

Comparing assisted and non-assisted deaths

v2



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

1 But there are two **2**
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 amyotrophic lateral sclerosis patients,
-those receiving an assisted death
-and those dying without AD.

This was a survey of physicians.

Assisted death patients were more likely to be at home and had less anxiety.

5% did not have a peaceful death.

Non-assisted death patients had as peaceful a death as AD patients

6% did not have a peaceful death.

Study 2²

Interviewed the families of 149 Oregon patients comparing those receiving an assisted death and those dying without AD

Rated the dying experience using a validated 33 item quality of dying questionnaire.

Assisted death patients

- had better symptom control
- better prepared for death

Non assisted death patients were as peaceful, family connected as AD patients and died as peacefully.

There was no difference in 24 of the quality indicators.

Author's conclusion:

"In our study, physicians estimated that patients who died as a result of euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide were similar to patients who died from other causes in terms of ... the frequency of feelings of pain, despair, fear, choking, and anger."

Author's conclusion:

"The quality of death experienced by those who received lethal prescriptions is no worse than those not pursuing PAD, and in some areas, it is rated by family members as better."