

13.1.2 Questionnaire on the “A death of one’s own”

The characters – Describe briefly the situation of each of the main characters of the movie

Questions of life, death, pain and dignity :

- What do you fear the most: death or constant pain?
- At what point would you deem life unbearable? Consider Jim and Kitty on their moving deadlines;
- Under what conditions would you like others to: withhold surgery? withhold medication? withhold fluids and nutrition? actively terminate your life? Consider Kitty’s and Ricky’s cases

Questions about the role of physicians and medicine :

- Is the job of physician to fight death no matter what it takes? When should a physician stop the fight and retreat? What does Jim’s wife say about the last weeks of her mother?
- How can one argue that Voluntary Assisted Suicide is compatible with the doctor’s oath? How can one argue that Voluntary Assisted Suicide is an “act of love”? Consider Kitty’s doctor.
- What is the difference between voluntary assisted suicide and euthanasia? What are, if there are any, the morally relevant differences between the two? Consider Jim’s and Kitty’s cases.

Questions about definitions :

- What do you think of the distinction between “making the patient comfortable” (“terminally sedated”), and assisting suicide? What about providing neither food nor fluid?
- Which one is more compassionate? Help die right away or let die from agonizing death?
- Which is morally preferable?

Questions about decision making :

- Who is to decide on what to do when the patient is mentally unable to make his decision on his or her own? Ricky’s wife vs. Jim’s wife (for her husband vs. her mother)

A duty to die? :

- Who takes care of the care taker? Jim’s wife struggle
- What are the prospects for health care costs in our aging society? To what extent should this situation be taken into account when deciding on policies concerning Voluntary Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia?