

EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE

Examining the evidence from Belgium – one of only five countries where euthanasia is practised legally – an international panel of experts considers the implications of legalised euthanasia and assisted suicide. Looking at the issue from an international perspective, the authors have written an invaluable in-depth analysis of the ethical aspects of this complex area. The discussion forms a solid foundation for informed debate about assisted dying. With contributors from a broad range of disciplines, this is ideal for students, academics, legislators and anyone interested in legal, medical, social and philosophical ethics. This book is a vital and timely examination of a growing phenomenon and one of the most challenging ethical questions of our time.

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This series of books was founded by Cambridge University Press with Alexander McCall Smith as its first editor in 2003. It focuses on the law's complex and troubled relationship with medicine across both the developed and the developing world. Since the early 1990s, we have seen in many countries increasing resort to the courts by dissatisfied patients and a growing use of the courts to attempt to resolve intractable ethical dilemmas. At the same time, legislatures across the world have struggled to address the questions posed by both the successes and the failures of modern medicine, while international organisations such as the WHO and UNESCO now regularly address issues of medical law.

It follows that we would expect ethical and policy questions to be integral to the analysis of the legal issues discussed in this series. The series responds to the high profile of medical law in universities, in legal and medical practice, as well as in public and political affairs. We seek to reflect the evidence that many major health-related policy debates in the United Kingdom, Europe and the international community involve a strong medical law dimension. With that in mind, we seek to address how legal analysis might have a trans-jurisdictional and international relevance. Organ retention, embryonic stem cell research, physician assisted suicide and the allocation of resources to fund health care are but a few examples among many. The emphasis of this series is thus on matters of public concern and/or practical significance. We look for books that could make a difference to the development of medical law and enhance the role of medico-legal debate in policy circles. That is not to say that we lack interest in the important theoretical dimensions of the subject, but we aim to ensure that theoretical debate is grounded in the realities of how the law does and should interact with medicine and health care.

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Lessons from Belgium

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*To Kevin Fitzpatrick, who showed what it can be both to live
well and to die well and whose contribution to this book is
much more than the sum of his words.*

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