Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

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I feel very strongly about PAD (Physician-assisted dying) partly because of my personal experiences. My partner is the most recent. He was placed in palliative care having completed an advanced care directive which was placed in the hands of the admitting doctor. But probably because this was a Catholic institution, they took no notice of it. He had a cancer of the throat, had survived about 5 or 6 surgery events, and at this stage he could neither eat nor drink. In the last couple of weeks, he could not communicate. So he had no choice but to dehydrate himself to death, considering artificial feeding would only prolong his agony. He lasted about 5½ weeks following admission.

Following his death, I obtained his medical file by FOI, only to find his ACT form was not there. With the help of a doctor, discovered he had been seriously underdosed with morphine. I knew what with anonymous studies, the medical profession have used "terminal sedation" only as the excuse that stronger doses were required to
relieve suffering; not with a reason to hasten death. But in doing so in a slower fashion than any form of PAD - all to prevent any kind of harm - broken the law as it was. There are plenty of safeguards in the Victorian law - but those opposing it seem to describe the patient as so vulnerable & the family as avaricious. It is often all about choice to be self-administered wherever this is feasible.

While there are equivalent laws overseas it has been shown that the numbers of people who avail themselves of this probability to have great peace of mind & often live longer than predicted.

I do not know if Catholic institutions will change now, but I would not trust them. It would appear entering one myself. There is little reason for PAD & positive care to be mutually exclusive, but have been combined overseas.

I therefore fully support valid end-of-life choice in the ACT & Australia wide.

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I feel very strongly about PAD (Physician-assisted-dying) partly because of my personal experiences of relatives & a partner, all of whom did not have the choice of a peaceful death. My partner is the most recent. He was placed in palliative care having completed an advanced care directive form & which was placed in the hands of the admitting doctor. But probably because this was a Catholic institution they took no notice of it. He had cancer of the throat, and survived about 5 or 6 surgery events & at this stage he could neither eat or drink or, in the last couple of weeks, could not communicate. So he had no choice but to starve and dehydrate himself to death, considering artificial feeding would only prolong his life. He lasted about 5 ½ weeks following admission.

Following his death I obtained his medical file by FOI only to find his ACD form was not there & with the help of a doctor discovered he had been seriously under dosed with morphine. I know that with anonymous surveys the medical profession have used ‘terminal sedation’ only on the excuse that stronger doses were required to relieve suffering, not with a reason to hasten death but in doing so in a slower fashion than any form of PAD – all to prevent any hint of having broken the law as it was.

There are plenty of safeguards in the Victorian law – but those opposing it seem to describe the patient as so vulnerable & the family as avaricious, impatient to inherit any available wealth. But surely well-trained doctors (required by the law) can assess the situation. It is after all, all about choice & to be self administered whenever this is feasible.

Where there are equivalent laws overseas it has been shown that the numbers of people who avail themselves of this probably are minimal and have great peace of mind & often live longer than predicted.

I do not know if Catholic institutions will change now but I would not trust them & would oppose entering one myself.

There is little reason for PAD & palliative care to be mutually exclusive but have been combined overseas.

I therefore fully support valid end-of-life choice in the ACT & Australia wide.

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