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SUBMISSION BY DVORA RABINOWICZ TO THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO END OF LIFE CHOICES

To whom it may concern,

My father passed away in January 2015 after a 12 - 15year battle with Alzheimer 's disease.

My father watched his mother's slow drawn out demise with Alzheimer's disease. Before he became unwell himself, he said that if anything ever happened to him, if he became sick like that, he would end his life. He would never go into a nursing home. But unfortunately he got Alzheimer's as well and was not afforded the liberty of a death with dignity.

When looking after my father became too much for our family he was put in a high care nursing home. High care nursing homes are a waiting room for death. Once there his health took a dive very quickly. He was in and out of hospital. With with each visit to hospital he lost more and more of his functions.

He went into a nursing home walking and talking, in the end he could no longer walk, talk, express himself, move, roll over, feed himself, dress himself, swallow food & drink unless it was thickened or pureed, go to the bathroom. He wore adult nappies and relied on others to change him and clean him up when he lay in urine and faeces. That was not living. That was not quality of life.

With each hospital visit we were told that as he has Alzheimer's disease he didn't qualify for the intensive care unit. In the end he qualified for palliative care. The options offered to us were to withhold medications. The next time he became unwell, we were told we should consider not giving him IV fluids or antibiotics. If we chose this option they would keep him comfortable with morphine for the 'pain'. That's the choice provided, a long slow drawn out death void of any dignity. To not treat them to me is still a treatment. The end result is still death. Why draw out their death, why not allow the option to end it quickly. Why even let it get to that point. The process is despicable.

When he died this year, we were relieved he was not suffering through this miserable life anymore.

Now for myself and my siblings, the possibility is there for us that we may contract Alzheimers disease too. The prospect of having the same undignified existence my father and grandmother had makes me sick to the stomach. It is our life and our choice, and when the time comes, we want the choice to die with dignity, at a time we decide is appropriate.

Regards

Mrs Dvora Rabinowicz

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