided by the student to show bibliographic details for the references used in the evaluation.