

**Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021**

**Submission No.:** 165  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Position:** I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill  
**Comments in relation to:** Other  
**Attachments:** No attachment

**Submitter Comments:**

My story

It was Day 7 of watching our dying stepfather, brother, husband, and friend, starve and dehydrate until his organs shut down and can no longer sustain his life.

I cannot express to you the cruelty and distress of this dear man's dying process. We should be able to choose a dignified and respectful end-of-life for him after he lost the capacity to do so. Our loved one was receiving drugs that consisted of pain relief and sedatives. He was unconscious, and appeared relaxed, but through his gasps, furrowing of brow and change of skin tone he was able to show us the pain he was in. When the nurses come to care for him, he moaned in pain. When the nurses tended to his needs and administered his drugs, he winced in pain, despite their gentleness. It was not only torture for him, it was distressing for his loved ones at his side.

The days were endless, but we maintained our bedside vigil, having our last slumber party and giving the gift of company in his final moments. Playing his favourite music, asking him what he wants to watch on the telly (even though he doesn't answer), telling funny stories and having loving discussions about what an awesome and courageous person he was.

Every day we had to beg his palliative care doctor for more pain relief, as we could see he was still experiencing pain and distress. Due to his long-term use of pain relief, he had built up a tolerance and this was not fully appreciated by the doctor.

We have shed many tears over this tortured death. There is no relief for us from the all-consuming frustration at a system that allows a fellow human-being to suffer like this. How is this humane?? Where is the Duty of Care to do the best for end-of-life patients?

Whilst we understand the Hypocratic Oath states that "I will not give a lethal drug to anyone", it also states "I will do no harm or injustice". Doing harm and injustice is exactly what is being done to patients by letting them die from starvation, dehydration, and organ failure!

The nurses and support staff are our superheros, and we don't know how they go through these hideous ordeals. We feel concerned for their mental health. Nurses are not just caring for patients who are dying, but the relatives and friends who are also drowning in their emotions and totally scarred for the rest of their lives at witnessing such a bitter end. Governments seem to have concern for nurses in COVID-19 circumstances – how about we start to think about their mental health in watching people suffer in death??

LETTING SOMEONE STARVE AND DEHYDRATE, TO A POINT WHERE THEIR ORGANS HAVE TO SHUT DOWN ONE BY ONE SO THEY CAN DIE IS TANTAMOUNT TO TORTURE AND SHOULD BE DECLARED A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. PLEASE STOP THE SUFFERING OF PATIENTS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AND THE NURSES. LET THE FAMILY MAKE THE DECISION TO END THEIR LIFE, WHERE THE PATIENT IS NOT ABLE TO. THEIR LAST GIFT. Please change the laws! We wouldn't do this to animals! We shouldn't do it to humans.

Please ask yourself – Would I want this for me? Would I want this for my loved one? Let me tell you – you would not – this is a cruel end. In our case our loved one has been grappling his illness and its complications for more than 39 years, and has spent more than ½ his life attending medical appointments and in hospital for months on end. This is a brutal end to a cruel life, and it doesn't need to be this way.

RESPECT and DIGNITY in death now! VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING NOW! Start the conversation!  
Create the change!