

Elderly people are, by and large, very well cared for, since great planning has been done to make living and moving around possible for handicapped people.

Euthanasia is accepted and practiced in the Netherlands for those who are severely ill for long or are dying. The family doctor discusses the issue in detail with the patient and the family before a decision not to treat the dying patient is taken. Active euthanasia is defined in the Netherlands as an intentional act to terminate life by a person other than the person involved on request of the latter.¹ Active euthanasia accounts for 1.8% of deaths in the Netherlands. If left alone, 87% of patients subjected to active euthanasia would have lived for a

month at most while another 12% would have survived for a maximum of 6 months.² Data on the development of public opinion in the Netherlands stems from a number of surveys conducted in 1966, 1970, 1980, 1985 and 1991 on a range of socio-cultural subjects. General practitioners, nursing home physicians, cardiologists, surgeons, internists, chest physicians and neurologists cover approximately 95% of euthanasia cases.

References

1. Dutch State Commission on Euthanasia: Final report. An English summary. *Bioethics* 1987; 1: 163-74.
2. van der Maas PJ, van Delden JJM, Pijnenborg L, Looman CWN. Euthanasia and other medical decisions concerning the end of life. *The Lancet* 1991; 338:669-674.

NEWS

Dr. Daniel Callahan

Dr. Daniel Callahan, President and co-founder of the Hastings Center will retire as president in the summer of 1996 (Hastings Center Report 1995;25:45). He conceived the idea of forming a center for bioethics in 1968. Together with his neighbour, Willard Gaylin, and the foggiest of notions on how they should go about the task, they got the Center off the ground in 1969. The rest, as the phrase goes, is history.

Dr. Callahan has served the Center as chief executive officer for twenty-six years, managing it, finding funds for it and directing its research and educational programs. In the process he has also written or edited twenty-five books.

Dr. Callahan offered the following explanation: 'I speculate about the moral meaning of the life cycle and now I should live some of those ideas. There comes a time when every founder of an organisation should step aside to make room for the next generation of leadership. I decided a few years ago that once we passed the twenty-five year mark, my time would come. I have had a splendid and interesting journey. Good talk, good colleagues, good supporters, good issues: what more could a philosopher ask of life?'

'But to retire from a role is not to retire from life. I will remain at the Center, happily expending and expanding my energies on that which I have liked the most over the years - my research and writing. Two questions will preoccupy me, both at the international level: What kind of medicine will be best for society? What kind of society will be best for medicine? Immoderate questions, to be sure, but those are the kind I like. They will keep me busy.'

(For an interesting glimpse into Dr. Callahan's style, see Ms. Ellen Moskowitz's essay entitled 'At the Center' on the inside front cover of the same issue.)

Mumbai Grahak Panchayat

This voluntary organisation was established in Bombay in 1975. Its initial activities were restricted to ensuring supplies of good quality to the public at a fair price. It has, since, diversified its activities to include the education of consumers, protecting their rights and launching several programs in their interests.

Its publications cover such topics as Medical negligence and the Consumer Protection Act, UN guidelines on consumer protection, World Environment Day and Consumer Protection Day. They have also published a comprehensive manual entitled Consumer Complaints Guide showing a wronged consumer the various steps necessary for taking effective action against the offending party.

Its periodical - **Grahak** - is published in English and Marathi and is replete with especially effective cartoons. One of their cartoons is reproduced below.

For further information please contact Mumbai Grahak Panchayat, Grahak Bhavan, Behind Dr. R. N. Cooper Hospital, Juhu-Vile Parle, Bombay 400056.



Is there anybody in the house not affected by malaria ?