



Departmental Distinguished Grand Rounds

Nothing, Nowhere, All At Once: Canada's Growing Courtship with Assisted Death

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Chief of Psychiatry, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Honorary Member of the World Psychiatric Association

Date and Time: November 30, 2023. The lecture will be from 12:00 - 13:00, including Q&A. The following 30 minutes (13:00 – 13:30) will be dedicated to young trainees and residents who are particularly interested in Dr. Gaiind's research and carrier path.

Location: This seminar will be held via Zoom. Please register [here](#)



Session Description:

Physician Assisted Death (PAD)/Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) has been legalized or decriminalized in well over a dozen jurisdictions around the world, and assisted dying policies continue to evolve rapidly. Many jurisdictions are exploring whether to introduce assisted dying laws, or expand existing laws. There is wide variation between policies, including how policies address potential applications for assisted dying for mental illness. PAD/MAID for sole criterion mental illness is available in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland, and recent Canadian legislation will permit psychiatric euthanasia by March 2024.

This session will explore medicolegal, scientific, ethical and public policy issues related to PAD/MAID, focusing on the particular

challenges posed with mental illnesses in the context of PAD/MAID. Dr. K. Sonu Gaiind, reviewing psychiatric euthanasia, will review the Canadian experience and significant recent policy developments, which are being watched globally, as Canada moves towards providing psychiatric euthanasia by 2024. This session will also explore differences between groups who seek PAD/MAID for different reasons, and discuss potential impacts of expanding PAD/MAID laws on marginalized populations suffering from life distress.

Learning Objectives:

- Be aware of the scope of and differences between physician assisted death (PAD) frameworks, ranging from PAD for terminal illness to PAD outside near end-of-life conditions
- Appreciate challenges assessing irremediability, suicidality, intolerable suffering, capacity and decision making when considering potential requests for assisted dying in the context of mental illnesses
- Understand proposed safeguards and their limitations
- Appreciate the tension between 'overinclusion' and 'underinclusion' in the context of assisted dying requests, and potential implications on different populations and sociodemographic groups

Biography:

Dr. Gaiind is a Professor and Governor at the University of Toronto, a member of the University Executive Committee, and Chief of Psychiatry at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, with clinical expertise as a psycho-oncology consultant. He is Chair of the Ontario Medical Association Relativity Advisory Committee and Medical Practice & Tariff Chair for the OMA Section on Psychiatry, a Past-President of the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the Ontario Psychiatric Association and of PAIRO, and President- Elect of the American Psychiatric Association Ontario District Branch. He represented Canada internationally as a Board Member of the World Psychiatric Association from 2017 to 2020, and in the more distant past represented the country on Canada's two first International Physics Olympiad teams.

Dr. Gaiind has been actively involved in health policy development and advocacy since residency, and has been recognized with numerous regional, provincial, national and international awards for his teaching, advocacy and impact. He has helped form health policy and engaged medical colleagues and the public to be more aware of and advocate against policies that stigmatize and discriminate against the mentally ill.

As Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) policies have been evolving in Canada, Dr. Gaiind has testified before numerous parliamentary and senate committees, chaired the time-limited Canadian Psychiatric Association Task Force on Assisted Dying, was selected to sit on the Council of Canadian Academies Expert Panel on Mental Disorders and Assisted Dying, was retained as an expert by the former Attorney General of Canada, and has spoken across the country and internationally on issues relevant to mental health and mental illness that need to be considered in any MAiD framework. He believes medical experts have an obligation to help guide health policies with evidence, rather than just personal ideology, and to consider the impacts of public policies on the most marginalized to avoid perpetuating policies of privilege.

Dr. Gaiind is a graduate of the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine, a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and an Honorary Member of the World Psychiatric Association.