

## Vocabulary of Actively and Intentionally Ending Life

For the purposes of the 2019 Royal College of Physicians poll, the RCP defines 'assisted dying' as:

*The supply by a doctor of a lethal dose of drugs to a patient who is terminally ill, meets certain criteria that will be defined by law, and requests those drugs in order that they might be used by the person concerned to end their life.*

The RCP is referring solely to the involvement of doctors in bringing about the premature death of an individual and is distinct from palliative care.

- 'Assisted dying' means bringing about death. It is physician assisted suicide.
- Palliative care controls symptoms or distress whilst a person dies.
- Expert and appropriate symptom control with sedatives, opioids etc. does not hasten the dying process.

**The UK:** [Assisted Suicide](#) has meaning in [law](#)

- 'an act capable of encouraging or assisting the suicide or attempted suicide of another person, and that act was intended to encourage or assist suicide or an attempt at suicide'
- Adding Physician or Doctor makes clear whose action it is

**Canada:** [Medically Aid in Dying \(MAID\)](#)

MAID includes clinician assisted suicide and physician administered euthanasia

This involved doctors, nurses and others such as pharmacists. It is defined by eligibility criteria that are listed as:

- be eligible for health services funded by the federal government, or a province or territory (or during the applicable minimum period of residence or waiting period for eligibility)
  - generally, visitors to Canada are not eligible for medical assistance in dying
- be at least 18 years old and mentally competent. This means being capable of making health care decisions for yourself.
- have a [grievous and irremediable medical condition](#)
- make a voluntary request for medical assistance in dying that is not the result of outside pressure or influence
- give [informed consent](#) to receive medical assistance in dying

**Oregon:** [Death With Dignity Act \(DWDA\)](#)

This also involves doctors and has eligibilities, but is confined to physician assisted suicide

**Netherlands:** [Physician Assisted Dying](#) & **Belgium:** [Belgium Act on Euthanasia](#)

Their definitions are very clear

*'Euthanasia is performed by the attending physician administering a fatal dose of a suitable drug to the patient on his or her express request. The relevant Dutch legislation also covers physician-assisted suicide (where the physician supplies the drug but the patient administers it). Palliative sedation is not a form of euthanasia: the patient is simply rendered unconscious with pain reducing drugs and eventually dies from natural causes.'*

Belgium has now extended their law to apply to *mature minors*

Some people welcomed it, underlining the "pioneering" role Belgium played in establishing a legal framework for euthanasia, which was presented as the ultimate

“humanitarian act” of which any patient, major or minor, should be able to take advantage. In contrast, others in Parliament and in civil society opposed the extension of the law. Among these were nearly two hundred paediatricians and paediatric palliative care specialists.

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