

**‘Death shouldn’t be society’s solutions for its own failures’ Canada’s assisted death program — which will soon include the mentally ill — under scrutiny for making death ‘a solution that disadvantages the most vulnerable’**

Since 2016, Canada’s medical assistance in dying programme – known by its acronym ‘Maid’ – has been available for adults with terminal illness. In 2021, the law was changed to include those with serious and chronic physical conditions, even if that condition was non-life threatening.

This year, it is expected to change again to include some Canadians with mental illness.

That planned expansion has ignited controversy over the assisted death programme as a whole and raised concerns that it may be too easy for the vulnerable to die in Canada. Those fears have been stoked by a recent string of reports suggesting that for some, death has been used as a stopgap for a broken social safety net.

“Making death too ready a solution disadvantages the most vulnerable people, and actually lets society off the hook,” Dr [Madeline] Li said. “I don’t think death should be society’s solution for its own failures.”

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

The 2016 law legalised assisted death for Canadians aged 18 and older with a serious and irreversible condition, whose death was “reasonably foreseeable”.

In that first year, a little over 1,000 people received an assisted death, a number that has grown every year since. In 2021, the most recent figures available, there were 10,064 Maid cases, accounting for 3.3% of all deaths in Canada.

**[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here](#)**