

# Incurable patient seeks right to die

Georgie Keate

A man is launching a High Court challenge to the law banning assisted dying because he has an incurable — rather than terminal — illness and will endure decades of paralysis and pain.

The 54-year-old, known only as Omid, had multiple system atrophy (MSA) diagnosed in 2014, is confined to his bed and losing his speech. He hopes his legal challenge will be accepted because no court has yet considered the issue of people with incurable diseases. Previous cases have involved those with a life expectancy of fewer than six months.

In 2014, when the Supreme Court rejected Tony Nicklinson's case, Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, its president, said there was "significantly more justification" in helping people to die if they had an incurable, painful disease than if they had only months to live.

Omid's lawyers — Saimo Chahal, QC, and Paul Bowen, QC — represented Mr Nicklinson. "They have more respect for animals than myself," Omid said. "If an animal is sick and they can't do anything about it, what do they do? They put them to sleep."

Liz Truss, the lord chancellor, is due to deliver written arguments on April 13, with a court date to come later.

Times 7 April 2017