

## EUROPEAN STUDY ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS EUTHANASIA AND PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE IN CANCER PATIENTS WITH SHORT LIFE EXPECTANCY

Sissel Johansen, MA<sup>a</sup>; Lars Johan Materstvedt, PhD<sup>a,b,c</sup>; Jon Håvard Loge, MD PhD<sup>b,d</sup>, Stein Kaasa, MD PhD<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Unit for Applied Clinical Research, Faculty of Medicine, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, Norway; <sup>b</sup>The Norwegian Cancer Society, Oslo, Norway; <sup>c</sup>Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, NTNU, Trondheim, Norway; <sup>d</sup>Department of Behavioral Sciences in Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo, Norway

### a) Object of study:

Few studies have asked this category of patients about their attitudes towards, and wishes for, euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. An EAPC/NTNU study on these topics will be performed in seven European countries: Norway 150 respondents; the Netherlands 100; Germany 100; Great Britain 200; France 100; Spain 100; and Italy 100 – i.e. a total of 850.

### b) Method:

Structured interviews using the newly developed questionnaire, Patients' Attitudes towards Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide Scale (PA-EPASS). Cross-cultural comparison will be carried out.

### c) Results:

Data collection is scheduled to start in Norway in January 2002. This is an EAPC Research Network study, with Trondheim as the initiating and co-ordinating centre. National co-ordinators in each country will be identified by the Network.

### d) Discussion:

Until this date, there has been no cross-cultural, multi-national, study of this kind and of this magnitude. The selected countries represent different medical, social, cultural, and religious traditions, factors that are likely to shape attitudes towards, and wishes for, euthanasia/PAS in various ways. The study is expected to generate entirely new scientific knowledge. Presumably, this knowledge will also be of clinical importance.