

Ethics and hastening death practices

- Euthanasia
- Physician / assisted suicide

Which words? Definitions : not a detail

Chile 2021

A relevant problem is the frequent **misunderstanding** that many have about the meaning of the terms and concepts used in different ethical and clinical end of life settings.

Carvajal C S, Portales V B, Beca I JP. Eutanasia: aclarando conceptos Rev Med Chil. 2021 Oct;149(10):1502-1506. Spanish.

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Which words?

Euthanasia

Definitions

AMA 2021: “Euthanasia is the administration of a lethal agent by another person to a patient for the purpose of relieving the patient’s intolerable and incurable suffering.”

Montero, 2012:

“Consists of all those actions carried out deliberately by health professionals whose objective is to directly cause death at the express, voluntary and repeated request of a capable patient who presents intense physical or mental suffering as a result of a terminal or irreversible disease and that the patient himself experiences as something unacceptable, unbearable and unworthy”

Montero F. Repensar la eutanasia y el suicidio médicamente asistido. En: Beca JP, Astete C, editors. Bioética Clínica. 1a Ed. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Mediterráneo; 2012. p. 498–519.

N.B. Prerequisites vary by country (laws)

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Which words?

Chile 2021

It is relevant to insist that **euthanasia adjectives should not be used**, such as active or passive, voluntary or involuntary, direct or indirect, since these adjectives only generate mistakes and greater confusion with decisions or clinical actions that have other names. Put in these terms, **euthanasia is always active, voluntary and direct**, since other options do not correspond to euthanasia in the clinical context...

Carvajal C S, Portales V B, Beca I J P. Eutanasia: aclarando conceptos. Rev Med Chil. 2021 Oct;149(10):1502–1506. Spanish.

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Which words?

Physician assisted suicide

Definition

Assisted suicide is a condition in which **the patient is the one** who carries out the action that ends her/his life through the ingestion of a lethal drug but has been dispensed **in the context of health care** and therefore called assisted. This care is provided by a physician trained in the area.

Picón-Jaimes YA, Lozada-Martinez ID, Orozco-Chinome JE, Montaña-Gómez LM, Bolaño-Romero MP, Moscote-Salazar LR, Janjua T, Rahman S. Euthanasia and assisted suicide: An in-depth review of relevant historical aspects. Ann Med Surg (Lond). 2022 Feb 11;75:103380.

NB : an injection is also possible (Switzerland).
Prerequisites vary by country (laws)

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France 2016 (last law)

Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide are illegal but the debate is sharp.

The french president proposes a new debate in the next months.



France is
« surrounded »

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France, law number 2016-87 on February 2, 2016, **already in 2005**

Which words?

Not voluntary hastening death practices

Treatments

when they appear useless, disproportionate or when they have no other effect than the sole artificial maintenance of life, **they may be suspended or not be undertaken...**

Double effect

The doctor sets up all the analgesic and sedative treatments to respond to the refractory suffering of the patient in the advanced or terminal phase, **even if they can have the effect of shortening life.**

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France, law number 2016-87 on February 2, 2016, **not before**

Which words? **Not** a voluntary hastening death practice.

Deep and continuous sedation maintained until death

Its aim is to **reduce or eliminate the perception** of a situation experienced as unbearable by the patient, when **all the means available and adapted to this situation have been offered** to her/him and/or implemented without making it possible to obtain the expected relief.

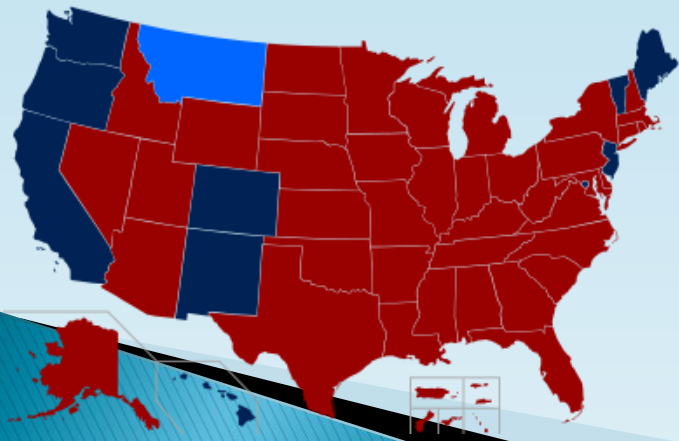
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Where?

In spring 2021 Spain became the **sixth country worldwide** to acknowledge the right to an assisted death (euthanasia and assisted suicide) after the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Canada and New Zealand.

Switzerland permits assisted suicide for “unselfish reasons.”

Several US states, not as a whole country, also allow assisted dying. Euthanasia is currently illegal in all 50 states of the United States. Physician-assisted suicide, or "medical aid in dying" is legal in eleven jurisdictions: California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Montana, Maine, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington (Wikipedia)



Rada AG. Spain will become the sixth country worldwide to allow euthanasia and assisted suicide. BMJ. 2021 Jan 15;372:n147.

