Data Article

Data on knowledge and beliefs of students, physicians and other health professionals about ethical issues in Cyprus

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A B S T R A C T

This article presents data collected in a field, questionnaire-based survey about ethical issues in the Republic of Cyprus. The participants were students of the University of Cyprus, and physicians and other health professionals of the Medical School, University of Cyprus and of the Archbishop Makarios III Hospital. The questionnaire included items on sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, and on their knowledge and beliefs about three different ethical issues. Beliefs on the same ethical issues but under specific, hypothetical scenarios were also reported by the participants. The ethical issues examined included euthanasia, assisted suicide, and gender selection through in vitro fertilization. Data from 259 questionnaires were collected in March and April of 2018.

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# Specifications table

| Subject area          | Medical policy |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| More specific subject area | Bioethics      |
| Type of data          | Excel and Word files, Tables |
| How data were acquired| Field questionnaire-based survey |
| Data format           | Raw, analyzed |
| Experimental factors  | All participants were orally informed about the purpose of the survey and the content of the questionnaire items |
| Experimental features | Students, physicians and health professionals self-reported their knowledge status and beliefs about three different ethical issues |
| Data source location  | Nicosia, Cyprus |
| Data accessibility    | Data are provided within this article |
| Related research article | There is no research article related to the data |

## Value of the data

- The data can be used for evaluation of knowledge and beliefs of students, physicians, and other health professionals about euthanasia, assisted suicide, and gender selection through in vitro fertilization.
- The data can be unified and compared with those collected in similar surveys conducted in different countries.
- The questionnaire and the design of the survey presented in this data article could be used in other similar surveys.
- The presented data can be used for the development of national health policies related to ethical issues.

## 1. Data

This article presents data from 259 questionnaires collected in a field, questionnaire-based survey that examines knowledge and beliefs related to three ethical issues, i.e., euthanasia, assisted suicide, and gender selection through in vitro fertilization (IVF), in the Republic of Cyprus. Two formats of data are provided, raw and analyzed.

Raw data include the participants’ responses (Supplementary Excel file) to the questionnaire items (Q) that are described and explained in two additional files that include: (a) the questionnaire used in the survey (Supplementary Word file ‘Questionnaire’) and (b) the explanation of the coded data included in the Supplementary Excel file (supplementary Word file ‘Data codes explanation’). The headings of the raw data in the Supplementary Excel file are in accordance with the questionnaire items (Supplementary Word file ‘Questionnaire’) and the data are coded in accordance with the Supplementary Word file ‘Data codes explanation’.

The questionnaire includes five sections (A to E) and thirty-two questionnaire items. Section A includes 9 items (Q1–Q9) on demographics, i.e., gender, age, occupation (physician, nurse, student, other), specialty (for physicians only), faculty of studies (for students only), hospital department (for nurses only), marital status and children, number of children, and personal characteristics such as whether or not participants own a pet, and religiosity. Section B includes seven items (Q10–Q16) on knowledge, i.e., whether the participants know what euthanasia or assisted suicide is, as well as their source of information, whether the participants know if it is possible to choose a baby’s gender through IVF, and whether euthanasia, assisted suicide, and gender selection through IVF are legal in the Republic of Cyprus. Sections C–E include items on beliefs. The items in Section C (Q17–Q23) ask participants to report whether they agree or disagree on some ethical issues related to euthanasia and assisted suicide while Section D (Q24–Q29) is related to gender selection through IVF. Section E
(Q30–Q32) includes dilemmas on ethical issues under specific conditions and whether the participants believe that all ethical dilemmas can be solved by adopting laws.

Analyzed data include four Tables 1–4. Table 1 presents participants’ characteristics (Table 1). Table 2 shows the frequency of responses to questionnaire items on knowledge related to euthanasia, assisted suicide, and gender selection through in vitro fertilization (IVF). Tables 3 and 4 present the frequencies of responses to items about beliefs related to euthanasia and assisted suicide (Table 3), and to gender selection through IVF (Table 4).

2. Experimental design, materials, and methods

The data were collected during a field, questionnaire-based survey conducted between March and April 2018 at the University of Cyprus (UCY) and in the Archbishop Makarios III Hospital in the Republic of Cyprus. Students of the UCY, physicians and other health professionals of the Medical School, UCY

Table 1
Sociodemographic characteristics of people participating in the questionnaire survey.

