

## Publication

### Continuous Deep Sedation and Euthanasia in Pediatrics: Does One Really Exclude the Other for Terminally Ill Patients?

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Debates on morally acceptable and lawful end-of-life (EOL) practices in pediatrics were reignited by the recent amendment in Belgian law to allow euthanasia for minors of any age who meet the criteria for capacity. Euthanasia and its legalization in pediatrics are often opposed based on the availability of aggressive palliative sedation. For terminally ill patients, this type of sedation is often identified as continuous and deep sedation until death (CDS). We demonstrate that this reasoning is based on flawed assumptions: (1) CDS is a morally preferable alternative to euthanasia; (2) CDS can meet the same patient needs as euthanasia; (3) children lack the capacity and experience to make EOL decisions; (4) unlike euthanasia, CDS does not raise capacity issues. Our aim is not to reject CDS as a valid option at the EOL, nor to offer a clear-cut defense of euthanasia for minors, but to emphasize the ethical issues with both practices.

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