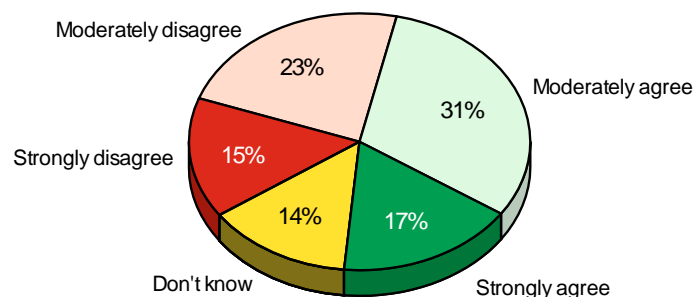


WITHHOLDING OR WITHDRAWING LIFE-SUSTAINING MEDICAL TREATMENT AND EUTHANASIA

Withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment concerns, by definition, patients in terminal state. In their case, medical treatment does not lead to being cured, but lengthens the process of dying and entails additional suffering. Withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment can be differentiated from the so-called passive euthanasia. The key distinction is the intention associated with stopping treatment: whether its goal is to end life or bring about the natural process of dying.

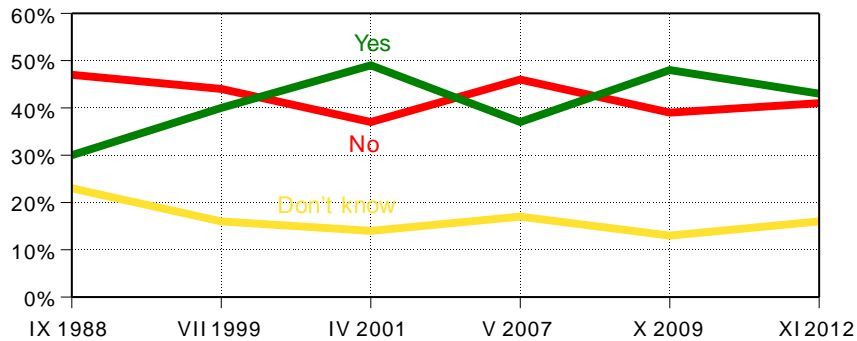
Both withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment and euthanasia are controversial. Almost half of respondents (48%) are of the opinion that an incurably ill, dying person should not be treated if it is known that treatment would not be effective, but that it would increase suffering and prolong dying. The opposite view is expressed by 38% of respondents.

DO YOU AGREE THAT TREATMENT SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM A TERMINALLY ILL, DYING PERSON IF IT IS KNOWN THAT IT WOULD NOT BE EFFECTIVE, BUT IT WOULD INCREASE SUFFERING AND PROLONG DYING?



In the opinion of 43% of respondents, physicians should follow the request of a suffering, terminally ill patient asking for death-inducing substance. Disagreement is voiced by 41% of respondents.

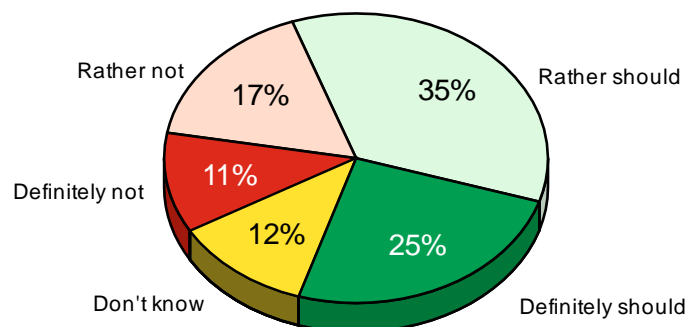
SHOULD PHYSICIANS FOLLOW THE REQUESTS OF SUFFERING, TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS ASKING FOR DEATH-INDUCING SUBSTANCE?



Opinions about the acceptability of both acts are differentiated by the worldview, primarily by religious beliefs. Although the Catholic Church clearly differentiates withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment from euthanasia, giving them very different moral evaluation, its position is not reflected in the opinions of the faithful. Respondents who participate in religious service at least once a week significantly more frequently condemn both euthanasia (considered as homicide by the Church) and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, which is acceptable in its doctrine.

Most respondents (60%) support the introduction of the so-called "living will" into the Polish law. It is the possibility to sign a declaration stating that, in case of permanent loss of consciousness, the person does not want life-supporting treatment to be administered.

IN SOME COUNTRIES THERE IS A LEGAL POSSIBILITY TO SIGN THE SO-CALLED "LIVING WILL". IT IS A DECLARATION STATING THAT, IN CASE OF PERMANENT LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, THE PERSON DOES NOT WANT LIFE-SUPPORTING TREATMENT TO BE ADMINISTERED. SHOULD IT BE INTRODUCED INTO POLISH LAW?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Withdrawing life-sustaining medical treatment and euthanasia", January 2013. Fieldwork for national sample: November 2012, N=952. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.