

Life-Ending Clinic Now Euthanizing People With Chronic Depression

Belgium made international headlines last week for extending euthanasia to children. Apparently, killing terminally ill children on demand isn't quite edgy enough for the right-to-die camp. Now, a decade after legalizing **euthanasia**, the Netherlands is debating doctor-assisted suicide for depression. Yes, depression.

As if **sex-selective abortion** wasn't immoral enough—and as if opening the door to playing God at the sickbed of young children wasn't appalling enough—it may soon be more convenient to kill off people who suffer from sadness.

Launched in 2012, the Life-Ending Clinic targets people whose family doctors flat-out refuse to help them end their lives. But the clinic isn't merely helping the terminally ill go on to eternity a little sooner than planned to avoid suffering. This death dungeon is essentially murdering people who report chronic depression and don't want to wake up fighting the battle in their mind again tomorrow.

"We consider it self-evident that someone who is terminal can turn to **euthanasia**," Life-Ending Clinic Director Steven Pleiter told *The Daily Beast*. "Now we are entering a phase in which there will be more debate about patients who are not terminally ill, among them psychiatric patients and those with dementia."

What in the world is going on here? I understand how devastating **depression** can be. I suffered with this malady for more than a year—and spent a good part of that year in bed sleeping. I understand the thoughts of hopelessness that come with this disorder. Nevertheless, the role of physicians is to

facilitate medical miracles, not medical massacres.

“Well, they will just kill themselves anyway,” some may say. No, they probably wouldn’t. According to a Mayo Clinic study, outpatients treated for **depression** had a suicide risk of 2 percent. That compares to a 1 percent risk for the general population.

No, people who suffer from depression typically do not commit suicide. And if we make suicide as easy as inserting an IV and listening to some soothing music while a person drifts into the afterlife, we could give the depressed masses motivation to move from their bed to a gurney so doctors can end their life and roll them into the morgue.

Depression has become an epidemic around the world—according to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 10 percent of America is depressed, and it costs employers \$51 billion a year in productivity—but depression is not a new phenomenon. Elijah sat under a broom bush and prayed that he might die (1 Kings 19:4-5), but the Lord didn’t **euthanize** him.

King David knew a thing or two about depression: “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief, yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away” (Ps. 31:9-10). But God went on to use him in mighty ways.

But the *Daily Beast* reports the Life-Ending Clinic director thinks giving psychiatric patients a chance at assisted suicide is important.

“We are dealing with a group of patients that have no other place to go, that are also being ignored by psychiatry,” Pleiter says. “We are looking at their requests seriously, we treat them in all fairness. I believe it was a deliberate choice for the lawmakers to offer space legally, to which both

patients with physical as well as psychological problems can turn.”

If we can murder the depressed, where do we go from here? Do we end the lives of the anxious? What if we’re just too stressed out to go on? Can teenagers who had a bad breakup with their boyfriend opt for assisted suicide with (or without) their parents’ permission? Where does the murderous madness end and a respect for the sanctity of life begin? Apparently not in the Netherlands.

The Life-Ending Clinic gives a whole new meaning to the words *slippery slope*. When psychiatrists decide they just don’t feel like listening to **depressed** patients whine anymore, they can just recommend **euthanasia**. *The Daily Best* story ends with this sad tale: “In one particularly disturbing case a 35-year-old woman, the youngest to die since the Dutch law was introduced, got help killing herself in 2012. Excerpts of her file were published by Dutch national newspaper Trouw and read like a sad story of clinical depression. But the file also shows an extended period of hopefulness. Not enough apparently. A team of doctors decided there was no cause to wait, and ended her life.”

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor at Charisma. She is also the author of several books, including *The Making of a Prophet*. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.