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Who?

Portugal-UK 2022 in a worldwide review of hastened death decisions:

Patients profiles follow the trends in the literature: the majority is aged between 70 and 89 years old, men die more often from a hastened death decision than women in most countries, most prevalent underlying disease is **cancer**, most people died at home.

Marina S, Wainwright T, Pereira HP, Ricou M. Trends in hastened death decision criteria: A review of official reports. Health Policy. 2022 May 10:S0168-8510(22)00103-8.

How many?

The annual incidence of euthanasia in the Netherlands as a percentage of all deaths rose **from 1.9% in 1990 to 4.4% in 2017**.

Groenewoud AS, Atsma F, Arvin M, Westert GP, Boer TA. Euthanasia in the Netherlands: a claims data cross-sectional study of geographical variation. BMJ Support Palliat Care. 2021 Jan 14:bmjsplice-2020-002573.

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For and against a new law in France

for	against
Individual freedom of choice: my body belongs to me! Ultimate freedom. I want to decide for myself. I want to be independent.	Huge risk of replacement of unavailable palliative care by hastening death practices. Anyway, we are dependent from the beginning to the end of our life.
Avoiding a long agony: too much useless suffering. It's too long. Awful experience in the family: never again!	Relatives are eager. Supporting the family is part of palliative care Violation of the right to self-determination and of human rights if no consent. Ends of life are various.
Meaninglessness of the rest of life	Respect for life
Right to a good death including or not palliative care	Right to palliative care Risk of abuse or overuse : saving money in the last expensive period of life is not an ethical goal

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for	against
Animal are helped	We are not animals like others
Other countries have legalized. Why not us?	Too many countries have kept the death penalty. No reason to do always like others
Euthanasia, assisted suicide and sedation until death provide the same result: death	Euthanasia and assisted suicide are voluntary acts performed by professionals, aiming at giving death. Sedation is a care aiming at alleviating suffering without intention of giving death
I want to decide for myself.	Okay, but you need somebody else with her/his ethics and feelings: do not forget her/him
I want to liberate my relatives	Not sure your relatives will be liberated from guilt