| Characteristics                   | Frequency | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------|
|                                   | N         | %     | N    |
| Gender                            |           |       |      |
| Male                              | 98        | 37.8  | 259  |
| Female                            | 161       | 62.2  |      |
| Age in years (mean ± sd)          |           |       |      |
| Physician                         | 24.0 ± 9.2 | 258   |
| Nurse                             | 42.2 ± 12.4 | 26    |
| Student                           | 40.6 ± 9.1 | 16    |
| Physician                         | 26        | 10.0  | 259  |
| Nurse                             | 17        | 6.6   |      |
| Student                           | 215       | 83.0  |      |
| Other                             | 1         | 0.4   |      |
| Specialty                         |           |       |      |
| Obstetrician/Gynecologist         | 4         | 1.5   |      |
| Surgeon                           | 7         | 2.7   |      |
| Pediatric                         | 9         | 3.5   |      |
| Other specialties                 | 6         | 2.3   |      |
| Faculty of studies                |           |       |      |
| Humanities                        | 8         | 3.2   |      |
| Pure and Applied Sciences         | 37        | 14.6  |      |
| Medical School                    | 6         | 2.4   |      |
| Social Sciences and Education     | 62        | 24.4  |      |
| Economics and Management          | 57        | 22.4  |      |
| Engineering                       | 28        | 11.0  |      |
| Letters                           | 12        | 4.7   |      |
| Hospital department               |           |       |      |
| Obstetrician/Gynecology           | 5         | 1.9   |      |
| Pediatrics                        | 12        | 4.6   |      |
| Marital status                    |           |       |      |
| Non-married                       | 219       | 84.6  | 259  |
| Married                           | 32        | 12.4  |      |
| Divorced                          | 1         | 0.4   |      |
| Other                             | 7         | 2.7   |      |
| Having children                   |           |       |      |
| Yes                               | 31        | 12.0  | 259  |
| No                                | 230       | 88.0  |      |
| Pet owner                         |           |       |      |
| Yes                               | 128       | 49.6  | 258  |
| No                                | 130       | 50.4  |      |
| Religiosity                       |           |       |      |
| Very religious                    | 23        | 8.9   | 258  |
| Fairly religious                  | 124       | 48.1  |      |
| Little religious                  | 80        | 31.0  |      |
| Not at all religious              | 31        | 12.0  |      |

Abbreviations: sd, Standard deviation; NA, not applicable.
and of Archbishop Makarios III Hospital were asked to participate in the survey. The research team visited classrooms, auditoriums of the UCY, and the departments of gynecology and pediatrics of Archbishop Makarios III Hospital. Students leaving their classrooms at the end of a lecture were systematically sampled (sampling step: 3). The composition of the student sample, in terms of the representation of university faculties, was based on the proportions of students in each faculty to the total population of students at UCY. Health professionals who were on duty at the time the survey was conducted were asked to participate. Students and health professionals were orally informed about the purpose of the survey and the content of the questionnaire items. Those who agreed to participate in

| Table 2 |
| Frequency of responses to three items on knowledge (euthanasia, assisted suicide, and gender selection through in vitro fertilization, questionnaire section B). |
|---|
| **Questionnaire item** | **Question** | **Frequency N (%)** |
| | | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t know** | **Total** |
| Q10 | Do you know what euthanasia is? | 252 (97.7) | 6 (2.3) | - | 258 |
| Q11 | Do you know what assisted suicide is? | 177 (70.0) | 76 (30.0) | - | 253 |
| Q13 | Is it possible to choose a baby’s gender through IVF? | 96 (37.0) | 68 (26.2) | 95 (36.7) | 259 |

Abbreviations: IVF, in vitro fertilization.

| Table 3 |
| Frequency of responses to three items on ethical issues on euthanasia and assisted suicide (questionnaire section C). |
|---|
| **Questionnaire item** | **Question** | **Frequency N (%)** |
| | | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t know** | **Total** |
| Q17 | In active euthanasia, a physician ends the life of a patient in a painless manner by administering drugs. Do you think that euthanasia is ethically justified? | 105 (40.5) | 105 (40.5) | 49 (18.9) | 259 |
| Q18 | On the contrary, in assisted suicide, the physician provides to someone the means to kill himself/herself, most often with a prescription. The patient will ultimately administer to himself/herself the lethal medication. Do you think that assisted suicide is ethically justified? | 83 (32.2) | 123 (47.7) | 52 (20.2) | 258 |
| Q19 | Do you think that assisted suicide is ethically more acceptable than euthanasia? | 52 (20.2) | 154 (59.6) | 52 (20.2) | 258 |

| Table 4 |
| Frequency of responses to three items on ethical issues on gender selection through in vitro fertilization (questionnaire section D). |
|---|
| **Questionnaire item** | **Question** | **Frequency N (%)** |
| | | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t know** | **Total** |
| Q24 | Do you think that gender selection through in vitro fertilization in order to avoid a disease is ethical? | 152 (58.9) | 71 (27.5) | 35 (13.6) | 258 |
| Q25 | Do you think that gender selection through in vitro fertilization for non-medical purposes is ethical? | 55 (21.3) | 158 (60.2) | 45 (17.5) | 258 |
| Q26 | If you wanted to have a child, would you perform an in vitro fertilization in order to choose baby’s gender having no medical reasons for doing so? | 35 (13.6) | 205 (79.4) | 18 (7.0) | 258 |
the study self-completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was anonymous, in Greek language, and was based on two online surveys on euthanasia and assisted suicide [1,2].

Assuming that about 20% of students would not know what assisted suicide is, and aiming at a 5% margin of error, a 5% level of significance and a statistical power of 80%, the minimum sample size for the needs of this survey was estimated to be approximately 250 participants.

The frequencies of the responses to the questionnaire items were estimated using STATA version 14 (StataCorp LP, College Station, Texas, USA).

Transparency document. Supporting information

Transparency document associated with this article can be found in the online version at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2019.01.046.

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2019.01.046.

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[1] SurveyMonkey, Euthanasia Survey, 2018. (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PQ2GBT5). (Accessed 20 December 2018).
[2] Medindia, Survey on Euthanasia, 2018. (https://www.medindia.net/health-survey/euthanasia.htm). (Accessed 20 December 2018).