



Should assisted suicide be permitted?

Lately there has been discussion about whether assisted suicide should be permitted in New Zealand. Many efforts to introduce legislation to permit this have failed in the past, despite some high profile cases, where the courts have found that someone's actions were considered to have brought about, or hastened the death of a relative or person close to them. For the medical profession this is a particularly difficult issue.

Research New Zealand decided to ask New Zealanders whether they agree with the proposal that assisted suicide should be permitted in New Zealand. It is assumed that in expressing their opinion the respondents bore in mind that the law would prescribe guidelines and protocols to prevent abuse of the law.

Respondents were more or less evenly divided on the issue. Some 47 percent felt that assisted suicide should be permitted and 44 percent felt it should not. Among those in the age group 15 -34 years 39 percent agreed with the proposal and 50 percent disagreed. Among those aged 35 and over 51 percent agreed with the proposal. 'The older people and those who may have older relatives clearly feel differently about this issue than do the younger people', said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

Among Maori/Pacific respondents, 37 percent agreed, a rather lower proportion than among NZ European/Pakeha, where 49 percent were in favour.

The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 4 and 12 August. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.9 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

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Table 1:

Q9b. Changing topics again, assisted suicide is against the law in New Zealand. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that assisted suicide should be permitted in New Zealand?

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	500	250	250
	%	%	%
Agree	47	47	48
Disagree	44	46	43
Don't know	8	7	10
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2:

Q9b. Changing topics again, assisted suicide is against the law in New Zealand. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that assisted suicide should be permitted in New Zealand?

	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
Base =	500	114	179	207
	%	%	%	%
Agree	47	39	51	51
Disagree	44	50	41	42
Don't know	8	11	8	7
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3:

Q9b. Changing topics again, assisted suicide is against the law in New Zealand. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that assisted suicide should be permitted in New Zealand?

	Total	NZ European/		
Base =	500	Pakeha	Maori/Pacific	Other
	%	%	%	%
Agree	47	49	37	50
Disagree	44	42	52	48
Don't know	8	9	11	3
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 4:

Q9b. Changing topics again, assisted suicide is against the law in New Zealand. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that assisted suicide should be permitted in New Zealand?

	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Base =	500	221	113	166
	%	%	%	%
Agree	47	43	52	50
Disagree	44	49	36	43
Don't know	8	8	12	7
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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