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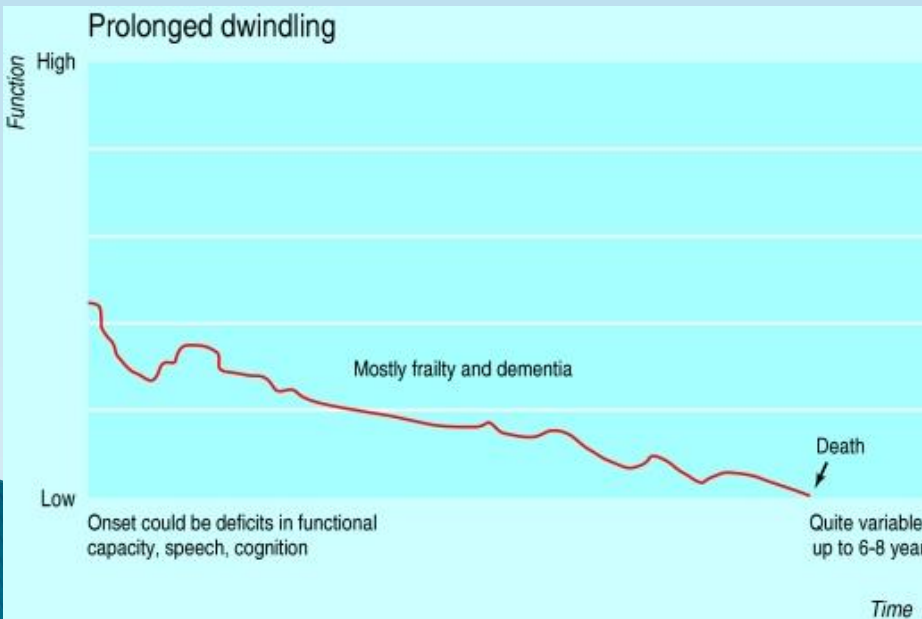
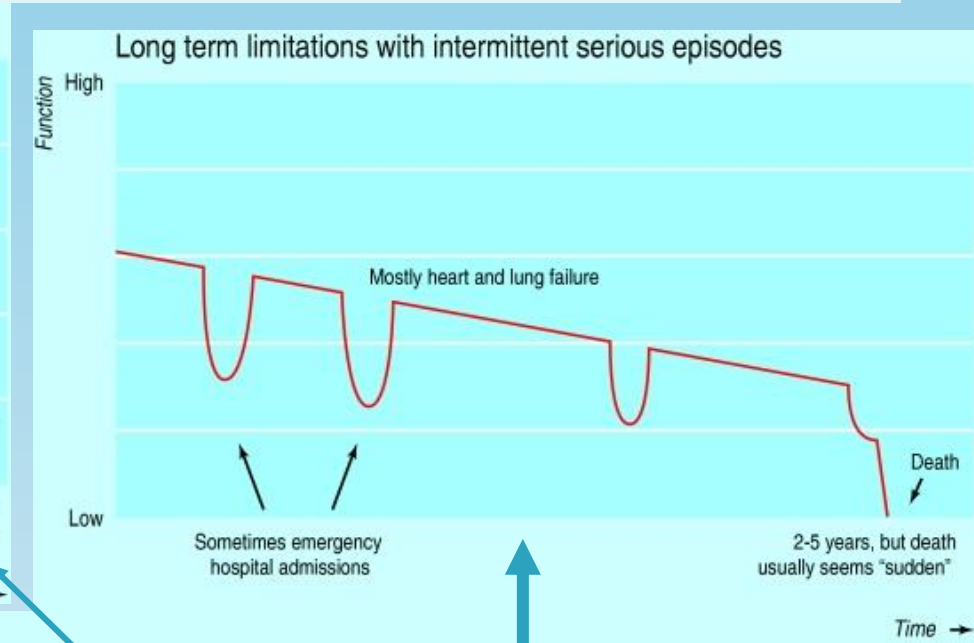
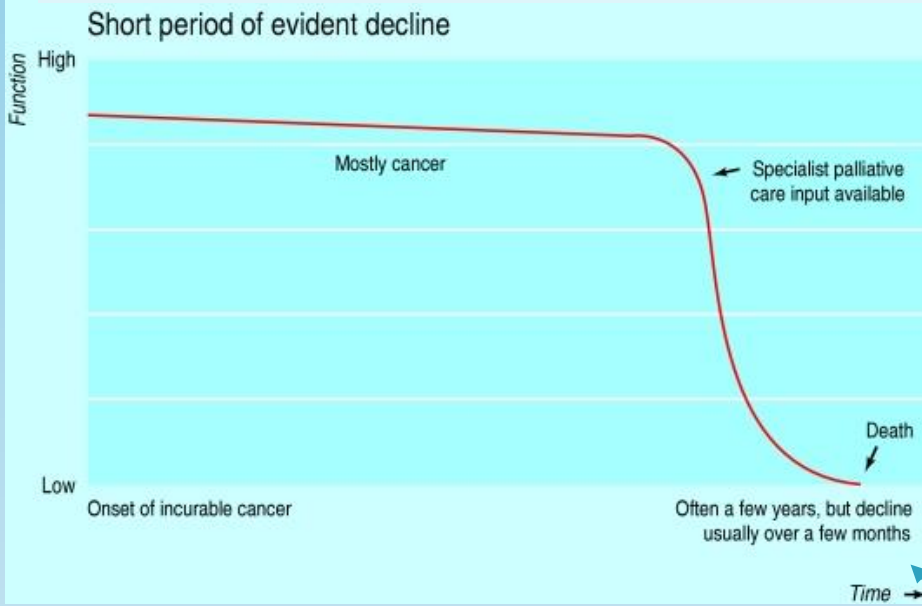
Table 3. Respondents' reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the legalization of EAS.

	N (%)
Reasons for agreement (N = 763)	
Meaninglessness of the rest of life	235 (30.8)
Right to a good death	198 (26.0)
Alleviation of suffering	157 (20.6)
Family suffering and burden	113 (14.8)
Social burden due to medical expenses and care	35 (4.6)
No violation of human rights	27 (3.1)
Importance of the right to self-determination	1 (0.1)
Reasons for disagreement (N = 237)	
Respect for life	105 (44.3)
Violation of the right to self-determination	37 (15.6)
Risk of abuse or overuse	31 (13.1)
Violation of human rights	29 (12.2)
Risk of misdiagnosis	23 (9.7)
Possibility of recovery	12 (5.1)

EAS: Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.

Yun YH, Sim JA, Choi Y, Yoon H. Attitudes toward the Legalization of Euthanasia or Physician-Assisted Suicide in South Korea: A Cross-Sectional Survey. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2022 Apr 24;19(9):5183.

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Life expectancy? Less than 6 months?

Murray SA, Kendall M, Boyd K, Sheikh A. Illness trajectories and palliative care. BMJ. 2005 Apr 30;330(7498):1007-11.

Ethics and old dependent people: only words?

Wreck



Crust



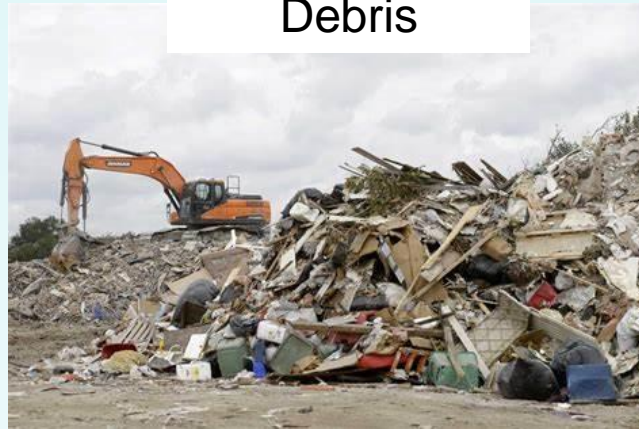
Green plant



Vegetables



Debris



Flower pot



How to avoid that?

