SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I would like to write my submission in support of the right to choose when it comes to end of life decisions. I believe that we as individuals should be able to make a choice as to when and where our lives will end and I congratulate the government on conducting such an inquiry. Specifically I will focus on Dementia and prolonged emotional trauma which is of closest relevance to me.

We live in a modern society where better health and well-being and greater access to care have resulted in us as people living longer. I feel however that although we are definitely living longer, our quality of life is not necessarily better. Our physicality, our bodies are lasting longer but I feel that more and more our minds are not. Dementia is a hugely growing and very sad reality of getting old and seems to be a common transition in times towards end of life. Our bodies are being kept alive longer than our minds.

I experienced this with my grandmother who was ready to go long before her body actually gave up. She would become extremely frustrated and fed-up when she would have moments of clarity (outside of her dementia) and would beg for it all to be over. My grandmother was also prescribed anti-depressants (as well as several other numbing medications) in an attempt to dull her frustrations. She no longer felt like herself and did not want to see her family have to manage a stranger, which is how she viewed herself. In the years leading up to her Dementia becoming so bad and unmanageable, she wanted the option of making that decision with her family. In her final weeks she was placed into a Nursing Home as my family could no longer care for her both physically and mentally – as my Mum used to say ‘the lights are on but no one is home’. She spent the last few weeks of her life distressed, confused and confined to a bed. I know my family would have liked the option to allow her some peace.

As we are entering the era of ageing baby boomers, it is going to become more apparent that although we are living longer, our quality of life in our final years is riddled with physical and psychological pain. Keeping people alive for the sake of being alive I believe is far worse than allowing someone the choice to make an (informed and discussed) discussion as to when they would like to end their own life.

I encourage the panel to consider discussion on end of life choices for those who are not only suffering physically but psychologically and emotionally.
Thank you for your time

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File1:

File2:

File3: