I wish to make the following points with reference to the above bill.

1. I do not think it is fair on a doctor to be put in the position of being asked to assist a patient to end their life. Doctors take an oath to preserve life, and to do no harm. If a patient asks his gp to assist in this, the gp can refuse, but trust is lost and the patient has to go elsewhere. The doctor feels bad the patient is let down. If a patient tell his doctor that life is intolerable, how does the doctor react? does he immediately tell him about the bill or does he try to assist medically with drugs and therapy? If he does not tell the patient about the bill is he guilty of withholding information, if he does tell him is he pressurising him?

2. I feel at 16 a person is too young to make the decision to end their life. Many teenagers go through a stage of depression, surely they should not be able to throw their life away. For ill youngsters there are new advances in medicine all the time and at such a young age they must have a chance.

3. How can a doctor be completely sure that a patient is not being talked in to taking their life by a family member or because they feel they are a burden to family?

4. How can a doctor be sure that the person willing to assist is not a relative or a person who could gain from the death? Will lawyers be involved to research anyone who is willing to witness or indeed do the deed?

5. No evidence is required to be put forward as to the patients mental state apart from a psychiatrist stating the patient is capable of making the decision, surely their mental state should be noted.

6. Many elderly people and indeed terminally ill people will be afraid to go into hospital for fear of their death being hastened as they may feel it is legal for this to happen.

When abortion was made legal in this country there were certain conditions before a pregnancy could be terminated, but much of that has fallen by the wayside. I fear that this could happen in assisted suicide too. It is known that already in Holland there are cases of 'physician assisted suicides' going unreported.

Anne Mathers
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