



Assisted deaths and safeguards

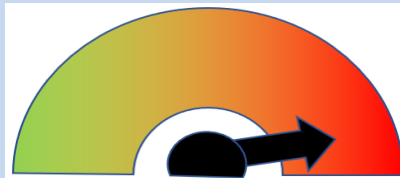
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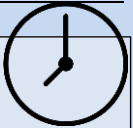
Small risks need modest safety measures



Big risks demand robust safeguards

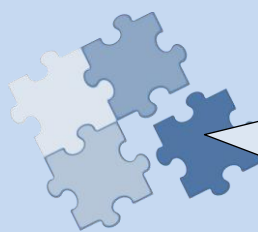


Any law on assisted dying is at the top of any risk register since getting it wrong is irreversible



Problem 1: Prognosis

- Doctors become more inaccurate the longer the survival¹
- Accuracy is worse for non-cancer patients²
- Doctors and families struggle to estimate prognosis in dementia³
- 88% of head & neck cancer prognoses are wrong⁴
- Half of predictions in heart failure are wrong⁵
- 5% of terminal diagnoses are wrong⁶



Problem 2: Intent
A wish to die is often transient⁷

Problem 4: UK record
We continue to fail vulnerable individuals and groups^{9, 10}

Problem 6: Expansion

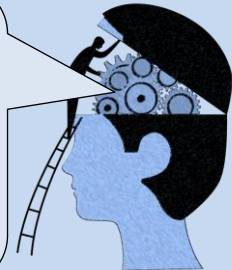
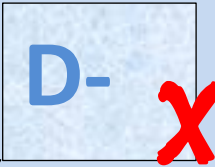
All jurisdictions relax safeguards over time (including Oregon)

Every safeguard is attacked as being discriminatory and limiting choice

References

- 1)Downar J et al.. *CMAJ*, 2017; **189**(13): E484-93.
- 2)Glare P et al. *BMJ*, 2003; **327**: 195-8
- 3)Browne B et al.. *Palliative Medicine*, 2021; **35**(10): 1733-46
- 4)Hoesseini A et al. *BMC Palliative Care*, 2020; **19**: 176-85.
- 5)Warriach HJ et al. *Palliative Medicine*, 2016; **30**(7): 684-9.
- 6)House of Lords Report 86-II (Session 2004-05), p730.
- 7)Monteforte-Royo C, et al.. *PLoSOne*, 2017; **7**(5): e37117
- 8)Select Committee on Mental Capacity Act 2005-Report
- 9)Confidential Inquiry into Premature Deaths of People with Learning Disabilities <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cipold/>
- 10)Protect, respect, connect- decisions about living and dying well during COVID-19. CQC 2021.
- 11)Shastri A et al *Clinical Medicine* 2019; **19**(2): 114-8.

Problem 3: Capacity
After 15 years the Mental Capacity Act is still not fully implemented⁸

Problem 5: Assessment
Doctors miss existential issues such as depression¹¹