



End-of-Life Issues and Attitudes

Residents, family members, caregivers, and practitioners have different attitudes and levels of knowledge about end-of-life decisions and care. Here are just a few facts and statistics about end-of-life matters.

75% of Americans favor advance directives, although only 30% to 35% of them actually write them.¹

92% of cancer patients in one study had heard about advance directives primarily through the media.²

5% of 2000 cancer patients said that they heard about advance directives from their physicians, although 63% said that they would have liked to have received this information from this source.²

25% of US cancer doctors surveyed support the issue of physician-assisted suicide for a terminally ill patient with unremitting pain, while 6.5% support euthanasia.³

10% of US cancer doctors surveyed reported that they had participated in physician-assisted suicides, and 3.7% had performed euthanasia.³

621,000 patients were discharged from hospice care in a 1-year period. Most of them were white, elderly, and lived in a private or semi-private residence while receiving hospice services. Most lived with a relative who was a primary caregiver.⁴

References

1. AARP, 2003
2. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 1999
3. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 2000
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003

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