

# Reported Assisted-Suicide Deaths in Oregon & Washington State

Report data supplied by lethally prescribing doctors, pharmacist reports, and death certificates.<sup>1</sup>

Figures and percentages are those reported by the respective states.

<u>Oregon</u>			<u>Categories</u>	<u>Washington State</u>		
1998 - 2008	2009	TOTAL		2009	TOTAL	
401	59	460	Number of reported assisted-suicide deaths	36	36	
629	95	724	Number of reported lethal prescriptions written	63	63	
353	55	408	Number of reporting doctors who wrote lethal prescriptions in a given year	53	53	
85 [26.4%]	3 [6.4%]	88 [23.8%]	Number of cases where prescribing doctor was present when lethal drugs taken	3 [8%]	3 [8%]	
76 [23.5%]	1 [1.8%]	77 [20.3%]	Number of cases where prescribing doctor was present at the time of death	Not Reported	Not Reported	
38 [9.6%]	0 [0.0%]	38 [8.4%]	Number of patients referred for psychiatric evaluation	3 [7%]	3 [7%]	
357 [89.9%]	57 [96.6%]	414 [90.8%]	Patients' reasons for requesting assisted suicide:	44 [100%]	44 [100%]	
347 [87.4%]	51 [86.4%]	398 [87.3%]		Loss of autonomy	44 [100%]	44 [100%]
228 [83.8%]	54 [91.5%]	282 [85.2%]		Inability to do enjoyable activities	40 [91%]	40 [91%]
233 [58.7%]	31 [52.5%]	264 [57.9%]		Loss of dignity	36 [82%]	36 [82%]
152 [38.3%]	15 [25.4%]	167 [36.6%]		Lost control of bodily functions	18 [41%]	18 [41%]
95 [23.9%]	6 [10.2%]	101 [22.1%]		Being a burden	10 [23%]	10 [23%]
11 [2.8%]	1 [1.7%]	12 [2.6%]		Inadequate pain control or concern about it:	11 [25%]	11 [25%]
			Financial implications of treatment	1 [2%]	1 [2%]	
19 [4.9%]	1 [1.7%]	20 [4.5%]	Complications after lethal drugs were ingested:	1 [3%]	1 [3%]	
0 [0.0%]	0 [0.0%]	0 [0.0%]		Regurgitation	1 [3%]	1 [3%]
1 <sup>2</sup>	0 [0.0%]	1 <sup>2</sup>		Seizures	0 [0%]	0 [0%]
10 [2.5%]	1 [1.7%]	11 [2.4%]		Patient awakened	2 [5%]	2 [5%]
				Unknown	5 [14%]	5 [14%]
20	1	21	Reported incidents of physician non-compliance with the assisted-suicide law	Not Reported	Not Reported	
0	0	0	Penalties imposed for non-compliance with the assisted-suicide law	Not Reported	Not Reported	

**Notes:**

- The Oregon Department of Human Services, the agency responsible for overseeing assisted-suicide practice, 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 cases. Death certificates, by law, do not even indicate drug overdose as the true cause of death. Washington's system of assisted-suicide data retrieval is virtually identical to Oregon's.
- According to Oregon's *Twelfth Annual Report*, "In 2005, one patient regained consciousness 65 hours after ingesting the medications, subsequently dying from their illness 14 days after awakening. The complication is recorded here but the patient is not otherwise included in the total number of PAS deaths."

**Sources:**

Oregon Department of Human Services, *Twelfth Annual Report on Oregon's Death with Dignity Act*, 3/4/10.  
Available online at: <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/docs/year12.pdf>.

Washington State Department of Health, *2009 Death with Dignity Act Report*, 3/4/10.  
Available online at: [http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/forms/DWDA\\_2009.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/forms/DWDA_2009.pdf).