

 **COMMITTEE:** Legality Of Euthanasia

 **COUNTRY:** New Zealand

 Euthanasia has been the ongoing topic of most health professionals, people in unimaginable distress, and their respective families. Even though it presents itself as a quite controversial topic, we thoroughly believe that the questions which may arise with the mention of euthanasia could be eased with in-depth and profound answers constructed with extensive care, solicitude, and pertinence by the eligible group of healthcare professionals of New Zealand otherwise known as SCENZ (The Support and Consultation of End of Life in New Zealand). The SCENZ group is also the main body that includes practicing medical practitioners, practicing psychiatrists, practicing pharmacists, and practicing nurse practitioners. The members bring collective experience in the awareness of Te Ao Māori (Interconnectedness of all living and unliving things) and an understanding of Tikanga Māori (Culture, custom, and ethics); expertise in ethics and law, and the disability sector; and includes representation of the views of patients, whanau (family) and the community. The request for assisted dying could be forwarded directly to the SCENZ group if the patient is not comfortable with raising the topic of euthanasia with their primary practitioner and they will indeed be welcomed with understanding and sympathy of the secretariat as a whole.

In New Zealand, the End Of Life Choice Act was first introduced in 2019, a follow-up, the relevant referendum was held in 2020, with the votes for the act being as high as 65%, the act passed and came into effect and assisted dying was made legal after 12 months on February 7th, 2021. Assisted dying is widely known as getting the legal help of a practitioner with either injections or oral medication that would help relieve the suffering of the said patient with chronic pain and induce merciful death. We find it worth mentioning that assisted dying is not, in any way or form, a replacement for palliative care or health care services. Indubitably, there need to be strict eligibility legislations that need to be regulated to prevent anguish that affects the patients of the said procedures and whanau. Those could be listed briefly as;

* being aged 18 years or over
* being a citizen or permanent resident of New Zealand
* suffering from a terminal illness that is likely to end their life within 6 months
* being in an advanced state of irreversible decline in physical capability
* experiencing unbearable suffering that cannot be relieved in a manner that the person considers tolerable
* being competent to make an informed decision about assisted dying.

People that don’t meet these criteria are in no way eligible to receive the service of assisted dying even if they are suffering from a mental disorder, a disability, or are of older age as the attitude towards these are primarily dependent on the patient, their well-being, and the factors that lead the patient to seek this particular kind of solution. We earnestly and heartily recommend pursuing other defined approaches to solve deeper rooted issues to further secure the health of our resident and their families.

Not only we are fully aware of the complications and the opposition to the End Of Life Choice Act, but we are dedicated to being of service to our people and meeting their personal needs in any shape or form. We believe living is a basic human right and we want to ensure that we respect and put that before anything else. However, as long as life is a right then death should at least be an option for complicated cases relative to each individual.

**“Some people are lucky to no longer be, and some are unlucky to still be, alive.”
― Mokokoma Mokhonoana**

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