
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 28 June 2021 10:33 PM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: VAD

Listen up please,

I see the right to die without excruciating pain and the right to die in nature's, or even God's, time, a human right. Human science can preserve life: long beyond our natural limit. I therefore see volunteer assisted dying as being a different side of the exact same coin.

I was privileged to sit with my father as he died from unrecoverable fall-related brain injuries from his long battle with Parkinson's disease; the doctors concurred that the injury was 100% fatal, and that a 20 year old could only survive for 2 or 3 days with such damage. Dad was a fighter- he had spent the last 10 years of his incredible life caring for my amputee mother and my disabled sister who hadn't been to the toilet independently for 20 years. My dear sister died at home with my octogenarian father administering morphine, and he assisted with many of the other tasks associated with caring for someone with terminal ovarian cancer.

Dad had a live instinct stronger than most of us. He had tried every scientific and medical approach to manage his disease. He was caring for his 82 year old wife the night that the bleed was rendering him unable to remember the day of the week. His pupils dilated yet he fought on.

Once at hospital and in an induced coma, it took [REDACTED] a whole 7 days to die. He was 83 and had advocated for his own right to die with dignity for as long as I could remember- [REDACTED]

There was no need for him to have lasted long enough to waste down to about 40 kilos and change to an unearthly grey. His being kept alive in that incurable state was not God or nature's work.

My sister had a life of pain due to her profound disability. At 57, she had the mind of a 3 year old and we spent many hours doing Frozen puzzles and pick up sticks. Sheridan was mentally unable to give consent. My parents and sister cared for her and she had a very good quality of life until cancer could no longer be abated. The last 4 or 5 days were cruel. Given that my parents had legal control over every other aspect of her life, and that there was certainty that the cancer would kill her, they should have been given the right to decide how long her despicable suffering should go on. One day the nurses took 11 litres of her bodily fluid to the bin.

Volunteer assisted dying is exactly that. People who can often don't. But as an MS sufferer, I know that a pleasant family gathering would be a preferable way to go out, that the other options I can think of, if ever it gets too much. I, like my father, would be unlikely to ever see a reason for stop living. However, I would certainly like the legal right to choose if I could no longer breathe unassisted. Because that 'assistance', as I sad, would actually be a side of the same coin as assisted dying.

This legislation must be allowed. This is nothing to do with suicide or playing God. It's just being reasonable. We pay taxes, this is a democracy.

Thank you,

Lenore Smith.