

# Caring not killing

SIR - We members and fellows of the Royal College of Physicians London (RCP) are dismayed at the recent conduct of an indicative survey by the college on assisted dying.

The process was heavily influenced by pro-euthanasia advocates on the college council, including members of "Health Care Professionals for Assisted Dying". The survey was conducted in a deliberately skewed fashion, including an unprecedented rule that a 60 per cent "supermajority" of respondents was required to maintain the current RCP policy of not campaigning for changes in legislation on this issue.

Some 43 per cent of respondents voted to maintain the college's current opposition to assisted dying and only 25 per cent were in favour of the "neutral" position now adopted by the RCP council, which would, in fact, allow the RCP to lobby for a change in current legislation - something which it has previously resolutely opposed.

Three members of the RCP ethics committee, including its chairman, Professor Albert Weale, have resigned because of the college's conduct and decision-making in this area. Professor Weale is on record as stating that the RCP has been "incoherent" and "unfair" (report, April 7).

We believe that it is not in the duty of a doctor to take part in assisted dying. Indeed, it is contrary to any form of good medical practice and will destroy the traditional, trusting doctor-patient relationship. We hope that the RCP will review the processes which led to the recent poll and its flawed result. The interests of patients - and of doctors - are best served by doctors caring for their patients rather than killing them. We expect the RCP to uphold this principle.

**Dr Charlotte Abson**

**Dr Richard Leach**

**Dr Amy Profitt**

**Dr Sanna Khawaja**

*and 33 others; see telegraph.co.uk*

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