Under what circumstances should there be the right to choose death? Does the physician assist the patient in terminating his life? By euthanasia bill, is life blasphemous or respect? The euthanasia debate lasted for decades, and in most countries of the world there is still no conclusion. Despite the increasing progress in medical technology, the peaceful medical care in most developed countries is also very popular, the discussion of euthanasia continues unabated, the relevant bill in the past two years in many countries of the hot, but also prompted people to ask ourselves: Dignity to die?

In April 2015, the Colombian government formally legalized euthanasia; in the same month, the California Legislature passed a bill that allowed terminally ill patients to receive physician-assisted suicide as the sixth state in the United States that would limit the legalization of euthanasia; In June, the Canadian Congress passed a bill similar to that of California, which officials said was just the first step in euthanasia legislation, and that there are likely to be some relaxation in the future.

According to a poll conducted by The Economist in 2015 for 15 European and American countries, more than half of the population in 13 countries supported the legalization of euthanasia for terminally ill patients, including Britain, France, Spain, Germany And euthanasia is also an illegal country; more than half of the population in 11 countries also support the physiological suffering of the great suffering of the non-terminal patients, the legitimate right to put forward euthanasia requirements.

At present, only two countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, permit the legal choice of euthanasia for patients who are not terminally ill. Swiss law allows any person to commit suicide, whether or not end-of-life, with a non-selfish intention. The attitude of the population to euthanasia is clearly not yet reflected in the existing legislation in most countries. In February, the BBC broadcast a British businessman Simon who was suffering from motor neuron disease and was reluctant to live under physical restraint. He went to Switzerland to euthanize the documentary, The Euthanasia Bill vetoed by Congress has aroused extensive discussion in the community.

Belgium: the most tolerant country for euthanasia

"I am glad that I am in Belgium." Pieter, a British and dual national, could not help but sigh when he learned that he had cancer at the end of his life and decided to go to euthanasia. "I can not imagine that if I want to choose to euthanize, I have to go to another country."

Belgium is the most tolerant country in the world for euthanasia. In 2002, following the Netherlands, Belgium accepted the law on euthanasia by allowing adults who "tolerate physical or psychological intolerable pain, sanity, and a willingness to end life." In 2014, Congress passed an amendment to remove the age limit for terminally ill patients in the euthanasia bill on the grounds that "children should have the same human rights as adults". Recently, a 17-year-old patient made euthanasia request, and by the physician team, the consent of the guardian to become the first legally accepted euthanasia of minors in Belgium, the news came out, the first to open the world's first legislative provisions caused controversy, Immediately triggered the world's media attention.

Under current legislation, end-of-life patients in Belgium will be allowed to sleep in a matter of minutes, with the assistance of a family physician, at home or in the hospital, or by oral
administration of anesthetic, with the assistance of two physicians, as assessed by two physicians; To be able to perform euthanasia outside the 2 physicians, more than one psychiatrist is allowed to assess, and after 1 month of the buffer period is still not changed the will to death; to worry about the future into a coma, unable to express the wishes of the people, A statement of euthanasia, valid for 5 years, can be signed at the City Halls, allowing physicians to perform euthanasia according to the statement when assessing the patient's unconsciousness. These seemingly unimaginable articles in the eyes of other countries, in the 14 years after the adoption of the legislation in Belgium, have been a trivial process. Belgian public opinion for euthanasia is generally open attitude, as early as in 2001 before the adoption of the legislation, the poll will show that 75% of the people support euthanasia; the "Economist" 2015 poll, the Belgians under various conditions The euthanasia ratings were the highest among all the polls. At the same time, more and more people choose euthanasia to finish their life. According to the Belgian Commission for Euthanasia Assessment, the number of people euthanized in Belgium has risen rapidly in recent years. By 2008, there were no more than 500 euthanas per year in the country; by 2013, 1,807 people were euthanized in a year. This trend is even more pronounced in the relatively open Dutch-speaking region, where euthanasia accounted for only 1.9% of all deaths in 2007; in 2013, the rate was 4.6%, even higher than in the neighboring Netherlands. Respect the patient autonomy? Or a landslide effect? The statistics behind the meaning of the parties, some scholars have said yes, some people expressed concern. An analysis by the Free University of Brussels (VUB) in 2015 indicated that the increase in the number of euthanasia in Belgium was associated with a general emphasis on individual autonomy in the community and the increased acceptance of euthanasia by the physician and the willingness to respect the patient's feelings. Conclusion: In Belgium, euthanasia is increasingly seen as a legitimate option for ending life. "I fully support the existing euthanasia legislation in Belgium, and I know the same people around me," said Ophélie Broeckaert, a family physician who practiced in Brussels. In 2009, 90% of Belgian physicians supported euthanasia; in the interview study, many physicians indicated that legalization of euthanasia helped them to discuss their condition and possible treatment in a more transparent and honest manner. On the other hand, doubts about whether or not euthanasia legislation has caused a slippery slope have been heard. In 2012, the twin brother, Marc and Eddy Verbessem (Marc and Eddy Verbessem) to imminent blindness, can not stand to see each other as a reason to pass the euthanasia application; in 2014, the original physiological gender female Fulhurst (Nathan Verhelst) The results of the transsexual surgery were less favorable than expected and the request for euthanasia was approved. In 2015, Emily, 24 years old, suffered from severe depression and received a green light allowing doctors to euthanize. Although the above cases are based on medical diagnosis, the patients are in line with the Belgian euthanasia law "to bear the intolerable pain", "independent and repeated expression of the will of death" and other conditions, the challenge of the general level of ethical awareness is still Many other countries caused an uproar. "Dutch and Belgian legislation allows patients who can live for many more years to be euthanized with" mental illness "," boredom "," feel lonely ", etc. Theo Professor of Ethics, Theo Boer said. He has been a member of the Dutch Euthanasia Review Board since 2005 and has strongly supported euthanasia as a choice to reduce the suffering of terminally ill patients.
However, in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in cases of euthanasia in end-of-life patients. The review committee was unable or even unintentionally to block clinical "After euthanasia, the attitude towards euthanasia became more conservative, and in 2014 it withdrew from the review committee.

