Assisted Dying Survey Summary Report

Survey Aim

The purpose of our assisted dying survey was for the RCR to gain insight into the views of our clinical oncology members and Fellows on the complex subject of assisted dying. The RCR has received a number of enquiries about this issue in the past three years and has not sought opinions on this matter since 2006. With a clearer understanding of their views, the RCR will be better placed to support and represent our members and Fellows going forward.

Timings

The RCR assisted dying survey ran from 5 February to 28 February 2019.

Participants

The RCR sent email invitations to the 1,572 UK clinical oncology members and Fellows to participate in the survey.

Response rate

The response rate was 34%. 540 complete survey responses were received. Eight did not contain valid GMC numbers, so have been excluded from analysis. Results of the 532 valid survey responses are presented below.

Results

The below outlines the three multiple-choice questions that were asked and the responses selected.

1. What should the RCR Faculty of Clinical Oncology’s position be on whether or not there should be a change in the law to permit assisted dying?

![Bar Chart]

- In favour: 26.9%
- Neutral: 30.3%
- Opposed: 42.9%

1 Includes trainees and retirees, but excludes overseas Fellows and members.
2 The RCR issued two survey respondents with temporary identification numbers, in lieu of GMC numbers. GMC numbers were used in this survey to disqualify duplicate and invalid responses.
A total of 532 responses were analysed. The number of responses in each category was as follows:

- In favour – 143
- Neutral – 161
- Opposed – 228

2. **Do you support a change in the law to permit assisted dying?**

![Bar chart showing support percentages]

A total of 532 responses were analysed. The number of responses in each category was as follows:

- Yes – 198
- Undecided – 85
- No – 249

3. **Regardless of your support or opposition to change, if the law were changed to permit assisted dying, would you be prepared to participate actively?**

![Bar chart showing participation percentages]

A total of 532 responses were analysed. The number of responses in each category was as follows:

- Yes – 123
- Don’t know – 111
- No – 298

4. **Is there anything else you want to say about this issue?**

79 free text comments were received, expressing a range of views.
RCR policy

The results of this survey show that opinion varies across the faculty of clinical oncology, as would be expected. We do not intend to hold an official faculty of clinical oncology position on assisted dying, but will make these results available publicly. We will ensure that we support all our members, irrespective of their viewpoint, should a change in the law occur.

Background information - results of RCR's 2006 Assisted Dying Survey

In 2006, the RCR invited clinical oncology members and Fellows to participate in a survey on physician assisted dying. 249 responses were received. Results of the 249 responses are presented below.

Q1. Is a change in legislation on assisted dying needed?
- Yes – 18.9% (47 survey respondents)
- Undecided – 5.2% (13 survey respondents)
- No – 75.9% (189 survey respondents)

Q2. In the event of this legislation receiving Royal Assent, would you be prepared to participate actively in a process to enable a patient to terminate their life under the terms described above?
- Yes – 18.1% (45 survey respondents)
- Uncertain – 5.2% (13 survey respondents)
- No – 71.9% (179 survey respondents)
- Did not answer question – 4.8% (12 survey respondents)