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## Assisted dying

Sir, I have no doubt that those arguing against the legalisation of assisted dying now (letters, Jun 25 & 26), will come to be seen in the same light as those who protested against the introduction of heart transplants as unnatural or ungodly. It is right to both save life when we can, and to limit the pain of dying for those terminally ill who so wish. At present, we can do the former but not the latter unless they commit suicide or covertly go abroad to die. It is time to give a better, safer and more regulated option.

**Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain**  
Maidenhead Synagogue

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein (Jun 24) repeats the well-worn arguments for legalising "assisted dying". He overlooks the unfeasibility of framing and enforcing "proper protections against abuse" (no jurisdiction with permissive laws has anything close) or where his argument logically leads.

To pose but two of several obvious questions his article raises: if the law should allow physician-assisted suicide for those likely to die in six

months' time, why not for those who face years of suffering? And if a hastened death for suffering patients who can request it, why not for those who are unable to do so?

**Professor John Keown**  
Kennedy Institute of Ethics,  
Georgetown University

Sir, In 1993, when my mother was 92, she suffered a stroke that left her paralysed. She could not utter a word, though could very clearly mouth "I want to die". I was helpless. She was fed through her nose and given antibiotics when pneumonia set in. Three months later, when an elderly locum (with no career to lose) was on duty, my mother was given the means to die peacefully. I do not wish to end my life in such a barbaric way.

**Enid Light**  
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