

APPG for Dying Well Minutes Meeting 7th September Webinar

Officers present: Fiona Bruce MP, Baroness Campbell of Surbiton, Rosie Cooper MP, Lord Curry of Kirkharle, Lord Farmer, Baroness Finlay, Sally-Ann Hart MP, Sir John Hayes MP, Baroness Hollins, Rachael Maskell MP, Robin Millar MP, Baroness Stroud, Sir Desmond Swayne MP, Stephen Timms MP

Participants:

- Ilora Finlay (Officer of the APPG for Dying Well)
- Dr Brick Lantz (Orthopaedic Surgeon in Oregon, President of Slocum Research Education Foundation, State Director for the American Academy of Medical Ethics)
- Professor Dr Benolt Beuselinck (Oncologist at a large cancer centre in Belgium – University Hospitals Leuven)
- Dr Leonie Herx (Palliative Care associate professor, divisional chair of Palliative Medicine at Queens University (Kingston, Ontario), past President of the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians)
- Dr Satya Chandagiri (Psychiatrist in Oregon with 32 years of experience with deep understanding of Oregon Physician Assisted Suicide law)
- Professor Dr Timothy Devos (Haematologist in the Molecular Immunology unit of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium)

Introduction: Ilora Finlay

First guest speaker: Dr Brick Lantz

- Context of Physician Assisted Suicide in Oregon
- Importance of trust in the patient-doctor relationship
- Failure of safeguards in Oregon
- Ethical issues of consent and mental health

Second guest speaker: Professor Dr Benolt Beuselinck

- Huge numbers of PAS deaths in Belgium since it was legalised
- Reasons why people request PAS – less than half cite physical suffering
- The slippery slope of doctors becoming the judge of the meaningfulness of life
- Difficulties for and burden on doctors and nurses

Third guest speaker: Dr Leonie Herx

- Context of Physician Assisted Suicide in Canada

- The deterioration of legal safeguards and the lack of oversight
- Reports of coercion and exploitation of the vulnerable
- Significant negative impacts on medicine (especially palliative care) and on wider society

Fourth guest speaker: Dr Satya Chandagiri

- Explored the most common reasons why people chose PAS in Oregon
- Difficulty in evaluating mental capacity and lack of training for clinicians
- Details of the “cocktail” of drugs that are self-administered and taking them is painful and long
- Discussion on whether legalising AS impacts the rate of suicides

Fifth guest speaker: Dr Timothy Devos

- Negative impact of the legalisation of AS on Palliative Care
- Euthanasia is now being proposed by clinicians sometimes – seen as the ‘good way of dying’
- Patient-doctor relationship becomes contractual – Doctors become an instrument for delivering death – negative impacts on mental health of doctors

Q&A section

Thanks and closing remarks: Baroness Finlay

- End of meeting -