

Suicide as panacea

SIR – Peter Bedford, the Berkshire coroner, concluded that a terminally ill woman and her partner “killed themselves in a five-star hotel in a suicide pact”, adding: “Part of me thinks, ‘Good on you.’ You have to respect... what they wanted for themselves” (report, August 12).

Many elderly people may now ask why they should not make a quick exit, rather than living out their full lifespans. The dead man’s sister said he had rheumatoid arthritis, was unemployed and was so “devoted” to his partner that “he wouldn’t be able to survive without her”.

In addition to approving of suicide for the terminally ill, the disabled and people who fear becoming old and infirm, it appears we also approve of suicide for those who would feel distressed at a loved one’s suicide.

Suicide is becoming the panacea for all ills and also a preventive medicine. Campaigners claim that “assisted dying” would be legalised with “strict safeguards” to avoid slippery slopes. It helps to start with slippery words.

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Daily Telegraph 13th August 2015