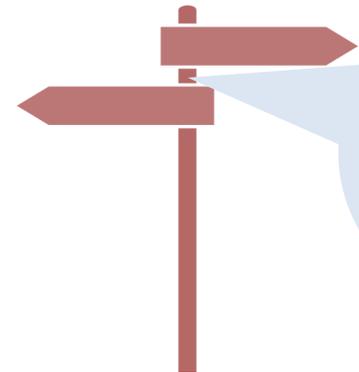
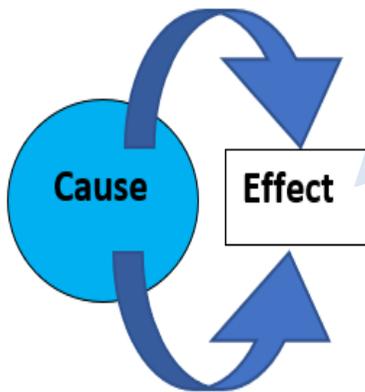




A persistent wish to die can occur about 1% of older people without severe illness.¹



But only one seventh want to end their lives.
Death wishes are often ambiguous,^{1, 2} transient³ and do not always imply a genuine wish for death⁴



- Three quarters of those with a wish to die report being lonely and 60% have a clinical depression.¹
- In patients with progressive neurological disease, a wish to die is not related to cognitive or behavioural impairment but is strongly related to depression.⁵
- A wish to die is strongly influenced by the perception of being a burden,⁶ or the fear of pain.⁷
- Of assisted deaths in Oregon in 2020, 53% felt a burden and 33% had poor pain control or a fear of pain.⁸

References

1. Hartog ID, Zomers ML, van Thiel GJ, Leget C *et al.* Prevalence and characteristics of older adults with a persistent death wish without severe illness: a large cross sectional survey. *BMC Geriatrics*, 2020; **20**: 342-356.
2. Van Wijngaaden E, Leget C, Goossensen A. Caught between intending and doing: older people ideating on a self-chosen death. *BMJOpen*, 2016; **6**: e009895
3. Briggs R, Ward M, Kenny RA. The 'Wish to Die' in later life: prevalence, longitudinal course and mortality. Data from Tilda. *Age and Ageing*, 2021; 1-8.
4. Monteforte-Royo C, *et al.* What lies behind the wish to hasten death? A systematic review and meta-ethnography from the perspective of patients. *PLoSOne*, 2017; **7**(5): e37117
5. Rabkin J, Goetz R, Murphy JM, Mitsumoto H. Cognitive impairment, behavioural impairment, depression, and wish to die in an ALS cohort. *Neurology*, 2016; **87**(13): 1320-8.
6. Gudat H, Ohnsorge K, Streeck N, Rehmann-Sutter C. How palliative care patients' feelings of being a burden to others can motivate a wish to die. Moral challenges in clinics and families. *Bioethics*, 2019; **33**(4): 421-30
7. Pestinger M *et al.* The desire to hasten death: using grounded theory for a better understanding 'When perception of time tends to be a slippery slope'. *Palliative Medicine*, 2015; **29**(8): 711-9.
8. Oregon Death with Dignity Act: annual reports. <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/EVALUATIONRESEARCH/DEATHWITHDIGNITYACT/Pages/ar-index.aspx>