

Researchers propose new de-medicalized approach to assisted dying

August 30 2023



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Three Lancaster University professors have argued that it is time to move beyond a medicalized approach to assisted dying.

Despite growing legal and medical support for assisted dying, many [health care professionals](#) do not want to be directly involved.

Nancy Preston, Sheila Payne, and Suzanne Ost—three leading professors at Lancaster University—have written an opinion piece for the *British Medical Journal*, exploring whether an enhanced de-medicalized approach, involving organizations outside health care, could help to overcome this.

The debate around assisted dying mainly focuses on whether it should be legalized, rather than how it should be implemented.

Decisions about legalization will be made by politicians. If it is legalized, most people assume it will be part of health care.

Research from Lancaster professors challenges whether this is the best option, and their article in the *BMJ* discusses an alternative which could provide more support for patients and families seeking an [assisted death](#), as well as removing the burden on [decision making](#) and involvement from NHS health care workers.

They argue that this option will also offer greater protection for vulnerable patients.

Nancy Preston, Professor of Supportive and Palliative Care at Lancaster University, said, "If the Government makes the decision to legalize assisted dying, it is crucial that equal consideration is given into how it should be implemented.

"The repercussions for patients, their families and [health care workers](#) could be profound if we don't get this right."

More information: Nancy Preston et al, Breaching the stalemate on

assisted dying: it's time to move beyond a medicalised approach, *BMJ* (2023). [DOI: 10.1136/bmj.p1968](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p1968)

Provided by Lancaster University

Citation: Researchers propose new de-medicalized approach to assisted dying (2023, August 30) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-de-medicalized-approach-dying.html>

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