

Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill

Islamic Medical Association-UK

We would like to submit our Muslim medical response regarding your public Consultation on Assisted Suicide(Scottish) Bill.

Looking to your Consultation and the 11 questions you put, we would like to OPPOSE STRONGLY this bill as a MEDICAL organisation and as Muslim doctors .

In fact , your all questions can not be answered directly and fully as we are not agreeing at all on the PRINCIPLE OF YOUR BILL ON ASSISTED SUICIDE !

Almost all the questions you asked do not apply because of this major difference between us.

Our response today is based on both :

-FIRST: Religious/Islamic reasons

-SECOND: Medical/Humane reasons

FIRST: RELIGIOUS/ISLAMIC REASONS:

All Muslims and Scottish Muslim believe in the SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE and that the end of any human's life is FIXED only by our Almighty GOD,the Creator and the Owner of all life.

Death should end naturally as ordained by GOD and without any interference/decision from the person's himself or herself and without the assistance of a doctor or a court or any body else.

This is why: ASSISTED SUICIDE,SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA ARE ALL FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM.

No one should have the intention to kill himself or herself ,even with the assistance of somebody else.

Doing or organising one's killing/ending his/her is BLASPHEMOUS.

Hell is the outcome and punishment in the after-life.

The one deciding and organising to end his/her life and the doctor or the relative helping are all guilty in the eyes of GOD.

To help someone to end his/her life is criminal ,according to the teachings of Islam , whatever the intention or motivation.

There are many verses in the final Holy Book :AL QUR'AN which emphasize these basic Pro-life islamic beliefs:

In the Name of GOD,the Most Compassionate the Most Merciful

"DO NOT KILL YOURSELVES, FOR VERILY ALLAH/GOD HAS BEEN TO YOU MOST MERCIFUL"

(chapter 4,verse 29)

"...TAKE NOT LIFE WHICH ALLAH HAS MADE SACRED"

(chapter 6,verse 151)

"AND(ALLAH) IS THE ONE WHO GAVE YOU LIFE, THEN SHALL HE ORDAIN YOU TO DIE, THEN SHALL HE GIVE YOU YOUR LIFE AGAIN, TRULY MANKIND IS UNGRATEFUL"

(chapter 22,verse 66)

There is also a clear saying of the final prophet Muhammad(peace be upon him) which has PROHIBITED all types/methods of suicide like: taking a poison/overdose, jumping from a mountain/high building or by using an iron instrument(gun/knife)

All types of Assisted suicide and Euthanasia(voluntary or non voluntary ,direct or indirect ,active or passive are all prohibited in Islam(as stated by the European Council for Ifta and Research).

It is forbidden to end deliberately(by intention) one's life or to hasten the death of any person.

Food and fluid are basic human rights and should be provided for every human being whether one is sick or healthy.

It is prohibited too to stop any life saving treatment.

We Muslims OPPOSE too any measure done to STOP/WITHDRAW food and fluid from any patient, whether he/she is conscious or not(in coma), child or old, disabled or with terminal illness.

Any medicine/analgesic which hasten death is to be avoided too.

So called living will(death/killing will) is prohibited in islam, but Muslims are requested to do quickly during their life:one type of will which deal with assets finance and the distribution of the inheritance.(OUR LIVING WILL IS TO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF THE CREATOR..!)

No believer has the right to decide about ending his/her life at any time and at any stage of the illness!

Muslims believe that for every disease there is a cure, as stated by the prophet:HOPE THERAPY! and we believe also that we do not own our bodies, our bodies belong to the Creator, the Designer, the real Owner !

Muslims believe in accepting any hardship suffering or illness and to be patient and tolerant, and this will take away all the previous sins (purification)/SAINT-LIKE ..! but we first should try before to avoid any illness and if one is ill, it is very encouraged to take the best treatment or best effective analgesic in order to relieve himself/herself from any pain.

Palliative care/Hospices are recommended in Islam and the best hospice for the Muslim is to die at home naturally with family members around.

