

THE PSYCHIATRIST'S POINT OF VIEW ABOUT RESEARCH IN ETHICS – EUTHANASIA AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

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Some of the research on ethics in palliative care, such as surveys focusing on the position of individuals with regard to ethical questions are colored by biographical and contextual factors of the participants. Thus, ethical questions, dealing with concepts such as autonomy and beneficence, are contaminated by psychological aspects. A qualitative analysis of a recent survey of the members of the Swiss Association for Palliative Care – assessing their positions regarding “euthanasia” - revealed that the same categories of arguments were used by those opposing and those favoring direct active euthanasia. This result illustrates the complexity of such surveys and the difficulty of their interpretation. In addition, the question arises of how ethical arguments of individuals are constructed and how the apparent ethical argumentation is related to deep convictions which's origin may be closer to psychology than ethics. The above mentioned survey will serve as an illustration for the discussion of “a psychiatrist's point about view on research in ethics”.