

18/10/17

The Principal Research Officer,
 Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices,
 Legislative Assembly of Western Australia,
 4 Harvest Terrace
 West Perth WA 6004.



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am almost 92 years of age and support end of life choices.

My decision is reinforced by at least two experiences in my life.

In 1956 I did some voluntary work at a care unit in Claremont. At the time there were two patients in particular whose fate was most disturbing. One lady was totally unable to move or to make herself in any way understood. We had to give her a bath everyday to avoid bedsores. She screamed blue murder during the whole process.

What was her quality of life?.

The other was severely arthritic and the least movement made her scream- she too had to be showered everyday.

My mother died of pancreatic cancer in February 1981. She too was in appalling pain for at least six weeks. She was determined to stay at home and nurses came every day to administer drugs to lessen the pain but these drugs were not effective. At that time heroin was not allowed which apparently could have helped.

I realise that drugs and treatment have vastly improved since then but even these drugs may only render their recipients comatose. Certainly it is to be welcomed but is that living?.

It is not only the pain that should be considered – dignity, independence may also be vital to many of us. Surely the choice should be with the individual concerned?

Those whose beliefs discourage such choice should allow others to make their own decisions.

I am well aware that careful safeguards will need to be put in place but I am sure that such safeguards can be arranged, especially since we now have the practical experience of so many other administrations in other parts of the world.

Ours is a democracy - let this be put to the vote.

Sincerely,