Discussion Topic: Euthanasia

Professor Carrier

*As medicine becomes more and more advanced, families are being faced with the difficult situation of deciding when it is in the best interest of a dying loved one to withdraw artificial life-support systems or even to administer an overdose of drugs to end the life of a terminally ill patient. Euthanasia, which comes from the Greek words for "a good death," is a highly controversial subject and one that ties into religion, medicine, ethics, and technology.*

**Vocabulary:**

1. probe

2. judicial

3. indication

4. apparent

5. terminally

6. overdose

7. induced

8. admit

9. aggravate

10. investigation

11. suspicion

12. presume

**Reading:**

**Murder charges in Uruguay probe of hospital deaths**

Murder charges were filed against two male nurses Sunday and a female nurse was charged with covering up a crime in a case involving more than a dozen deaths at two Uruguayan hospitals, judicial officials said. The judge overseeing the case said there was no indication the two male nurses were acting together.  
 Judge Rolando Vomero said after a court hearing that the accused admitted to causing a total of 16 deaths of patients, but added that the investigation continued and the number was not final. He said most of the apparent victims “were not terminally ill.” He said they were injected with overdoses of morphine or aid to “cause death within minutes.”  
 Vomero said one male nurse who worked at both hospitals admitted being involved in five induced deaths, and the other to 11 deaths in one hospital. The judge said that from the evidence gathered so far, it “does not appear that there were any connections” between the two nurses “even though they both worked at the same place.” No further information was released on the three accused nurses because none had a criminal record.  
 Lawyer Ines Massioti, representing one of the nurses charged with “especially aggravated murder,” told reporters that the judge had ruled the suspects could be held in jail while the investigation proceeds. Massioti said her client acted “out of pity.”  
 “After 20 years of working in intensive care, with stress and in contact with death, he could not stand it anymore,” the lawyer said.  
 Earlier in the day, police inspector Jose Luis Roldan said officials were investigating suspicions that some hospital workers had given poison to patients who were in critical condition at the two hospitals. Roldan said the allegations center on the private Sociedad Espanola hospital and the public Maciel Hospital. Officials at both declined to comment.  
 The South American country’s Public Health Ministry issued a statement saying it was cooperating with the investigation into “presumed criminal acts linked to the health area.” It gave no details about the allegations, but said it was conducting its own investigation and expressed “profound concern.” (AP) From [www.koreaherald.com](http://www.koreaherald.com) .

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How do you feel about euthanasia (mercy killing)?
2. If one of your family members was brain dead, what will you do?
3. Do you think that brain dead people are alive or not?
4. Many of the reasons practices like euthanasia and abortion are restricted are religious? Do you think that religious people should be allowed to make decisions for other people who do not share their religion?
5. In society it is perfectly ok to practice euthanasia on animals who are sick or severely injured? Why should humans be any different?
6. Who should make decisions about our personal health?
7. If you were going to make a law allowing euthanasia, what would be the circumstances where it would be allowed?
8. If you were paralyzed and unable to move or talk or even breathe without the help of others or a machine would you want to continue living?
9. Do you think that it is wrong for doctors to keep people alive who are obviously suffering?
10. Do you think that hospitals sometimes do procedures that are unnecessary so that they can get more money from insurance companies?