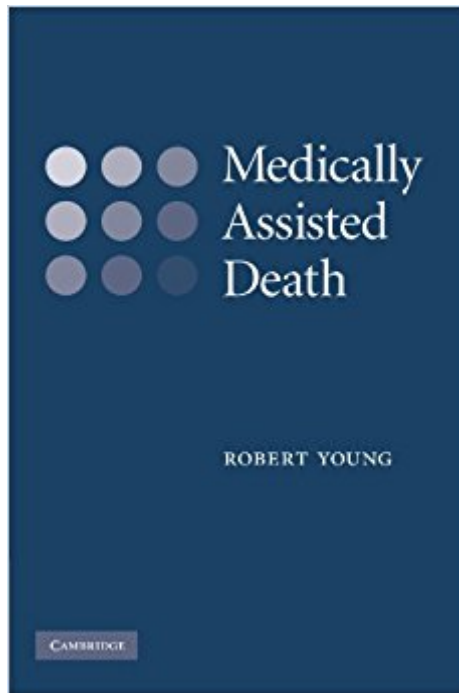




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Medically Assisted Death



Synopsis

Does a competent person suffering from a terminal illness or enduring an otherwise burdensome existence, who considers his life no longer of value but is incapable of ending it, have a right to be helped to die? Should someone for whom further medical treatment would be futile be allowed to die regardless of expressing a preference to be given all possible treatment? These are some of the questions that are asked and answered in this wide-ranging discussion of both the morality of medically assisted death and the justifiability of making certain instances legal. A case is offered in support of the moral and legal permissibility of specified instances of medically assisted death, along with responses to the main objections that have been levelled against it. The philosophical argument is bolstered by empirical evidence from The Netherlands and Oregon where voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide are already legal.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Robert Young (2007) Medically Assisted Death, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. Ralph BlundenThe author of this book, Dr Robert Young, is a former Reader in philosophy at La Trobe University, Australia. In this review I will outline the form and content of Dr Young's wonderful book, but I will not be challenging any of his arguments or conclusions since I find myself largely in agreement with them. Yet, a characteristic of the book is that Dr Young draws attention to further literature that discusses issues in opposition to his own preferred position. Even those who disagree with Dr Young's conclusions will find guidance in this book to sources more congenial to their own philosophic leanings. Dr Young has a disquieting ability to both be gentle in the way he deploys

arguments and to be uncompromising in the relentlessness of his logic. Philosophy is notoriously difficult in its professional guise. Medically Assisted Death is unusual in its sensitivity to the reader. Dr Young takes enormous care to at all times inform the reader of what he is doing, why he is deploying certain arguments or discussing certain propositions and consistently throughout the book he summarises what he has done. The topic demands the reader's concentration, but there is nowhere the non-professional philosopher will find a more accessible account of the topic. This is not to say the book is without rigour as it certainly has that. It is to say that Dr Young has reflected on the topic of voluntary medically assisted death for many years and brings his meticulous analytic mind to bear on it in such a way as not only to provide lucidity, but to give the book a certain aesthetic dimension through the use of language that is elegant, succinct and precise.

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