

Anziani ‘stanchi di vivere’ e ‘desiderio di morire’: un’analisi critica del fenomeno e discussione delle sue implicazioni etiche e sociali

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Older People ‘tired of living’ and ‘wish to die’: A Critical Analysis of the Phenomenon and Discussion of its Ethical and Social Implications

Abstract: Some elderly people, especially in Belgium and the Netherlands, claim to be ‘tired of living’. This perception is characterised as suffering caused by the prospect of having to continue living with a very poor quality of life, not primarily caused by a physical or psychiatric illness, and closely associated with a death wish. In recent years, the emergence of movements demanding the ‘right to die’ has posed an ethical dilemma concerning the justifiability of extending the euthanasia procedure to applicants not suffering from an irreversible health condition. This study, using interviews conducted by van Wijngaarden and colleagues with this population group, questions the idea that euthanasia can provide a solution to the existential suffering of these individuals. On the contrary, it sees the need for policies that are more sensitive to promoting the resources of the elderly, capable of responding concretely to their sense of loneliness and uselessness.

Keywords: Euthanasia, Older adults, Wish to die, Bioethics.

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