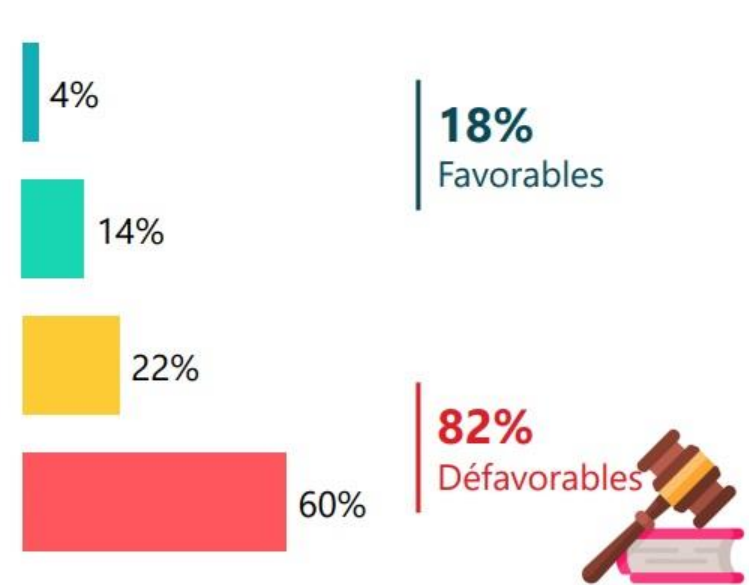
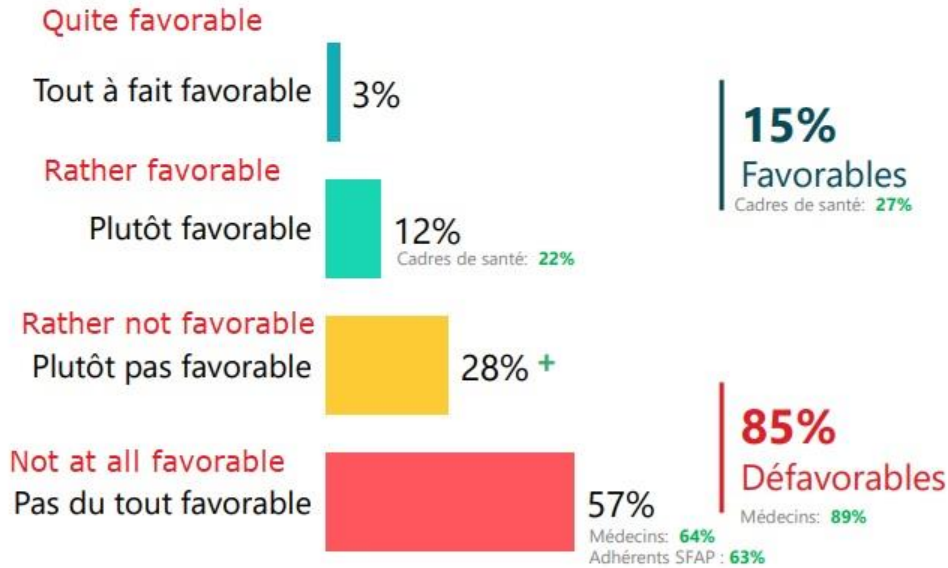




L'évolution de la législation vers l'instauration d'une mort intentionnellement provoquée est largement rejetée par les répondants.

MAiD : Medical Assistance in Dying

Loi instaurant une forme de mort intentionnellement provoquée...



B1. Si une loi instaurait une forme de « mort intentionnellement provoquée », y seriez-vous... A tous
 "opinionway pour SFAP"

