

Appendix 2

Table 1 - Physician and patient characteristics in LAWER cases (n=66)		
	unweighted % (n)	weighted %
<i>Physician specialty</i>		
family physician	50.0 (33)	32.3
specialist	50.0 (33)	67.7
<i>Patient age</i>		
1-64 years	15.2 (10)	8.2
65-79 years	42.4 (28)	39.1
80+ years	42.4 (28)	52.7
<i>Patient sex</i>		
male	51.5 (34)	46.2
female	48.5 (32)	53.8
<i>Cause of death</i>		
cancer	62.1 (41)	32.4
cardiovascular disease (incl. cerebrovascular accident)	15.2 (10)	37.5
respiratory disease	7.6 (5)	10.8
neurological disease	4.5 (3)	3.6
other disease	10.6 (7)	15.6
<i>Place of death</i>		
at home	33.3 (22)	18.7
hospital	48.5 (32)	67.1
nursing home	16.7 (11)	12.5
other	1.5 (1)	1.2

Table 2 - Term used for LAWER cases by physicians (n=66)

	unweighted % (n)	weighted %
symptom treatment	19.7 (13)	21.2
palliative sedation	68.2 (45)	63.3
compassionate life ending	6.1 (4)	6.4
euthanasia	0.0 (0)	0.0
other	6.1 (4)	9.0

Table 3 - Comparison of drugs and doses used (unweighted / weighted)

	Intensified alleviation of pain and other symptoms n=1249	LAWER n=66	Euthanasia/ assisted suicide n=142
Drugs used	(n=1199)	(n=65)	(n=139)
Opioids	94.9 / 94.3	93.9 / 97.0	40.0 / 46.4
<i>as only drug</i>	58.6 / 59.8	44.6 / 47.7	15.7 / 21.7
<i>with only benzodiazepines</i>	23.7 / 21.8	26.2 / 26.2	14.3 / 17.4
<i>with only other drugs</i>	6.5 / 7.0	12.3 / 12.3	2.1 / 1.4
<i>with benzodiazepines and other drugs</i>	6.2 / 5.7	10.8 / 10.8	7.9 / 5.8
No opioids	5.1 / 5.7	6.1 / 3.0	60.0 / 53.6
Chi² p-value	.202 / .238		<.001 / <.001
Reported OME opioid doses used in last 24h	(n=821)	(n=37)	(n=44)
1-119 mg	37.8 / 44.4	37.8 / 44.1	13.6 / 14.8
120-239 mg	32.5 / 29.6	27.0 / 26.5	22.7 / 33.3
240-479 mg	21.8 / 18.9	27.0 / 26.5	47.7 / 40.7
480+ mg	8.3 / 7.1	8.1 / 2.9	15.9 / 11.1
Chi² p-value	.858 / .596		.043 / .077

* OME=Oral Morphine Equivalent. Conversion rates were obtained from handbooks and review publications with equianalgesic tables [34-37]

Missing OME doses: Euthanasia 12/56 (21.4%); LAWER 24/61 (39.3%); Intensified alleviation of pain and other symptoms 318/1139 (27.9%). Cases with missing values were excluded from the analysis.

** Intensified alleviation of pain and other symptoms is the administration of drugs to intensify pain and/or other symptom treatment, taking into account a potential life-shortening effect.