



# A family's fight for a dignified death

*Terminally ill Galician girl, Andrea, dies after four days off life support.*

*to pass away: a softer way of saying "to die".*

*to refuse to do s.t.: to indicate unwillingness to do s.t.*

*to pit s.b. against s.b. else: to put people into conflict.*

*to enforce: to make s.b. comply with a law.*

*binding: involving an obligation that cannot be broken.*

*to slap: (in this context) to impose a fine or punishment.*

*to babble: to "talk" rapidly and incomprehensibly.*

*a great deal: a large quantity of something*

Andrea, the terminally ill child whose parents have been battling since the end of September to give her a dignified death, **passed away** on Friday at Santiago's Hospital Clínic.

The 12-year-old had been off life support for four days after doctors, who initially **refused** to remove her feeding tube, finally consented on the basis that her condition had deteriorated severely, as her parents had been claiming.

The much-publicised case, which **pitted** Andrea's family against the paediatrics department at the Santiago hospital, has reopened the dignified death debate in Spain. Although Galicia recently passed regional legislation allowing for palliative sedation in terminal cases, Estela Ordóñez and Antonio Lago, Andrea's parents, had to turn to the courts to have this law **enforced**.

The couple had obtained a non-**binding** report from the regional bioethics committee recommending that Andrea's feeding tube be removed because of the disproportionate amount she was suffering.

But the hospital refused to do so, and the regional health chief publicly called the parents' attitude "active

euthanasia." This official was removed from her job over that statement, and sources familiar with the situation said that this, and the fact that the hospital did not want to be **slapped** with a negative court ruling, played a role in medics' decision to finally take Andrea off life support.

When she was just eight months old, Andrea stopped **babbling**, manipulating objects with her hands and sitting up. Since then, the child had been battling against a rare degenerative disease that kept her hospitalised for the last three months of her life.

Her parents say that while aware of the fact that one day Andrea would be gone from their lives, "we weren't ready for the fact that when our daughter's body stopped responding, she would not be given a dignified death the way her life had been dignified."

The case was made more difficult because of the fact that Andrea could not talk and express how she was feeling. Since her parents went public about how Andrea was being treated in the hospital, they received a **great deal** of support, including from Pedro Sanchez, the leader of the PSOE, who has promised a new law on dignified death if he becomes president. However, on the other side of the debate, the Spanish Association of Christian Lawyers announced that they will be taking legal action against the hospital.

adapted from: [http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/10/09/inenglish/1444390475\\_894081.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/10/09/inenglish/1444390475_894081.html)

"Let's chat about that!"

- What's your opinion on euthanasia?
- Why did the hospital refuse to stop Andrea's treatment? Were they right to do so?
- Should we change the laws on euthanasia?
- What other laws should be changed in your country? Why?
- Do you have a right to decide when to die?

## Weekly English Practice

15th October 2015

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# “iLook, iThink, iSpeak” Express yourself better!

## The use of cannabis as a medical treatment

The cannabis plant has been employed in medicine for centuries with some medical practitioners recommending that their patients ingest its active components (such as THC). In fact, in the 19th century it was a very common pain reliever. However, since marijuana has become illegal in most parts of the world, many now dispute whether its potential medical benefits outweigh its risks. It is currently used in some countries in treatments for cancer and AIDS patients, especially during end-of-life care.

### CLAIMED POSITIVE EFFECTS:

- STIMULATING HUNGER,
- EASING GASTROINTESTINAL DISTRESS
- RELAXING MUSCLES
- REDUCING NAUSEA
- MITIGATING PAIN
- LOWERING EYE PRESSURE

### CLAIMED POTENTIAL DANGERS:

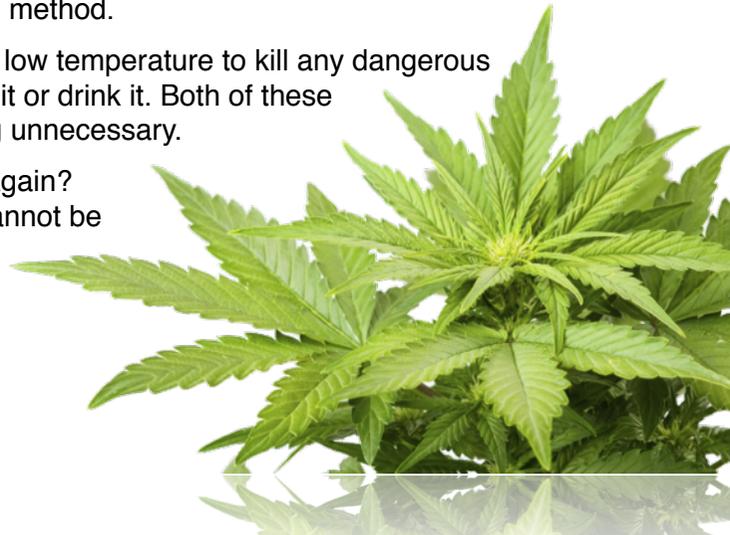
- HIGH POTENTIAL FOR ABUSE
- HARMFUL EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN
- SMOKING IS CARCINOGENIC
- CANNABIS IS A BANNED SUBSTANCE AND ITS USE PROMOTES CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

One response to the criticism of smoking has been to develop other methods of administering the drug. The most widespread of these is inhaling it through a vaporizer, which extracts and heats the active constituents in marijuana without generating any toxic compounds or irritants. An adequate amount of THC is still delivered into the bloodstream by the vaporization method.

Another option is to bake marijuana at a relatively low temperature to kill any dangerous microorganisms and then allow that patient to eat it or drink it. Both of these methods of administration make smoking the drug unnecessary.

Will cannabis ever become a standard medicine again? Marijuana is a natural plant which means that it cannot be patented and marketed by pharmaceutical companies. Many argue that this is the main reason why there is so much resistance to its use becoming legal again.

<http://www.debate.org/medical-marijuana/>  
<http://www.debate.org/big-issues/>



*Is it Gandalf? Is it a vision of God?  
No! It's an ECP coach dressed up for  
Halloween!*



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