

# Dutch doctor may be tried for euthanasia

By Senay Boztas

A FEMALE Dutch doctor faces prosecution for carrying out euthanasia on an elderly woman with dementia by secretly putting a sedative in her coffee, following it with a fatal injection even though she apparently struggled.

The Regional Review Committee for Euthanasia (RTE), which assesses euthanasia cases, said the doctor "did not act in accordance with due care criteria" and referred the case to the courts and health inspectorate, according to the *Volkskrant* newspaper.

It is the first time a Dutch doctor has been accused of acting without due care towards a dementia patient in 15 years of legal euthanasia. But the committee said the doctor did act in good faith. "I am nonetheless convinced that this doctor acted in good conscience," Jacob Kohnstamm, chairman of the RTE said. "It would be good if there were more clarity over how this can be carried out. [Referring this case to the courts] is a cry for help."

Ethics experts have expressed concerns about a growing number of cases involving patients with dementia, or psychological issues. These made up 2 per cent and 1 per cent of the 5,516 cases in 2015.

In this case, Dutch reports said although the woman, 79, had said she did not want to end up in long-term care and had expressed a desire to die, she often added: "But not yet."

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