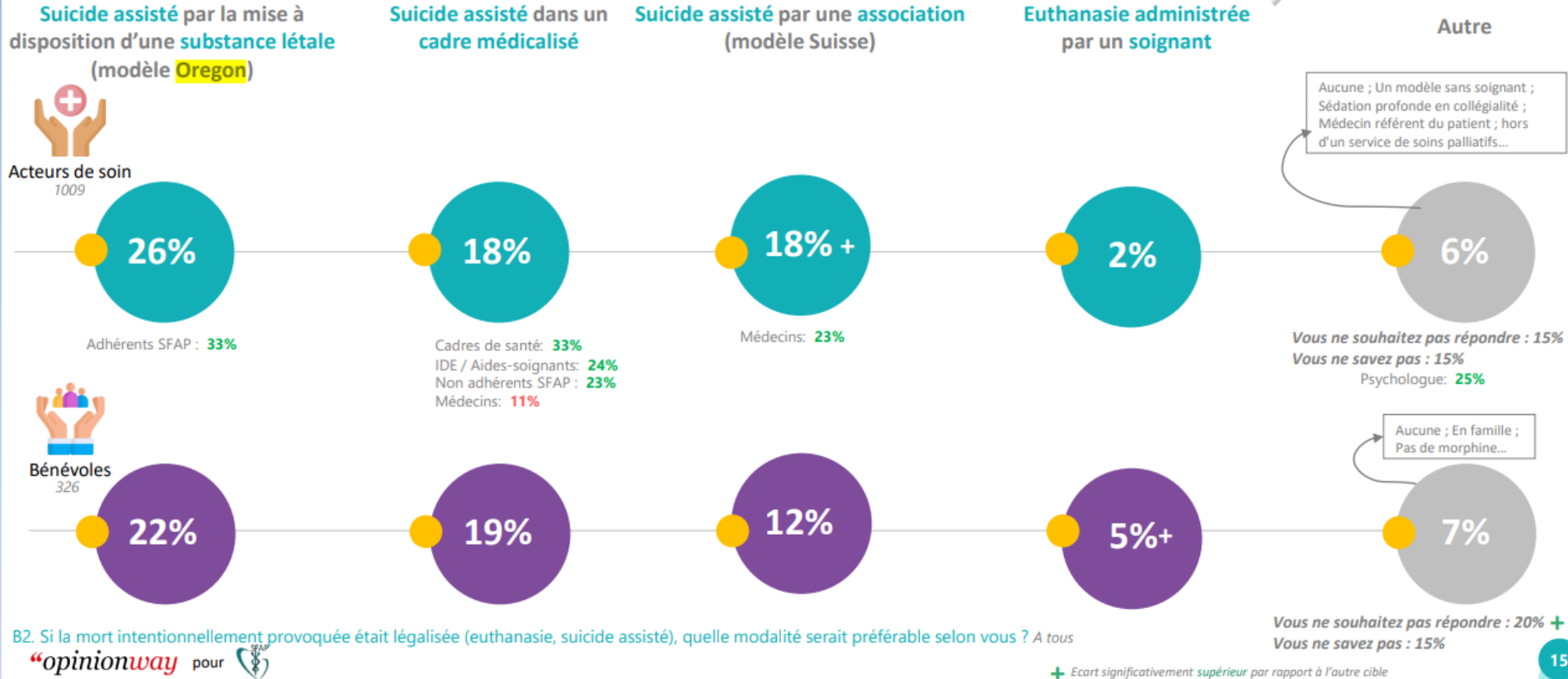
+ Ecart significativement supérieur par rapport à l'autre cible

Sondage OpinionWay 2022 pour la SFAP : OpinionWay poll for SFAP (french support and palliative care society)



La modalité préférable dans le cas d'une légalisation de la mort intentionnellement provoquée serait, pour près d'1/4 des répondants le suicide assisté par la mise à disposition d'une substance létale.

