

# The fear of dying in misery in a hospital is driving the assisted dying debate, says medical ethics expert

May 20 2015

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The fear of a miserable death in a hospital bed rather than at home is driving public support for mercy-killing law in the UK, a Birmingham City University academic has warned.

Responding to a report published today by The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, listing some of the worst cases in recent years of terminally ill patients dying without dignity, Timothy James, senior lecturer in Medical Law and Ethics at Birmingham City University, said:

"For most people, dying at [home](#) isn't about autonomy, it's about dealing with the fear of dying in a hospital with poor end of life care. The fear of dying in misery in a hospital is what is driving the assisted dying debate."

"We've known for a long time now that the option should be available for [terminally ill patients](#) to die at home. We are seeing too many cases where proper pain control is not being given."

Referring to care in the English NHS, the ombudsman's report details some of the cases investigated over the last four years, including that of a 29-year-old male dying of cancer who was admitted to [hospital](#) and left without pain relief for 11 hours.

Provided by Birmingham City University

Citation: The fear of dying in misery in a hospital is driving the assisted dying debate, says medical ethics expert (2015, May 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-05-dying-misery-hospital-debate-medical.html>

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