End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Miss Robyn Watt

Do you agree a person should be able to request end of life assistance from a registered medical practitioner?

Absolutely not. The first thing you learn in medical school is ‘do no harm’. Whether or not this bill eventually goes through, there is absolutely no place for a registered medical practitioner to be involved in assisted suicide. Doctors killing patients is unethical in the extreme. The law recognizes that killing another human being is immoral and illegal – there is no way that any legislation, safeguards, or ‘compassion’ can change this fact.

Are you satisfied with the two categories of people who would qualify to be assisted under the terms of the Bill?

The category of ‘finds life intolerable’ is so vague and hazy that it could apply to any one at any point in life. More so, there is no way of effectively clarifying this category successfully without leaving significant loopholes in it.

Do you consider the level and nature of safeguards as set out in the Bill to be appropriate?

They are frightfully inappropriate. The apparent safeguards laboured in the Bill are little more than camouflage for the underlying ethical error and the extreme proposals.

Do you have any other considerations on the Bill not included in answers to the above questions?

Due to the fact that there is no ‘conscience clause’ (a fact which in itself is ridiculous and reveals again how little informed thought has gone into this Bill), you would see many Doctors and medical students (including myself) leave the profession. There would be absolutely no compatibility in staying a medic and having this Bill in practice.

Even if the difficulties in this Bill were ironed out, there would still be absolutely no place for assisted suicide in Scotland.

Please listen to the people who are most aware on this issue – who deal with these decisions every day, who are far more aware of all the surrounding issues but who are also not immune to having a personal awareness of this – doctors, and other medical professionals also have heartwrenching stories of terminal illness and suffering and know how difficult these situations can be. However, they also have a far deeper insight into the situation to know that there is no need of this bill, that it is life-threatening for a far wider group than it intends, and it would be a horrifying step back in the NHS in the UK.

Miss Robyn Watt.
3\textsuperscript{rd} year Medical Student, Edinburgh University.

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