

# Assisted dying is public's decision

Baroness Finlay has argued against assisted dying for many years, claiming that most doctors are opposed to it. Yet in "GPs must ask: do we want to kill people?" (Letters, last week), she seems to want to deny grassroots doctors a voice on this issue. Why? Is she afraid of the answer?

The recent survey by the Royal College of Physicians found that its members hold a wide spectrum of views and, as a result, the college moved to neutrality on the subject. This implies only a willingness to engage in the debate and to listen to other voices, notably those of our patients.

All doctors must be given a say, but ultimately it will be a decision for wider society – 84% of whose members support a change in the law. *Dr Jacky Davis, chairwoman Healthcare Professionals for Assisted Dying*

## **GPs will still have a choice**

Finlay says doctors who "do not feel that ending life is the role of a GP" should continue to oppose assisted dying. But this elides important distinctions. One question is about whether assisted dying should be permitted. Another is about who should be involved in its delivery. On the second, surely the most that is being suggested is that GPs be permitted, rather than required, to play a role.

*Chris Belshaw, Cumbria*

## **It's not about killing**

Finlay tries to confuse the public by using the terms assisted dying and euthanasia interchangeably. They are entirely different. The public generally supports assisted dying, whereas no one wants doctors to kill their patients, and Lord Falconer's bill included elaborate safeguards to ensure they would not do so.

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