

Table 4. Death with Dignity end of life care for 246 Oregonians who died after ingesting a lethal dose of medication, by year, 1998-2005.

Characteristics	2005 (N=38)*	1998-2004 (N=208)*	Total (N=246)*
End of Life Care			
Hospice			
Enrolled (%)	35 (92)	178 (86)	213 (87)
Not enrolled (%)	3 (8)	28 (14)	31 (13)
<i>Unknown</i>	0	2	2
Insurance			
Private (%)	22 (58)	129 (63)	151 (62)
Medicare or Medicaid (%)	16 (42)	74 (36)	90 (37)
None (%)	0	2 (1)	2 (1)
<i>Unknown</i>	0	3	3
End of Life Concerns⁺			
Losing autonomy (%)	30 (79)	177 (87)	207 (86)
Less able to engage in activities making life enjoyable (%)	34 (89)	172 (84)	206 (85)
Loss of dignity (%) ⁺⁺	34 (89)	60 (80)	94 (83)
Losing control of bodily functions (%)	17 (45)	121 (59)	138 (57)
Burden on family, friends/caregivers (%)	16 (42)	74 (36)	90 (37)
Inadequate pain control or concern about it (%)	9 (24)	45 (22)	54 (22)
Financial implications of treatment (%)	1 (3)	6 (3)	7 (3)
PAS Process			
Referred for psychiatric evaluation (%)	2 (5)	32 (16)	34 (14)
Patient died at			
Home (patient, family or friend) (%)	36 (95)	196 (94)	232 (94)
Long term care, assisted living or foster care facility (%)	2 (5)	9 (4)	11 (4)
Hospital (%)	0	1 (<1)	1 (<1)
Other (%)	0	2 (1)	2 (1)
Lethal Medication			
Secobarbital (%)	4 (11)	101 (49)	105 (43)
Pentobarbital (%)	34 (89)	103 (50)	137 (56)
Other (%)	0	4 (2)	4 (2)
Health-care provider present when medication ingested[†]			
Prescribing physician (%)	8 (23)	40 (29)	48 (28)
Other provider, when prescribing physician not present (%)	18 (51)	74 (54)	92 (54)
No provider (%)	9 (26)	22 (16)	31 (18)
<i>Unknown</i>	3	2	5
Complications			
Regurgitated (%)	2 (5)	10 (5)	12 (5)
Seizures (%)	0	0	0
Awakened after taking prescribed medication ^{††}	1	0	1
No complications (%)	35 (95)	194 (95)	229 (95)
<i>Unknown</i>	1	4	5

Characteristics (cont'd)	2005 (N=38)*	1998-2004 (N=208)*	Total (N=246)*
Emergency Medical Services			
Called for intervention after lethal medication ingested (%)	0	0	0
Calls for other reasons (%)**	1 (3)	2 (1)	3 (1)
Not called after lethal medication ingested (%)	36 (97)	203 (99)	239 (99)
<i>Unknown</i>	1	3	4
Timing of PAS Event			
Duration (weeks) of patient-physician relationship			
Median	8	12	12
Range	0-678	0-1065	0-1065
Duration (days) between 1 st request and death			
Median	40	38	39
Range	15-1009	15-737	15-1009
Minutes between ingestion and unconsciousness			
Median	5	5	5
Range	2-15	1-38	1-38
<i>Unknown</i>	3	21	24
Time between ingestion and death			
Median (minutes)	26	25	25
Range (minutes-hours)	5m-9.5h	4m-48h	4m-48h
<i>Unknown</i>	2	15	17

* Unknowns are excluded when calculating percentages unless otherwise noted.

** Calls included two to pronounce death and one to help a patient who had fallen.

† The data shown are for 2001-2005. Information about the presence of a health care provider/volunteer, in absence of the prescribing physician, was first collected in 2001. Attendance by the prescribing physician has been recorded since 1998. During 1998-2005 the prescribing physician was present when 35% of the patients ingested the lethal medication.

†† Historically, the Annual Report tables list information on patients who died as a result of ingesting medication prescribed under the provisions of the Death with Dignity Act. Because one patient regained consciousness after ingesting the lethal medication and then died 14 days later from his/her illness rather than from the medication, the complication is recorded here but the patient is not included in the total number of PAS deaths.

+ Affirmative answers only ("Don't know" included in negative answers). Available for 17 patients in 2001.

++ First asked in 2003.