

Comparing assisted and non-assisted deaths

v1



There are very few studies comparing the quality of deaths between assisted and non-assisted deaths



But there are two:
In the Netherlands
In Oregon

References

1. Veldink JH *et al.* Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide among patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in the Netherlands, *NEJM*, 2002; 346: 1638-44.
2. Smith KA *et al.* Quality of death and dying in patients who request physician-assisted death. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 2011; 14(4): 445-50.

Study 1¹

Compared the characteristics of 2 groups of Dutch multiple sclerosis patients, those receiving an assisted death and those dying without intervention.

This was a survey of physicians.

Assisted deaths were more likely to be at home and had less anxiety

Non-assisted deaths had as peaceful a death as assisted deaths

Study 2²

Interviewed the families of 149 Oregon patients

Rated the dying experience using a validated questionnaire.

Assisted death patients

- had better symptom control
- were better prepared for death

Non assisted death patients had no difference in the remaining 24 quality indicators

Conclusion: there is no evidence that the quality of assisted deaths is better than non-assisted deaths