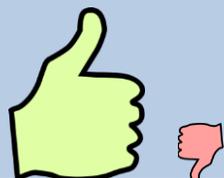


The impact of assisted dying on doctors

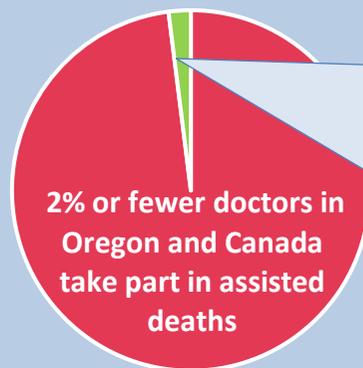
v5



In countries where assisted deaths are legal, it might be assumed that most doctors participate



In reality, the proportion of doctors participating in assisted deaths is remarkably small



- In Oregon (2020) 142 physicians prescribed lethal drugs for 370 patients¹ → that year there were 6,191 active physicians in Oregon
- In Canada (2020) 1,274 doctors participated in 7,595 assisted deaths² → in 2019 there were 91,375 active physicians in Canada
- In Colorado only 0.01% of doctors prescribe⁷

Participating in assisted deaths has a psychological impact on up to half of doctors, and that can persist long-term in up to a fifth.³



Doctors in Victoria, Australia, are struggling to do eligibility assessments, know the patient or reconcile their role in assisted deaths.⁴

In the 2020 BMA poll, the majority (58%) of practicing UK doctors who expressed an opinion were unwilling to prescribe lethal drugs.⁵



Factors contributing to the emotional burden of participating in an assisted death include discomfort with being involved in the process, assessing a patient's capacity to decide, and having to judge if the patient fits the criteria for an assisted death.³



Canadian physicians' refusal to participate in assisted deaths was not based on religious or moral grounds, but because of the emotional burden and fear of psychological repercussions.⁶



References

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