

# THE DANGERS OF Voluntary Assisted Suicide

VAD legislation is particularly harmful because its target candidates are among the most vulnerable in society. The high rates of mental health issues, the prevalence of feeling a burden on others and the downward spiral so easily taken to involuntary euthanasia, should all serve as stark warnings to reject such killing.

## High rates of depression

"The medical literature suggests that the incidence of major depression in terminally ill patients ranges from 25% to 77%. **(1)**



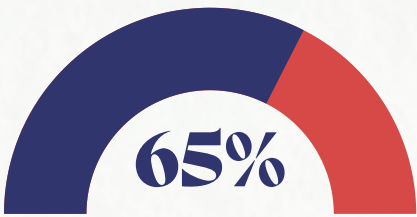
Early treatment is, of course, dependent on early recognition of the problem; all too often, physicians wait until the last weeks of a dying patient's life to decide to address the depression. By this point, it is generally too late"

– '**Depression, anxiety, and delirium in the terminally ill patient**' **(1)**

The significant rates of depression and varying mental ailments (eg. dementia, anxiety etc.) that terminally ill people are more likely to face due to their declining health and age, should call for increased care for such vulnerable people, instead of others preying on their fragility and helping them to kill themselves.

## Feeling like a burden

Multiple studies have found the especially high prevalence amongst the terminally ill to feel like a burden on others. Reports show that self perceived burden is a significant problem for anywhere from almost 20% to 65% of terminally ill patients **(2)**.

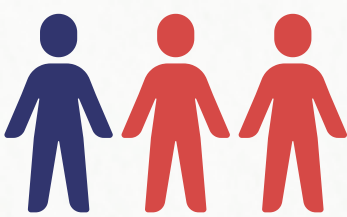


Some studies finding the rates in which seriously ill patients consider themselves a burden, is as high as 77% . **(3)**

## The slippery slope to involuntary euthanasia

Whilst advocates for VAD like to stress the consent and autonomy of the patients making the requests, real world data shows the prevalence of involuntary euthanasia (where patients have not requested their lives to be ended).

The Remmelink Report which was commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Justice reported almost 3,000 deaths from euthanasia/assisted suicide in the Netherlands in 1990. The report also found 1,000 of these **were not voluntary. (4) (5)**



**1/3 deaths**  
**were**  
***involuntary***

- A 1998 study in Flanders, Belgium, found **1796** patients were killed without explicitly requesting it. **(6)**
- A 1994 study conducted in South Australia, in which 10% of the State's medical practitioners were sent an anonymous questionnaire, found that of those who responded, 19% admitted to intentionally bringing about the death of their patient.



- But notably in **almost half (49%) of those cases**, they did so without the request of the person they were killing. **(7)**

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