

WHY DO PEOPLE REQUEST EPAS?

In the jurisdictions where it is legal, psychological, social and existential reasons lead to requests for EPAS rather than physical symptoms like pain.

Hudson, P. L., L. J. Kristjanson, M. Ashby, B. Kelly, P. Schofield, R. Hudson, S. Aranda, M. O'Connor and A. Street (2006). "Desire for hastened death in patients with advanced disease and the evidence base of clinical guidelines: a systematic review." *Palliative Medicine* **20**(7): 693-701.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0269216306071799>

Chochinov, H. M., L. J. Kristjanson, T. F. Hack, T. Hassard, S. McClement and M. Harlos (2007). "Burden to others and the terminally ill." *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* **34**: 463-471.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885392407003430>

Autonomy, or the desire to control the manner and timing of one's death, is also an important factor:

Ganzini, Linda, et al. "Experiences of Oregon nurses and social workers with hospice patients who requested assistance with suicide." *New England Journal of Medicine* **347.8** (2002): 582-588.

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa020562> - t=article

Euthanasia for existential distress has been permitted under the Dutch law for euthanasia:

Sheldon, Tony. "Dutch argue that mental torment justifies euthanasia." *BMJ: British Medical Journal* **308.6926** (1994): 431.

<https://search.proquest.com/openview/7d44b9975b98cad5b13e81c1b6fdbddf/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2040978>

But research has shown that requests for EPAS are often cries for help that are misinterpreted by healthcare professionals:

Johansen, S., J. C. Hølen, S. Kaasa, S. Kaasa, J. H. Loge and L. J. Materstvedt (2005). "Attitudes towards, and wishes for, euthanasia in advanced cancer patients at a palliative medicine unit." *Palliative Medicine* **19**(6): 454-460.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1191/0269216305pm1048oa>

Furthermore, the desire for hastened death waxes and wanes over time:

Chochinov, H. M., D. Tataryn, J. J. Clinch and D. Dudgeon (1999). "Will to live in the terminally ill." *The Lancet* **354**(9181): 816-819.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673699800117>

In a recent article in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, Ezekiel Emanuel pointed out that requests for EPAS are uncommon at the end of life and that legalizing EPAS would not solve the problem of inadequate end of life care. He likened euthanasia requests to suicide:

Ezekiel Emanuel (2017). "Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide: focus on the data." *Med J Aust* **206**(8): 339-340.
<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2017/206/8/euthanasia-and-physician-assisted-suicide-focus-data>