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Commentary

Assisted dying for mental illness: commentary, Breen

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Assisted dying; human rights; clarity; compassion; death.

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Response

Professor Malhi describes the access to assisted dying under the rubric of parity.[1] What is good for one is good for another – no discrimination. This makes good sense when 'it' is actually a 'good'. Assisted dying by its very nature is a negation. It is the antithesis of a good and as such the parity argument is disingenuous. It is tantamount to saying 'I am as entitled to get shot as you are'. You cannot have parity of esteem for a negative value – it is an oxymoron. This argument is false and attempts to broaden assisted dying to include the mentally ill on a false premise. Let the logic and truth of the situation be clear: to wish good for another is love; to wish evil for another is hatred. Of course, many people have good intentions and want to alleviate suffering but are blinded to the reality of assisted dying, which is the removal of a person's right to life.[2,3] To take life and not to protect and heal or palliate is unjust regardless of the good intention and clouded understanding of the actor. The action itself has a moral value regardless of the intention of the person doing it – we all know it is always wrong to take innocent life, to cheat, to harm others. To agonise over somatic versus psychiatric suffering is not relevant. What is relevant is why assisted dying should be allowed at all since it is a negation of justice based oftentimes on confused compassion and reasoning.

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Declaration of interest

None.

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