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Sometimes a case will erupt in the courts, focusing public attention for a moment on one facet of a larger dilemma: the Bartling fight to allow a competent man to opt for death; the Elizabeth Bouvia argument that a quadriplegic is entitled to starve herself to death; the Baby Doe case over allowing a severely handicapped infant to die; last February's case. His wife wants to allow him to die; his mother agrees but fears that the method, withholding antibiotics, would be painful. In many other cases, doctors acknowledge, gravely ill patients including handicapped infants have been allowed to slip into death by the adjustment or elimination of certain treatments void of public and legal scrutiny. Mercy killing is an act of homicide that's usually done to end the life of someone who has extreme pain or an incurable illness. Choosing to switch off a mechanical ventilation machine can be a form of mercy killing. Ending medically necessary life support is common as well. He was reported to have illegally assisted in the death of more than 100 patients in the United States, and was convicted of multiple charges of second-degree murder in the late 1990s and sent to prison. He was released in 2007 after agreeing to not provide advice on committing suicide to anyone else, after which he appeared at various universities and on TV talk shows to promote his belief and theories about a patient's right to die. Controversy. The euthanasia or mercy killing problem. The woman lay on a hospital bed dying of an incurable disease. One day her son entered her room and fired three shots, killing her. He did not try to hide what he had done, but said: "She's out of her misery now." Passive, or negative, mercy killing refers to permitting a terminally ill person to die without initiating or continuing "extraordinary" treatment that would only forestall death for a short time. Until recent years most doctors probably would have refused requests for mercy killing. Lately, however, there seems to have been a change of viewpoint in some quarters. The dilemma of teenage pregnancies. How you can improve your memory? Negative effects of workers going on strike.