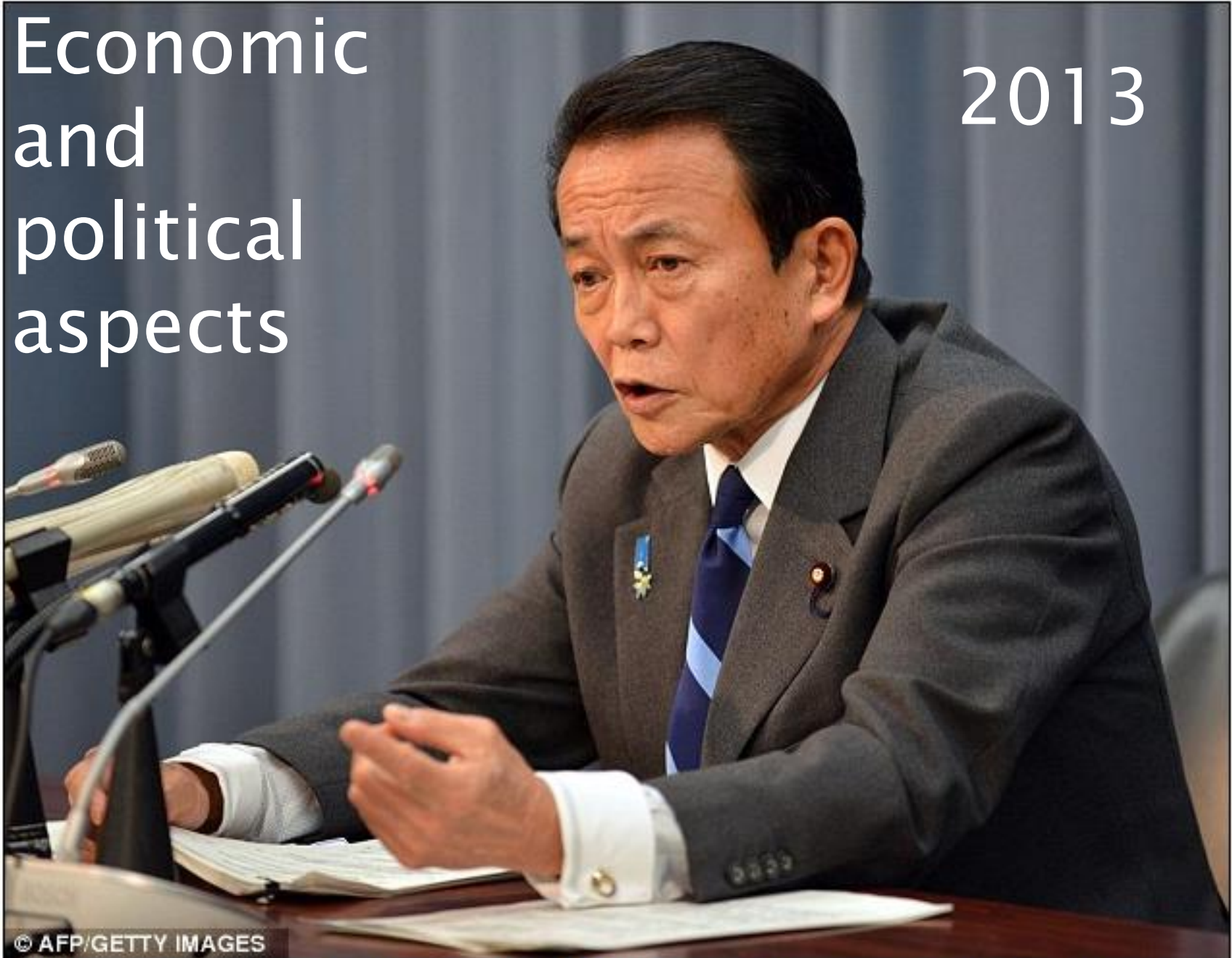
Modalité préférable *Si* la mort intentionnellement provoquée était légalisée



Sondage OpinionWay 2022 pour la SFAP : OpinionWay poll for SFAP (french support and palliative care society)

Economic and political aspects

2013



© AFP/GETTY IMAGES

'Hurry up and die': Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso said the elderly should be allowed to die sooner to cut the costs to the state of having to care for them

Don't worry!

