

Appendix 1

Interview Guide

Views and envisioned roles of palliative care physicians in euthanasia

1. I would like to open by simply asking you for your personal and professional views on euthanasia.
2. Are there any particular personal or professional experiences that have led to your stance as regards to euthanasia?
3. What do you think the impact of legalizing euthanasia will be on medical education in general and palliative care education specifically? Do you think we should teach medical students how to perform euthanasia?
4. Do you think that euthanasia should be within the role of a physician? Why or why not? If not, why do you think that many physicians who are not palliative care specialists do view it as potentially being part of their role?
5. Who should determine the role of physicians on end of life care? Physicians alone? Physicians in consultation with government and citizens? Other bodies?
6. Could it be that a demand for euthanasia is a blow to our professional pride as palliative care physicians? What do you think about that?
7. What do you think about Bill 52, the new legislation?
 - a. How do you think Bill 52 will impact on the access to palliative care services? On the development of palliative care?
 - b. On the care of your palliative patients?
 - c. On future changes in hospital policies regarding end of life care?
 - d. What will be your role, once euthanasia is accessible, with patients and families that are asking for euthanasia? Would you accompany any of your patients who asked for euthanasia?
 - e. How do you think this hospital should organize itself to offer euthanasia?
8. What is the role of palliative care within a system that legalizes euthanasia (or assisted suicide)? What is the role of PCPs that work within such a system - how do you think that palliative care teams can continue to reduce suffering in the face of the new laws that are coming? How can they continue to advocate for quality end of life care in the new reality of a public that has fought and won for the right to die on request?
9. People on the outside find it difficult to understand what the difference is between palliative sedation and euthanasia. Say you had to sedate someone who had a 1-2 month prognosis for really intractable symptoms. How would you explain to someone on the outside that palliative sedation and euthanasia feel very different to you? If you were not to provide artificial hydration and nutrition why is one killing the person and the other not?
10. How comfortable will you be with palliative care colleague who you may know who will perform euthanasia? Non-palliative colleagues?
11. Surveys (e.g. by the College des Médecins, and Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians) have suggested that while physicians in Quebec generally support Bill 52, palliative care physicians across Canada are generally opposed to the legalization of euthanasia. Why do you think there is such a difference of opinion between palliative care specialists and other physicians?

12. A researcher reported at the palliative care congress that according to the briefs presented to the commission, the public and others may view palliative care physicians as being naive and patronizing. What do you think of that opinion?
13. Quebec palliative care physicians have stated in the media that underlying the euthanasia debate is the citizens' fear of illness, dying and suffering. May I ask: what would you say are your own fears and concerns about your own eventual end of life care? How do these impact (or not) how you view Bill 52?
14. In what ways, if any, do religious frameworks inform your opinions on ethical issues in end-of-life care? How would you position yourself on the political spectrum ranging from far right to far left? In what ways, if any, do your political affiliations, views, or commitments inform your opinions on ethical issues in end-of-life care?
15. Do you have any other views (philosophical? cultural?) of the issue that you would like to discuss?
16. Any final comments?

Thank you very much for your participation!