

11 Years under Oregon's Assisted-Suicide Law

Report data supplied by lethally prescribing doctors, pharmacy reports, and death certificates. ¹

Categories	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
No. of reported assisted-suicide deaths	16	27	27	21	38	42	37	38	46	49	60	401
No. of reported lethal prescriptions written	24	33	39	44	58	68	60	[64] ² <u>65</u> ³	65	85	88	[628] ⁴ <u>629</u> ⁵
No. of reporting MDs who wrote lethal prescriptions in a given year	[14] ² <u>NR</u> ³	[22] ² <u>NR</u> ³	22	33	33	42	40	39	40	45	59	[389] ⁴ <u>353</u> ^{5,6}
1st doctor asked wrote lethal prescription	8	8	11	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	?
No. of cases where prescribing MD was present when lethal drugs taken	→	→	→	→	→	34 ⁷	6	8	15	11	11	85
Duration (weeks) of patient-doctor relationship – <i>Median:</i> <i>Range:</i>	11 2-540	22 2-816	8 1-853	14 0-500	11 0-379	10 0-405	12 0-1065	8 0-678	15 1-767	8 0-1440	8 0-916	10 0-1440
Patients' reasons for wanting assisted suicide – Fear of												
<i>Being a burden:</i>	2	7	17	4	14	16	14	16	20	22	20	152
<i>Losing autonomy:</i>	12	21	25	16	32	39	32	30	44	49	57	357
<i>Lost control of bodily functions:</i>	→	→	→	→	→	→	121 ⁸	17	27	31	37	233
<i>Inadequate pain control or concern about it:</i>	2	7	8	1	10	9	8	9	22	16	3	95
<i>Inability to do enjoyable activities:</i>	11	22	21	13	32	39	34	34	44	42	55	347
<i>Treatment financial implications:</i>	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	11
<i>Loss of dignity:</i>	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	39	29	34	35	42	55	228 ⁵
Patients referred for psychiatric evaluation	5	10	5	3	5	2	2	2	2	0	2	38
Complications –												
Regurgitation:	0	0	1	1	2	3	3	2	4	3	0	19
Patient awoke after taking drugs:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Unknown:	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	[9] 10 ⁹
Minutes from drug intake to death – <i>Median:</i> <i>Range:</i>	22 10 mins–12 hrs	30 4 mins–26 hrs	30 5 mins–75 hrs	25 5 mins–37 hrs	20 5 mins–14 hrs	20 5 mins–48 hrs	25 5 mins–31 hrs	26 5 mins–9.5 hrs	29 1 min–16.5 hrs	25 6 mins–83 hrs	15 2 mins–25 hrs	25 1 min–83 hrs ¹⁰
Days between writing of lethal prescription and death – <i>Median:</i> <i>Range:</i>	2 0-22	7 0-247	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	14 0-462	NR	7 0-698 ¹¹
Reported incidents of non-compliance with ODHS reporting protocols	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	10	0	2	20
Penalties imposed for non-compliance with assisted-suicide law	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

- The ODHS has acknowledged that it has no way of knowing if data provided by prescribing doctors are accurate or complete. The Pharmacy Dispensing Report simply asks for general information (ie, patient & physician names and drugs prescribed) but no data on patient's case. Death certificates do not indicate drug overdose as true cause of death.
- Bracketed statistics are the figures the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) previously reported for that category in their annual report for that year.
- Underlined statistics are the new figures for those previous years which the ODHS reported in the 2006 report. The ODHS gave no reasons for the statistical changes.
- This is what the total would have been if the ODHS had not changed the data reported prior to 2006.
- This total reflects the changed data the ODHS reported in the 2006 report for years 1998 to 2005.
- Since the ODHS reports do not identify the lethally prescribing doctors, there is no way to determine the total number for the 10-year span. The same doctor could have written multiple lethal prescriptions for multiple patients since 1998.
- 7th Annual Report (for 2003) changed the cumulative figures for 1998 to 2003 to this total.
- 8th Annual Report (for 2004) changed the cumulative figures for 1998 to 2004 to this total.
- 10th Annual Report (for 2007) changed the 10-year, overall total for cases involving unknown drug complications from 7 to 8—even though the report for 2006 listed 7 such cases, and there were 0 cases reported for 2007. No explanation for the change was given.
- Without explanation, the 11th Annual Report (for 2008) changed the total range of time between drug intake and death to 1 min.–48 hrs. Given the statistic for this category from the 2007 report, the correct range should be 1 min.–83 hrs (the total on the above chart).
- This total was reported in the 10th Annual Report (for 2007) without explanation. The category was not included in the reports for 2000–2006 and 2008.

NR = Not Reported

Sources

Oregon Death with Dignity Act: The First Year's Experience, OHD, 2/18/99.
 Oregon Death with Dignity Act: The Second Year's Experience, OHD, 2/23/00.
 Oregon Death with Dignity Act: Three Years of Legalized Physician-Assisted Suicide, OHD, 2/21/01.
 Fourth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 2/6/02.
 Fifth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/5/03.

Sixth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/10/04.
 Seventh Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/10/05.
 Eighth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/9/06.
 Ninth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/8/07.
 Tenth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/18/08.
 Eleventh Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, ODHS, 3/3/09.