

# **THE ARSENAL**

Augusta University's Undergraduate Research Journal

ISSN 2380-5064 | The Arsenal is published by the Augusta University Libraries | <http://guides.augusta.edu/arsenal>

**Volume 5, Issue 1 (2023)**  
**Special Edition Issue**

## **SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES ON OPINIONS ABOUT PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**

Makenzie Jane and Angela Bratton

### **Citation**

Jane, M., & Bratton, A. (2023). Sociodemographic influences on opinions about physician assisted suicide. *The Arsenal: The Undergraduate Research Journal of Augusta University*, 5(1), 35. <http://doi.org/10.21633/issn.2380.5064/s.2023.05.01.35>



© Jane and Bratton 2023. This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDeriv 2.0 Generic License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>).

# Sociodemographic Influences on Opinions about Physician Assisted Suicide

**Presenter(s):** Makenzie Jane

**Author(s):** Makenzie Jane and Angela Bratton

**Faculty Sponsor(s):** Angela Bratton, PhD

**Affiliation(s):** Department of History, Anthropology, and Philosophy

## ABSTRACT

Physician-assisted suicide (PAS) is the voluntary termination of one's life via administering a lethal substance with a physician's direct or indirect assistance. In the U.S., only nine states legally offer assisted suicide. These "right to die" states have death with dignity laws that seek to help individuals with terminal illnesses take their own lives to avoid suffering. In general, public opinion regarding the legality of PAS seems to be divided. This medical anthropology research paper aimed to analyze the influence of various sociodemographic factors on people's opinions regarding physician-assisted suicide, focusing specifically on religious identity, income, and age. The study implemented 45 detailed questions to voluntary participants 18 years or older. The questions served to sort the participants into demographics and gather information on their opinions about PAS and different conditional circumstances. The study's results suggested that most of the sample supported the idea of "dignity over death," a common argument for proponents of PAS. The detailed analysis confirmed the belief that approval of PAS is dependent mainly on the patient's autonomy and mental state. Age also influenced the participant's support of PAS to end one's suffering. Additionally, the religious affiliation also affected people's beliefs, with some stating their spiritual authority as the only one with control over life and death, and others citing their religious ruler's mercy as a reason why they support the procedure. This study also discussed the role of income in people's medical discussions regarding end-of-life support. This study furthers understanding of how people's social status may influence their opinions about life-ending procedures and medical decisions.

*Received: 02/15/2023 Accepted: 03/29/2023*

---

*Correspondence:* Makenzie Jane, Augusta University, 1120 15<sup>th</sup> St. Augusta, GA 30912, [mjane@augusta.edu](mailto:mjane@augusta.edu)