"Euthanasia legislation is intended to be used in special circumstances where pain can not be alleviated, and euthanasia is now" normalized ", and is regarded as the patient's right, or even a fashionable death," said Bohr. Under such a social environment, elderly people living alone and those who have been bedridden for years can easily be forced to live in a situation of "voluntary" euthanasia. The Government may therefore neglect the development needs of long-term home care and palliative care.

Bohr believes that the existing euthanasia regulations in the Netherlands and Belgium should be more clearly applied to avoid the "intolerable pain", "no improvement in the condition may be" there is no small subjective interpretation of the vocabulary, to eliminate the possibility of abuse of regulations. "Some additional conditions, such as" the patient has only a few weeks of life ",", the patient has consulted the specialist care of peace, "'" patients and the implementation of euthanasia between doctors have long-term medical relations "should be included "Said Bohr.

Ease of medical treatment can not alleviate the pain Bohr's worries, in Belgium, did not seem to get much response.

"Agreeing to euthanasia is not as easy as it seems to be," says Brokat, who has experience in assisting patients with euthanasia. "Euthanasia is definitely the last option to explain all possible treatments to the patient, and if the general family physician feels that his experience is not sufficient to judge, he can also consult a specialist who has received end-of-life medical training (LEIF)."

These physicians receive training in addition to how to respond to the patient's euthanasia requirements, including how to give appropriate palliative medical advice. In Belgium, euthanasia and tranquility were not mutually exclusive, and in 2002, through the euthanasia bill, a peaceful palliative medical bill was passed, stating that patients had the right to peaceful care. 73.7% of euthanized persons in 2013 had received tranquility care.

According to a report by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2015, Belgium ranks fifth in tranquility of care in 80 countries. In the high-quality medical care resources, the Belgian demand for euthanasia diminished, suggesting that drugs can not alleviate the pain does exist?

"In spite of the few, in some serious mental illness, I think euthanasia can be an option for patients," says Lode Holvoet, a clinical psychologist who practiced in Ghent, Belgium, and carefully cared for it "But I will not discuss this option with them unless these patients take the initiative to propose euthanasia," he said.

Whether the psychological pain can be the reason for euthanasia, euthanasia has been the most controversial, the most controversial one. Physical pain, while others have not experienced, or can be imagined with empathy; by contrast, the psychological pain of the abstract but not explicit, often more difficult for others to agree, not even be taken seriously. Those who suffer from mental torture and consider killing others are often criticized for not "cherishing life" and "not working hard enough."

In a 2013 documentary about euthanasia in Belgium, Eva, who suffered from severe depression for a long time, questioned her acceptance of euthanasia on the grounds that she was "unable to ascertain that the patient had tried all possible therapies" "I've tried all possible treatments for three years, but it has not worked," he said angrily. "It makes me feel that my efforts every day are totally unacceptable."
"Psychological pain is very subjective, and in many cases the patient just wants to be treated as a human being," Hofft explained, "In some cases, euthanasia represents that kind of empathy." He cited one of his patients as an example: 19-year-old girl suffering from severe autism, often self-mutilation behavior. In a consultative, he took the initiative to the girl mentioned euthanasia, and seriously think with her, talk about death, a period of time, the girl's self-mutilation behavior but slowly less.

A study published in 2015 followed 100 patients in Belgium who filed euthanasia on the grounds of psychological distress. Of the 48 people allowed, 13 eventually changed their minds by postponing or canceling euthanasia, with more than half Said, just be allowed to euthanasia, let them in the psychological enough calm, can continue to live. The aforementioned 24-year-old melancholy patient, Emily, was also scheduled to receive euthanasia on the same day, dispelling the idea of seeking death.

24-year-old severe melancholy patients love Amy originally applied for euthanasia, and finally euthanasia scheduled day, dispelled the idea of death. (Source: The Economist)

Life and death debate, always a dilemma
"The most important thing about euthanasia is that it makes death no longer a taboo subject," he said. "It's a very difficult decision to agree to an euthanasia for patients who are not terminally ill," he says. "Between doctors and patients, To discuss death more openly and frankly. " "For each patient, the situation is different, and if the law is too detailed, it is very difficult to ensure that it is clinically difficult to protect the patient's condition," he said. Every patient in need is in need. "

Life and death debate, always a dilemma. Even in countries where euthanasia legislation has been in place for 14 years, opinions from different perspectives have continued to agitate each other. The amendment to the euthanasia law was sent to the Belgian parliament, pending an inquiry into existing legislation, which included a request that the physician respond to the patient's euthanasia request within 7 days and that the current flexibility of 5 Year euthanasia pre-signing deadline, etc., if passed, the estimated number of euthanized people will further increase.

In addition, the legitimacy of euthanasia in patients with dementia at different stages of development, as well as the possibility and timing of euthanasia in long-term coma patients, are still unsettled.

Death is a huge issue, and everyone has different answers. Euthanasia of the long debate is still continuing, all the discussion, understanding the way of death, may also have to spend a lifetime to finish.

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