Is It Right To Take Ones Life Essay, Research Paper

Is it right to take one s life?

Death-lack of a heartbeat or signs of breathing. With the introduction of life-support machines, doctors can now artificially maintain a human life. Should a person have the right to prevent the natural path of death from occurring?

Death

The definition of death was once defined of a lack of a heartbeat, or the lack of breathing (what is death). Now in days that has altered due to life-support machines. The definition of death is a Grey area. Brain dean is accepted by most places as a certification of death (what is death). Now because of life-support machines people can now live longer, in some senses this is better but in others it is just prolonging the inevitable. Many believe that when a person is hooked up to a life-support machine it is altering their natural path of death. When a patient asks to be taken off or not hooked up to a life-support machine they are thought of as committing euthanasia.

Passive euthanasia

Definition of Euthanasia is: Eu-> Good, Thamatos -> death

Patients usually ask to be switched off life-support machines, they now want to die in peace without the support of chemicals. Most religions do not believe in being hooked up to a support system. They see the life-support systems as preventing the natural path of death, by infecting the body with chemicals or hooking the body up to a machine that will take over a part of the body s function. Most religions believe that one has the duty to live the life God gave you, until you die a natural death (rest in peace). Some feel that by being hooked up to a life-support system it is preventing one to die in private, with pride and dignity. By being hooked up to a life-support system most religions feel that you are playing God with your life. Going against his/her wishes. A patient can get to the point where they just want to be peaceful and stop the suffering, they usually ask to be taken off of all support systems. Giving a patient pain medication intended to relieve suffering stops respiration. This is not seen as euthanasia, because the intent was not to kill the patient but to stop the suffering. Church s are not against this, nor are they against withholding artificial chemicals that are used to sustain the patient. One of the biggest problems is getting into something when you do not know the full consequences. Meaning deciding you want to be hooked up to a life-support system and then down the road seeing the affect it is having on you or your loved ones, noticing that now it is to late. Another problem is not having control. Not having control to save a person or stop treatments.

Decisions

There are many cases, where a person was unable to make a decision about whether they wanted to be hooked up to a support system or whether they wanted to die naturally. Most cases are when a person goes into a coma. In the article I want the respirator disconnected , Karen Ann Quinlan fell into a coma. She was 21 therefor of legal age to make her own decisions. She was taken to a hospital and hooked up to a respirator, and diagnosed as being in a vegetative state. Her parents had asked the physician to disconnect her from the respirator, insisting that she would never have wanted to be kept alive in a vegetative state. The parent s wishes were refused on the basis that it would be against medical policies and treatments. Her father felt that Karen s privacy was being invaded, he took this issue to the Superior court of New Jersey. Here he tried to become his daughter s guardian; his intent was to get the power to remove his daughter from the respirator. The court refused him, they said that the decision should be left up to the physician. Mr. Quinlan went to court after court with his case, and finally he was granted the right to have his daughter disconnected from the respirator. Karen started to breath on her own and lived for 9 more years before she died of pneumonia.

The right of privacy is basically that the individual has the right to grow without any bodily invasions. One is allowed to die in peace without having to deal with the pressures of physicians and medication. In Karen s case she was put on a respirator without any choice, and whether it was needed or not she was still placed on one. She also was not given the chance to die peacefully; the respirator would keep her alive a lot longer then normal.

Patients that are not in a coma state have the ability to choose if they want to be ever connected to a life-support machine, they can now even write down scenario to what they want. An example is, if they were in a car accident and they were paralyzed from the next down but still had the use of all major organs except for the lungs. In this case they could say they wanted to be kept alive or they wanted to be kept off of the life-support machines. Knowing that either you will be cured or living your life on machines for the rest of your life also helps make decisions. You can make your decision as long as you are in a rational state of mind.

Foundation law

• An individuals honored liberty

• The life, body or honor of an individual must not be damaged

• Every person is entitled to privacy and intimacy

• One s premises should not be entered without consent

• If medical treatment will not cure the patients disease, the patient should not be forced to receive the treatment, even if it may prolong life

• Passive euthanasia is respected

These should all be respected. They are criteria to every law.

Church s view

The church s view on life-support machines is that in now way shape or form, are we to hurt one s self. We should not alter what is meant to be, but live our life the way God intended us to live it, Jesus did not alter his life, he lived it the way it was made to be lived and died when he was called upon.

Problems with live-support machines

When being placed on a life-support machine, you do not have control. If you are elderly one may take advantage of the fact that a person is hooked up to a life-support system. If there is a need for bed space, it has been known that an elderly person had problems with, there machine and ended up dying. This is not a proven fact, but many articles have stated facts about issues like this. Other problems with the life-support machines are if a person is dependent on them for the rest of their life. By the time they die their bodies are so bloated from the medication that was pumped into them. Most can not eat so they are fed by IV, so their bodies become full of many fluids, so either when they die they are all brittle and decaying or bloated.

By being hooked up to a life support machine, it is prolonging one s life. Preventing it from taking its natural path. Some people agree with this others do not. It is all a matter of what you believe. Many want relatives placed on life-support, because they are not ready to say good-bye. Others see it as if it is meant to be, then it shall be.

Social teachings of the church

Social teachings of the Catholic Church; has six main principals. In regards to this topic, one would look at, dignity of the human person.

Dignity of the human person: all people are sacred, made in the image and likeness of God. People do not lose dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success, or race. This emphasizes people over things, being over having (handout principles of Catholic Social Teachings). It also gets into depth about each teaching; an example is respect of human life. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherited dignity and a right to life consistent with dignity. Is this saying that if you are hooked up to a life-support machine that you will die without dignity? That is an answer only you can answer. If you treat yourself with respect and make wise decision you will not loose any dignity.

Conclusion

Preventing a person to live their life out the way they want to is a social justice issue. Playing God and prolonging ones life and preventing a natural path of life, is also a justice issue. With today s technology almost anything is possible, but that does not mean that everyone wants to deal with today s technology. There are very few ways to consider a person dead, and with advanced technology soon there will be even fewer ways.