

## Assisted dying

The Times  
June 30, 2006

Sir, It is not the right to die that is at issue (letter, June 29) as assisted suicide is illegal. What is disputed is whether anybody has the right to ask another person to kill them or assist in their suicide, and in particular whether the medical profession should be the agent of such deaths.

Reservations about the legalisation of euthanasia have some grounding in that there have been more than 200 cases of non-voluntary euthanasia in the Netherlands where there was no prior request. To put it in lay terms, people were killed without any request or consent either at the time or prior to the event, something which might be characterised as murder.

To suggest that those who cannot &ldquo;do the things that make life enjoyable&rdquo; should have a right to ask the medical profession to kill them or procure their deaths seems to me to be an unwarranted extension of respect for autonomy. In any event, why is it always assumed that euthanasia or assisted dying must be in the remit of the medical profession?

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