

End-of-Life Choices in Mexico

Public opinions and the Catholic Church influence



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Nothing to disclose

Overview of the presentation

1. What is allowed, prohibited and not clear regarding ELC
2. Public opinion on euthanasia
3. Catholic Church influence in Mexico
4. Conclusions

ELC legally allowed and encouraged

- Suspending or refusing treatment
- Suspending life support treatment (WD/WH)
- Advanced directives

Encouraged

- Providing palliative care to the terminally ill (including terminal sedation)

ELC Not clear

- WD/WH artificial nutrition and hydration
- VSED

ELC prohibited

- Euthanasia
- Physician assisted suicide
- Assisted suicide

Opinion

General public Parametría

2006

39% agreed with euthanasia, 46% disagreed, 15% undecided

Agreed young (18-25), with higher education, not religious

2008

60% agreed with euthanasia, 35% disagreed, 6% undecided

Agreed young, from Mexico City, not religious

Opinion

Medical doctors (Lisker et al 2008)

2097 from different hospitals in the country

40% agreed with euthanasia, 44% disagreed, 16% undecided

48% agreed with WD/WH, 35% disagreed, 17% undecided

Agreement: respect for autonomy, prevent suffering.

Disagreement: respect life, defend sanctity of life

Opinion

Medical doctors (Alvar et al 2013)

99 students, 140 residents, public hospital in Mexico City

50% agreed with PAD, 58% with WD/WH

Greater acceptance in younger

46 students were at religious schools

Secular schools agreed significantly more
with PAD (68-33%), with WD/WH (79-39%)

Opinion

Medical doctors (Alvar et al 2014)

212 residents (76 beginning, 136 advanced), two public hospitals, Mexico City

Would they carry out PAD?

82% of beginning residents agreed, 55% of advanced residents

This percentage resulted with PAD hypothesized as being legal.

16% to 66% of beginning residents, 13% to 42% of advanced residents

Interest in a legal framework to regulate PAD.



Opinion

Medical doctors (DMD Mexico 2015)

In-depth interviews and focus groups with specialists in, Mexico City and Puebla

For: Terminally ill patients have a right to decide to end their life (not only terminally ill)

Against: Against Catholic religion. No individual is master of his life. Nobody has the right to shorten another's

Opinion

Medical doctors (DMD Mexico 2015)

Should PAD be legalized? Different opinions in doctors

1) Clearly in favor: clear criteria for its application and supervision

2) Against: dangerous given the degree of corruption in the country

3) “The country is not yet prepared to understand and accept PAD”

Opinion

Catholics (Catholics for choice Mexico 2014)

2669 surveyed on reproductive rights and euthanasia

65% agreed with euthanasia, 35% disagreed

Agreed from urban zones and Mexico City

Moving away from the moral teachings of their church

80% supported teens' access to birth control, knowing in what situations abortion is legal

80% agreed with abortion when woman's life is in danger, 71% when the pregnancy is the result of rape



Opinion

DMD Mexico 2016

A survey is currently being carried out nationally

Results are expected in July 2016 and will provide some very important information

Catholic Church influence in Mexico

- A majority of the population is Catholic
- Secular country with citizens from other religions or none
- Catholic Church wants its doctrine to be applied by means of the law
- The Vatican influence in public politics

Catholic Church influence in Mexico

- In 2007 a law legalized abortion in Mexico City
- In 17 states the constitution was reformed
- Abortion was outlawed
- Reforms were made responding to a dictate of Benedict XVI

Catholic Church influence in Mexico

- Support of politicians, because of their beliefs
- The promise of support during elections
- Forgetting their commitment to a secular state
- Many Mexicans are outraged that the Catholic Church attempts to impose its dogmas

Catholic Church influence in Mexico

- PAD debate in academic and legislative realms
- Catholic Church's condemnation
- A new bill on euthanasia in the legislature
- The Catholic representatives will exercise their power to be heard

Catholic Church influence in Mexico

- Euthanasia to get rid of the sick and the elderly
- Some Catholics will follow and others will not
- Essential to defend secularism in this debate
- Denounce any attempt of influence from the Catholic Church

Conclusions

- A bill on euthanasia in the legislature
- Academics working on a PAD legalization project
- Academics with some legislators and journalists to defend the secular state
- *Chronic*, about euthanasia, produced in English by Mexican director Michael Franco

Conclusions

- Mexico finally has a Right to die association
- Whose main goal is to promote legal and social changes
- So that Mexicans can legally opt for a dignified death choosing when and how to die

THANKS

