



SCAN ME

# Legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide: advanced cancer patient opinions. Cross-sectional multicenter study

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## BACKGROUND

**New law in 2016**

Authorisation of Deep and continuous sedation

Ban on euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide

96% of French people are in favour of euthanasia

Fewer than 50% of physicians are in favour of euthanasia

**BUT we didn't know anything about the wishes of patients**

## METHODOLOGY

**National multicenter prospective study Between 2016-2020**

14 palliative care units (PCU) Patients hospitalised in a PCU or followed by a palliative care team in hospital or at home

Patients with locally advanced or metastatic cancer and requiring palliative care

One Questionnaire

410 approached  
331 participated

Table 1 Individuals with or without a favourable opinion about legalising

	All	
	N=331	
	MaSD	
	N (%)	MD
Age	65.8±12.7	13
Sex		
Male	161 (48.6)	0
Female	170 (51.4)	
Marital situation		
Couple	187 (57)	3
Single	141 (43)	
Have children		
Yes	272 (82.7)	2
No	57 (17.3)	
High school education		
No	160 (48.9)	4
Yes	167 (51.1)	
Family support (visits)		
Every day	168 (56.2)	32
Less than every day	103 (34.5)	
No visit	28 (9.4)	
Believe in God		
Yes	175 (54.0)	7
No	149 (46.0)	
Practice religion		
Yes	46 (19.8)	99
No	186 (80.2)	
Hospitalised patient		
Yes	278 (84.8)	3
No	50 (15.2)	
Cancer site		
Digestive	69 (20.8)	3
Gynaecologic	57 (17.2)	
Head and neck	42 (12.7)	
Lung	64 (19.3)	
Others*	96 (30.3)	
Metastatic sites		
Yes	274 (86.7)	15
No	42 (13.3)	
Treatment during curable phase		
Adjuvant chemotherapy	93 (28.1)	0
Neoadjuvant chemotherapy	27 (8.2)	0
Radiotherapy	90 (27.2)	0
Surgery	101 (30.5)	0
Immunotherapy	14 (4.2)	0
Target therapy	12 (3.6)	0
Treatments during incurable phase		
Chemotherapy	235 (71.0)	0
Radiotherapy	106 (32.0)	0
Surgery	58 (17.5)	0
Immunotherapy	52 (15.7)	0
Target therapy	32 (9.7)	0
Hormonotherapy	10 (3.0)	0

\*Dermatologic, haematologic, cerebral, sarcoma, urologic.  
MD, missing data.

## RESULTS

Favorable opinion for deep and continuous sedation

- 89.7 in intractable suffering
- 65.6% in psychological suffering without physical suffering
- 82.2% at the patient's request, when he/she has decided to discontinue life-sustaining treatment

Opinion about legalising physician-assisted suicide

48.6%  
21.6%

Opinion about legalising euthanasia

52%  
22%

Unfavorable opinion

significantly more often believed in God and practiced a religion



## DISCUSSION

- Less favorable opinion in patient with advanced cancer  
=> Why?  
Because of good care? Palliative care?  
**Need others studies !!**
- Determinant of unfavorable opinion in literature:  
« younger age, lower religiosity, higher education and higher socioeconomic status were the most consistent predictors of endorsement of euthanasia and assisted suicide. » (1)

In France « 49% of French people declared believing in God as opposed to 66% in 1947 » (2)

A better understanding of patients' beliefs is essential for providing precise information and/or interventions tailored to the palliative context.  
=> **Spiritual care ?**

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## References :

- (1) Castelli Dransart DA, Lapierre S, Erlangsen A, et al. A systematic review of older adults' request for or attitude toward Euthanasia or assisted-suicide. *Aging Ment Health* 2021;25:420-30.
- (2) IFOP, Le rapport des Français à la religion, August 2021

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