



Thunder Bay Psychiatry Local Education Group (LEG)

PSYCHIATRY DEPARTMENT ROUNDS

Topic: Missing Goldilocks and Killing Kant: The Price of Canada's Assisted Death Expansion

Presenter: Dr. Sonu Gaing, Chief of Psychiatry, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 **Time:** 1200h EST

Click [here](#) to join the WebEx

Learning Objectives

1. Be aware of the scope of medical assistance in dying (MAID) frameworks, ranging from MAID for terminal illness to MAID outside near end-of-life conditions.
2. Appreciate challenges assessing irremediability, intolerable suffering, capacity and decision making when considering potential requests for assisted dying in the context of mental illnesses.
3. Understand proposed safeguards regarding MAID outside near end-of-life situations, including MAID for mental illness, and their limitations.
4. Appreciate the tension between 'overinclusion' and 'underinclusion' in the context of potential assisted dying requests as MAID laws expand.

Abstract

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) has been legalized or decriminalized in well over a dozen jurisdictions around the world, and assisted dying policies continue to evolve rapidly. Many jurisdictions are exploring whether to introduce assisted dying laws, or expand existing laws. There is wide variation in how policies address potential applications for assisted dying for mental illness. MAID for sole criterion mental illness is available in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland. Canadian legislation that was initially set to permit psychiatric euthanasia by 2023 was recently amended to delay implementation until 2024.

This session will explore medicolegal, scientific, ethical and public policy issues related to MAID, focusing on the particular challenges posed with mental illnesses in the context of MAID, including challenges determining irremediability and the overlap between suicidality and psychiatric MAID. Dr. K. Sonu Gaing, a University of Toronto professor and psychiatrist, a past president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association and panelist from the Council of Canadian Academies Expert Panel reviewing psychiatric euthanasia, will review the Canadian experience with MAID, including recent policy developments expanding MAID to non-dying disabled. Issues that have driven Canada's MAID expansion will be discussed. This session will also explore differences between groups who seek MAID for different reasons, and discuss potential impacts of expanding MAID laws on marginalized populations suffering from life distress.