



The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study



Attitudes toward Euthanasia in New Zealand in 2015

The controversial Euthanasia debate has had a long-standing place in New Zealand's Parliament.

The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS) asked participants aged 18 years and over how strongly they support euthanasia. The data reported below are drawn from the 2014/15 wave of data collection, sampling 15,270 New Zealanders.

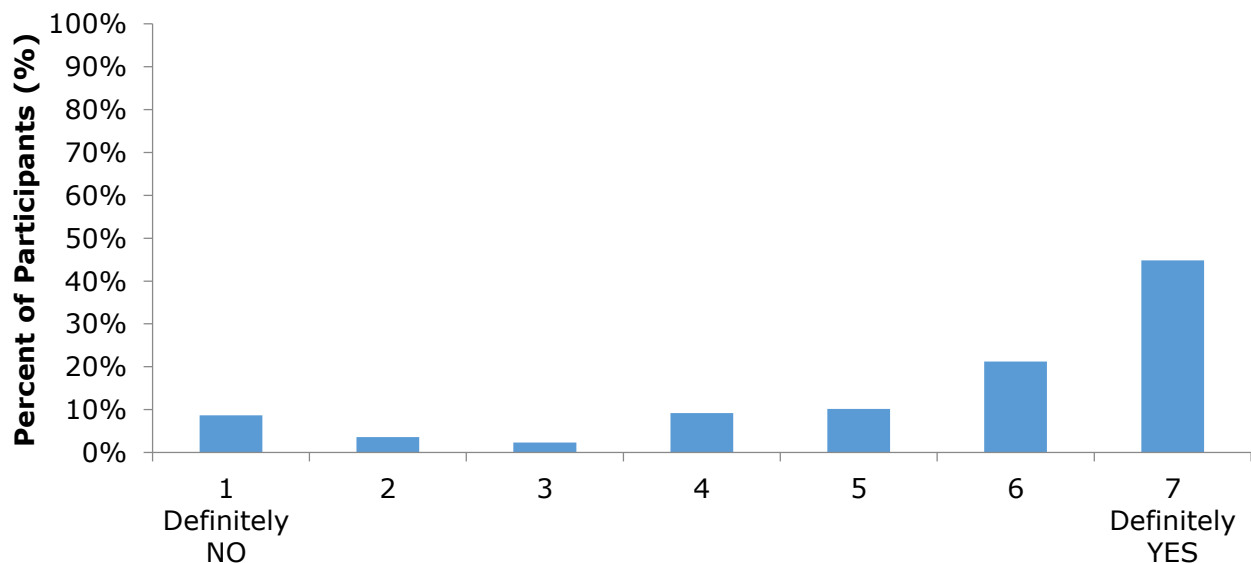
DO NEW ZEALANDERS SUPPORT EUTHANASIA?

The NZAVS asked people about their support for euthanasia using the question:

Suppose a person has a painful incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life if the patient requests it?

Participants were asked to respond to this question using a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being 'Definitely NO' and 7 being 'Definitely YES'

The percentage of participants' response to this question is shown in the bar graph below:



Participants' response to the question 'Suppose a person has a painful incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life if the patient requests it?' (1 = Definitely NO, 7 = Definitely YES)

“The mean response to the question was 5.6 out of 7. This indicates that most New Zealanders were, on average, supportive of euthanasia.”

The results show that of the participants who answered this question:

- 12.3% were opposed to euthanasia. These participants rated their response as either 1 or 2 out of 7.
- Approximately two thirds of the participants (66%) were supportive of euthanasia. These participants rated their response as either 6 or 7 out of 7.
- 21.7% were undecided on the issue. These participants rated their response as 3-5 out of 7.
- The average response to the question was 5.6 out of 7. This indicates that most New Zealanders were, on average, supportive of euthanasia.

How does support for euthanasia differ by age?

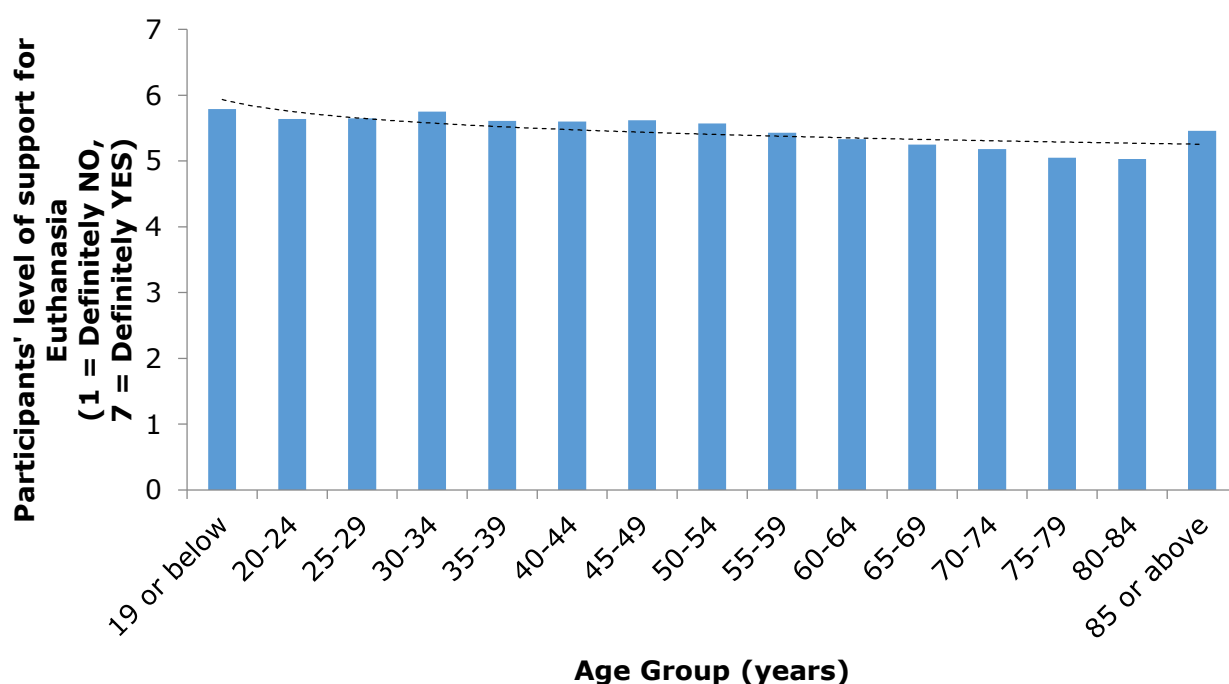
The responses to the question “Suppose a person has a painful incurable disease. Do you think that doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient’s life if the patient requests it?” were then broken down by age group.

The graph below illustrates participants’ response to the question by age group:

The results show that of the participants who provided their age and a response to the question (n=15,259):

- The highest levels of support for euthanasia were reported by participants aged 18 to 19 years with an average response of 5.79 out of 7.
- The lowest levels of support for euthanasia were reported by those aged 80-84 years with an average response of 5.03 out of 7.

Overall, although average responses differ by age groups, the data shows that the average responses to the question for all age groups were all above 5.



SUMMARY

- Roughly 2 out of 3 adult New Zealanders were supportive of euthanasia.
- Roughly 12.3% of adult New Zealanders were opposed to euthanasia.
- Support for euthanasia is similar across age groups.

CONTACT:

NZAVS Research Team

Email: nzavs@auckland.ac.nz

Phone: +64 9 373 7599 ext 87498

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NZAVS *The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study*