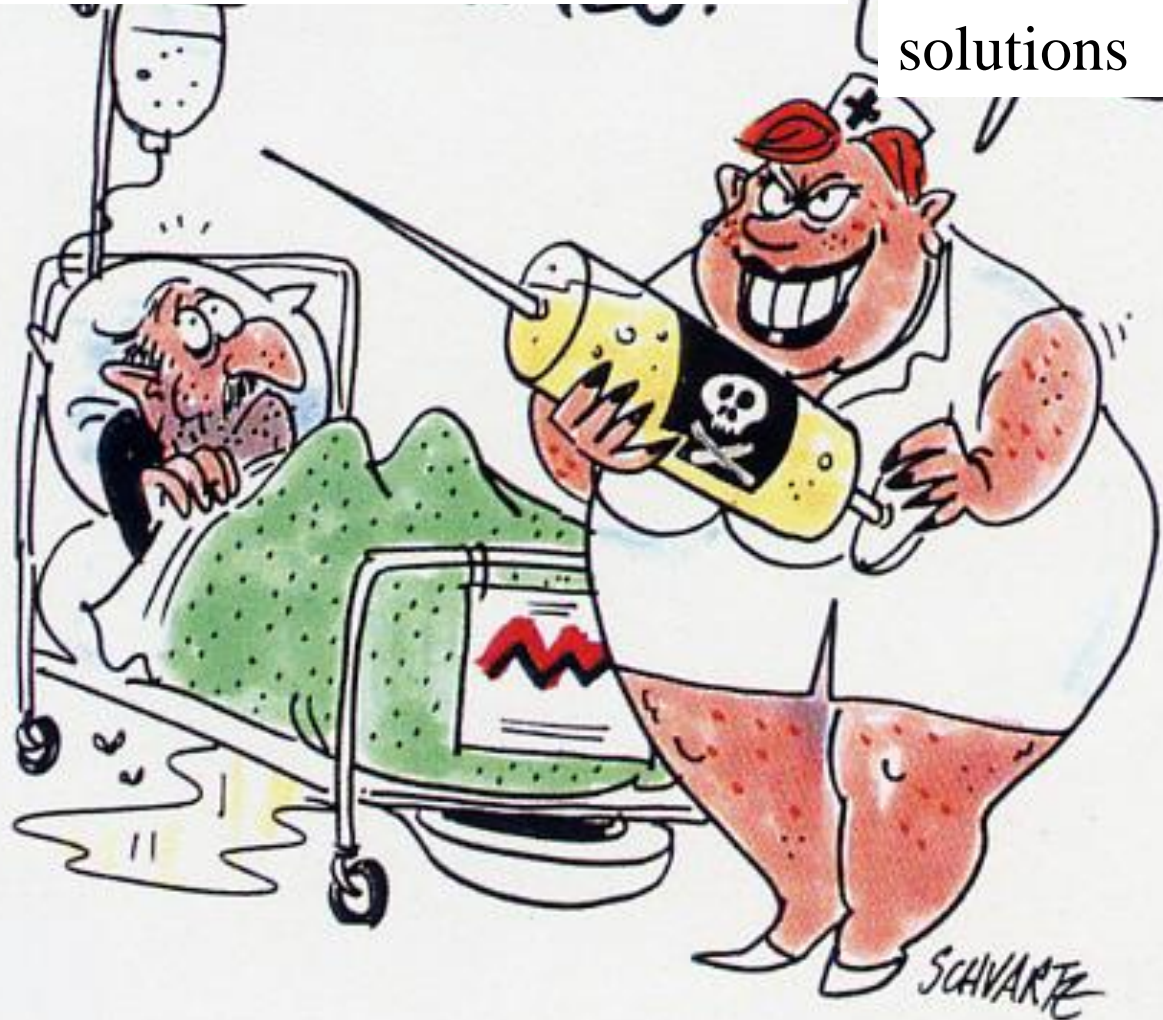
Our medical staff is very efficient



How to save our pensions?

Euthanasia?

there are
no 36
solutions

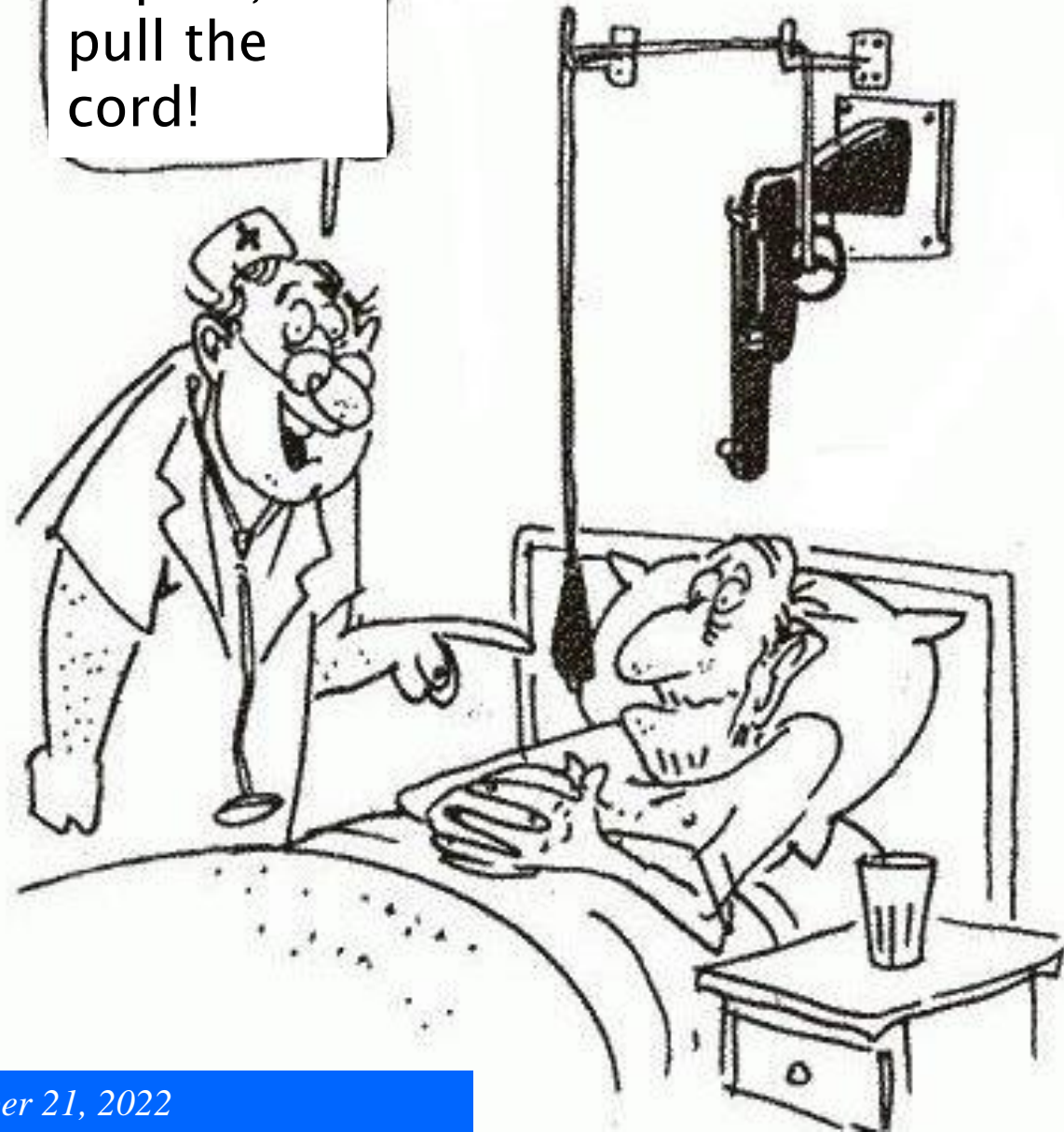


“Euthanasia should never be seen (or used) as a means of resolving societal failures.”

