

Canadian physicians warn the Spanish Parliament about euthanasia

As the Spanish Parliament debates the euthanasia and assisted suicide bill, Canadian physicians feel it is essential to bring to your attention the dangers and failures of the euthanasia and assisted suicide laws in Canada which have been in place since 2016.

Since then, there has been constant pressure to normalize and expand these practices and to abandon the safeguards instituted to protect vulnerable people.

The Canadian government is now looking into extending euthanasia and assisted suicide to children, people with mental illness, and cognitive disorders.

Doctors and hospitals are under pressure to provide euthanasia or to refer cases to another clinician, even when it violates their fundamental principles to do so. (Euthanasia in Canada : A Cautionary Tale, World Medical Journal September 2018).

Dr. Saba alleges that a patient's consent to be euthanized cannot be free and informed if the patient does not have access to the proper health care including palliative care.

Dr. Saba's argument is not theoretical given the report from the Quebec Commission on end of life care. It indicates that the euthanasia laws are not being respected. In Quebec, 52 cases not conforming to the law were performed in 2016-2017.

The lack of health services in the province and particularly palliative care, was denounced recently by the President of the College of Physicians which is the regulatory body for medical practice. The College reported some patients were seeking euthanasia because of the lack of palliative care.

Dr Saba states: "The present Canadian laws are not safe. In the same way the proposed Spanish laws will have the same outcome. You cannot safely put into place euthanasia and assisted suicide without having a comprehensive palliative care system active and running. People need assistance in living and not assistance for suicide."

Dr. Rene Leiva, a family physician contends that the present Canadian laws and proposed Spanish laws do not protect patients from ending their lives prematurely because of feelings of hopelessness, lack of future, feelings of being overwhelmed, being a burden and not having access to medical care which would treat their pain and suffering.

Dr. Laurence Normand-Rivest who is a palliative care physician reminds the world that Canada's present legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide and the proposed Spanish law are contrary to practices in the vast majority of countries around the world. These laws protect the lives of its citizens and particularly those facing disease, disabilities and conditions that could make them candidates for euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The World Medical Association, which comprises 114 countries worldwide, has consistently rejected euthanasia and describes this practice as unethical. Presently only 6 countries of the world have laws legalizing either euthanasia or assisted suicide. This represents less than 2% of the world's population.

Dr. Paul Saba, Dr. Rene Leiva and [\[mC1\]](#) Dr. Laurence Normand-Rivest are members of the **Physicians' Alliance against Euthanasia**, representing more than 1100 Canadian doctors. Contact information : Dr. Paul Saba 001-514-886-3447, pauljsaba@gmail.com