

**Duty to die**

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*duty to die:* a moral obligation to either kill one's self, to ask to be killed, or to ask to have treatment withdrawn with the intention of dying

**Is there ever a duty to die?**

*A general objection:*

1. If A has a moral right to  $x$ , then A is never morally obligated to sacrifice  $x$ .

*Arguments that there can be a duty to die*

2. Jerry is slowly dying in a hospital bed. He needs many machines to keep himself alive: a machine to keep his heart going, a machine to keep his lungs going, a dialysis machine, and a pancreas machine. He will eventually die with or without these machines, but they can keep him alive for several more months. Four adorable orphans are admitted into the hospital. Each has a temporary but very serious medical condition: to survive, one requires a heart machine, the second a lungs machine, the third a dialysis machine, and the fourth a pancreas machine. If they have these machines for a month, each will be cured and be able to live rich, full lives. But all the machines in the hospital are taken.
3. There is sometimes a moral duty to engage in *medical triage*: to allocate scarce medical resources to where they are most likely to have the largest impact. Sometimes doctors are obligated to engage in triage in ways that will almost definitely allow some patients to die. There is no inherent moral difference between doctors engaging in triage and a patient engaging in "self-triage," and deciding to die. Thus, patients sometimes have a duty to die.

### **Who has a duty to die?**

*Hardwig's view*

All of the following contribute to the duty to die:

- living imposes burdens on family and loved ones (what about society more generally)?
- inability to have relationships, or loss of the part of you which is important to others

Fairness-oriented conditions:

- being older, or having lived a very good life already (is this about fairness?)
- loved ones have already sacrificed for you, or if their lives are already not so great
- loved ones have to make sacrifices because you didn't make sacrifices in the past (i.e. you haven't saved up for your current medical condition)

*Is future welfare relevant?*

Hardwig says no?

Hardwig says yes, and is an objective list theorist?

Preferentism and the duty to die?

- would the *least selfish* more often have duties to die?
- would those who are liked less have greater duties to die? (e.g. those with fewer close relationships?)

Hedonism

- can the depressed have a duty to die because their depression is upsetting for those who care for them?