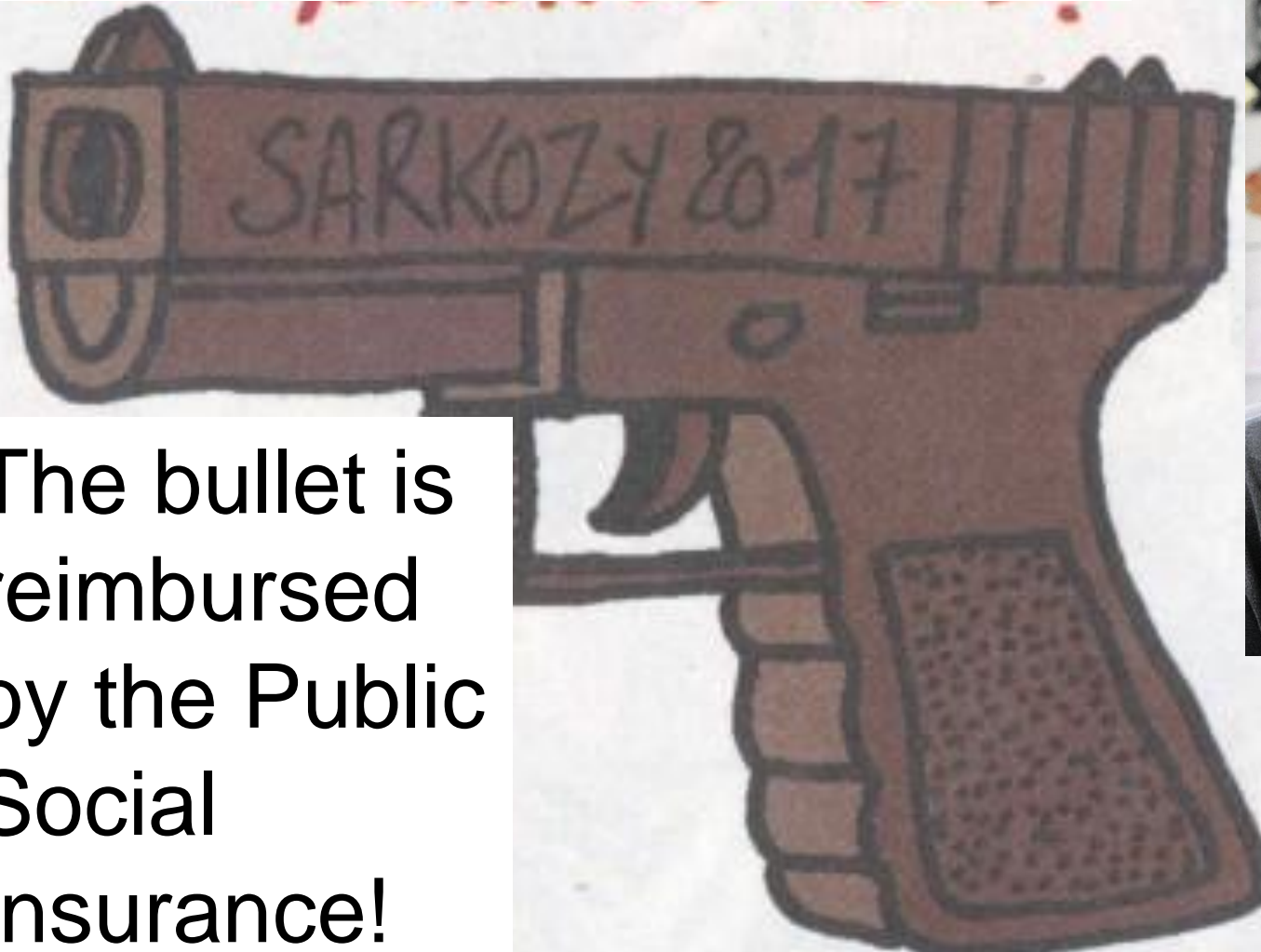
Verhofstadt M, Thienpont L, Peters GY. When unbearable suffering incites psychiatric patients to request euthanasia: qualitative study. Br J Psychiatry. 2017 Oct;211(4):238-245.

Assisted suicide?

If you are too much in pain, pull the cord!



Liberal program: old people,
commit suicide!



The bullet is
reimbursed
by the Public
Social
Insurance!