

Worries of future drives assisted suicide

by UPI

PORTLAND, Ore. - Patients in Oregon who request physician aid in dying under the state's Death With Dignity Act say they are worried about future suffering, researchers say.

"Our data suggests that patients who request physician-assisted death do so not because of physical symptoms or their current quality of life," Dr. Linda Ganzini of the Oregon Health & Science University said in a statement.

"They often make their requests based on an anticipation of future suffering.

Fifty-six Oregonians took part in the study -- all had requested physician aid in dying or had contacted an advocacy organization for information. The vast majority of patients were diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Each of these patients was asked to rate on a 5-point scale the importance of 29 factors in influencing their request for aid in dying.

The study, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, found the highest ranked reasons for wanting aid in dying were: wanting to control the circumstances of their death, concerns about future poor quality of life, concerns about future pain, concerns about the future ability to care for oneself, a loss of independence and the desire to die at home.

Among the lowest rated reasons for requesting assistance were: depression, lack of support, financial concerns, current pain and quality of life.

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