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| **Belgium nurses admit killing without consent** |

A high proportion of deaths classed as euthanasia in Belgium have involved patients who have not requested that a doctor ends their lives, a new study has found.

Researchers have discovered that seriously ill or elderly patients taken to hospital are often given lethal doses of drugs to end their lives even though they have not asked to be killed. This practice is against the law in Belgium. Critics say that it is barely distinguishable from murder.

Voluntary euthanasia, where patients request that a doctor ends their lives, has been permitted in the country for the last eight years.

It is found that a fifth of nurses interviewed by researchers admitted that they had been involved in the euthanasia of a patient. However what is quite worrying is that nearly half of these nurses – 120 out of 248 also admitted that they had taken part in “termination” of patients’ lives without their request or consent.  That is murder.

Dr Peter Saunders, director of the Care Not Killing alliance, an umbrella group of more than 50 British medical charities opposed to euthanasia said: “Once you legalise any form of euthanasia you inevitably get people pushing the boundaries. Once you have legalised voluntary euthanasia, involuntary euthanasia will follow”. It appears that around half of euthanasia cases are occurring outside the law in Belgium without the request of the patient. This has shaken peoples’ trust in nurses because they have been traditionally viewed as the patient’s advocate and not someone who might be part of the decision to end their lives (without their explicit consent)”.

The rationale behind this euthanasia way of thinking is that killing is an acceptable answer to human suffering. So when doctors and nurses allow involuntary euthanasia they assume they are doing the best for the patient by cutting short their lives.  This is a sorry state of affairs and far removed from the Christian ideal of care for the most vulnerable in our society.

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