End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Dr John F Travers

Assisted suicide and euthanasia - A Gorbals GP's Personal View
I understand that the committee might have an interest in individual views from members of the caring professions. Please forgive me if I am misinformed.

I qualified as a doctor 31 years ago and have worked in a highly deprived practice in Glasgow as a full time GP for the last 27 years.

In that time, I have only once been asked by a patient to aid him to take his life. I assured him that I would do everything to prevent him from suffering but would not help him to kill himself. This charming and intelligent gentleman later died peacefully surrounded by his family and friends.

I have been privileged to be involved in the terminal care of hundreds of patients in my career. In all but a handful were we able to provide adequate symptom relief and allow them to die with dignity.

Offering terminal care for a patient can be a most rewarding activity for medical and nursing staff.

I firmly believe that the opportunity to care for a husband, a wife, a parent or a child during their last illness is also the climax of a loving relationship and is beneficial to the subsequent grieving process.

I hope that you will consider the experiences of people such as myself when making the very difficult decisions which you face.

Dr John F Travers

2 May 2010