This is the BEST DIGNIFIED DEATH/BEST DEATH ,natural death according to GOD's plan and not according to one's decision or the decision of the doctor or family or the court.

This is also for THE BEST INTEREST for every Muslim patient who did not disobey GOD at the end of his/her life, by having a natural death according to the Will of GOD.!

Muslim doctors/any doctor, should have the HUMAN RIGHT:CONSCIENCIOUS/RELIGIOUS OBJECTION (Conscience clause) to avoid any step which will hasten the death or end the life of any patient.

For a doctor to end the life of any patient, even following patient's request, or to help someone for Assisted suicide is the BIGGEST BETRAYAL of the doctor and is very wrong and sinful.

Life is a great GIFT from GOD ,to be cherished and to be protected by all means and by the laws of the land.

Muslim doctors, Muslim nurses and Muslim patients all share this basic belief and attitude to human life: FULL RESPECT AND FULL PROTECTION OF ANY HUMAN LIFE(PRO-LIFE),and to avoid been involved in any case of Assisted suicide.

This is the culture and beliefs of the Scottish Muslims and all Muslims in Britain/EU and all over the world.

It is definitely FOR THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PATIENT ...at least to avoid going to the hellfire !

IT IS THE SAME BELIEF WHICH IS SHARED BY MILLIONS OF SCOTTISH AND BRITISH CHRISTIANS.

SECOND:MEDICAL HUMANE REASONS:

-The sacred duty of any doctor is to PROTECT/TREAT AND SAVE THE LIFE of any patient.

-A doctor can not be a KILLER ! this is contradictory to the Hippocratic Oath !

-The trust between the doctor and the patient is LOST when the doctor is found to be involved in the killing of patients !

-In this Bill: we do not see this important and basic medical practice: the EXAMINATION of the patient !

-Even there is no assessment by a psychiatrist !

-There are sometimes hidden or cases of subclinical depression which are difficult to diagnose or to notice and which make people suicidal.

Here we need to treat depression in order to clear the suicidal symptoms.

There are today many effective and successful treatments for depression

- Alcoholism too, can make many people depressed and suicidal,here we need to address the cause: Alcoholism.
- Generally we all should deal with the causes of feeling suicidal.
- We have today a big hope with the continuous progress of medicine/drugs and medical technology and research and new treatment or cure and in discovering stronger effective analgesics .
- Some patients/people feel as burden on the family or the NHS ...This feeling should not exist at all in any civilised society!

Every patient/person should feel loved and wanted by the family,society and the NHS.

- Hospice facility/Palliative care and counselling should be made easily available to help any one who feels suicidal, and we do need to open many more hospices today as only few are available !.
- If Assisted suicide is made legal,there will be a lot of pressure on many vulnerable old,lonely,disabled and chronically sick people to ask for Assisted suicide ,especially with the present difficult climate of recession and financial difficulty(SLIPPERY SLOPE !).
- Already when Assisted suicide was made legal as in Oragon in the US,the number of cases have risen hugely to 450%?
- It is a fact that hard cases(very small in number) will always make bad laws for all !. We have to respect well the majority view and help the minority in counselling and in addressing their problems and feelings.
- And if Assisted suicide is legalised ,safeguards are difficult to make in order to protect all members of the society.
- Not only that ,but also the majority of the Disabled groups oppose it too.
- And this was too,the view of 87% of those who made their submissions on the Bill before that.

Certainly your Bill on Assisted suicide is not in the PUBLIC INTEREST and not for the BEST INTEREST of the patient.

It is UNCHRISTIAN too!

Scottish Muslims,Scottish Christians and people with other faiths and no faith would like to keep the law as it is now;

ASSISTED SUICIDE AND EUTHANASIA ,SHOULD BE KEPT ILLEGAL for the safety of all of us .

WE REJECT FULLY THIS BILL AND IT SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN IMMEDIATELY !
Any one or any doctor found to be assisting any one or a patient in been killed(Assisted suicide) , he/she should be definitely prosecuted and punished !

Dr A.Majid Katme(MBBCH,DPM)
Spokesman: Islamic Medical Association/UK