

# Attitudes of nursing students towards the legalization of euthanasia, end-of-life planning and the spiritual dimension: A quantitative study

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## Abstract

**Background:** The Law on Euthanasia was approved in Spain and implemented in the health system. Nursing students must position themselves with respect to euthanasia in their work in the near future. **Objectives:** To know the attitudes of nursing students towards the legalization of euthanasia, its relationship with end-of-life planning, and the spiritual dimension. **Design:** A cross-sectional descriptive quantitative study. **Settings and participants:** Study carried out with students of the Nursing Degree at the Universities of Huelva and Almería in Spain from April to July 2021. **Methods:** Attitudes towards the final phase of life, Anxiety towards death, and Attitudes towards Euthanasia questionnaires were administered. Descriptive, inferential and logistic regression statistics were calculated to determine the relationship between attitudes towards euthanasia and sociodemographic variables, end-of-life planning, and the spiritual dimension. **Results:** 285 Nursing students with an average age of 23.58 years (SD = 8.19) participated. The scores on the attitude towards euthanasia were higher than the mean. While 70.5 % of the students were aware about advanced planning, only 2.5 % of them had made advanced plans. In religious practice and the spiritual dimension, the average score was high as they considered these elements to be of great support at the end of life. In terms of anxiety about death, the average score was significantly higher in women. Age, spiritual accompaniment and help, and the frequency with which spiritual beliefs are practiced are predictive factors for the attitude towards euthanasia. **Conclusions:** Students have a positive vision of euthanasia while admitting anxiety about death. They emphasize advance planning and greater religious practice as supports for euthanasia. The need for curricular training related to moral deliberation and values that support euthanasia is clear. © 2023 The Authors

## Author keywords

Attitudes; Euthanasia; Living wills; Nurses; Spirituality; Students