

Dutch hospital discovers euthanasia practices

The recently proposed infant mercy killings were found to be practiced in Holland before recent legalization

BY TOBY STERLING
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands — A hospital in the Netherlands — the first nation to permit euthanasia — recently proposed guidelines for mercy killings of terminally ill newborns and then made a startling revelation: It has already begun carrying out such procedures, which include administering a lethal dose of sedatives.

The announcement by the Groningen Academic Hospital came amid a growing discussion in Holland of

whether to legalize euthanasia for people incapable of deciding for themselves whether they want to end their lives — a prospect viewed with horror by euthanasia opponents and as a natural evolution by advocates.

In August, the main Dutch doctors' association KNMG urged the Health Ministry to create an independent board to review euthanasia cases for terminally ill people "with no free will," including children, the severely mentally retarded and people left in an irreversible coma after an accident.

The Health Ministry is preparing its response, which could come as soon as December, a spokesman said.

Three years ago, the Dutch parliament made it legal for doctors to inject a sedative and a lethal dose of muscle relaxant at the request of adult patients suffering great pain with no hope of relief.

The Groningen Protocol, as the hospital's guidelines have come to be known, would create a legal framework for permitting doctors to actively end the life of newborns deemed to be in similar pain from incurable disease or extreme deformities.

The guideline says euthanasia is acceptable when the child's medical team and independent doctors agree

the pain cannot be eased and there is no prospect for improvement, and when parents think it's best.

Examples include extremely premature births when children suffer brain damage from bleeding and convulsions, and diseases that a child could only survive on life support for the rest of his or her life,

such as severe cases of spina bifida and epidermolysis bullosa, a rare blistering illness.

The hospital has revealed it carried out four such mercy killings in 2003 and reported all cases to government prosecutors. There have been no legal proceedings against the hospital or the doctors.

Rainstorm in Philippines kills nearly 340; typhoon possible

Rescue workers struggle to reach stranded citizens after landslides and flash floods batter the Quezon province

BY PAT ROQUE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARAGONDON, Philippines — A powerful rainstorm triggered landslides and flash floods that killed nearly 340 people in the eastern Philippines, officials said Tuesday, and rescuers raced to save those stranded in three coastal towns before a typhoon strikes the hard-hit region.

At least 150 people were reported missing, and the region was largely cut off by landslides and floodwaters that washed away bridges and roads. Helicopter crews struggled to find places to land and dropped food to residents huddled on rooftops.

Authorities planned to send a coast guard boat to three stricken towns in Quezon province, east of the capital, to deliver supplies or pick up evacuees. Forecasters predicted a new typhoon circling off the Pacific coast could hit the area as early as Wednesday.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman went to Quezon province Tuesday following the overnight storm and reported that at least 306 people were killed and 150 others were missing. Thirty-two people died elsewhere, authorities said.

Soliman said bad weather and

Storm kills 338

The death toll from landslides and flash floods rose to 338 in the eastern Philippines, after a typhoon last week.



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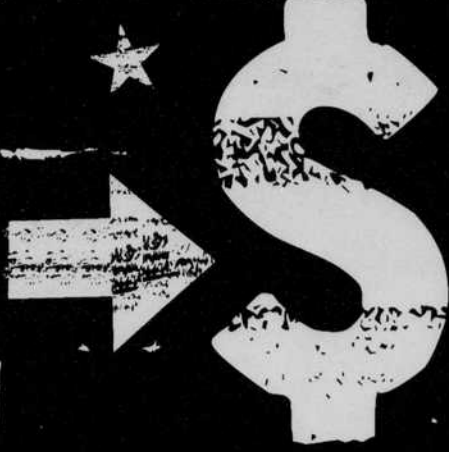
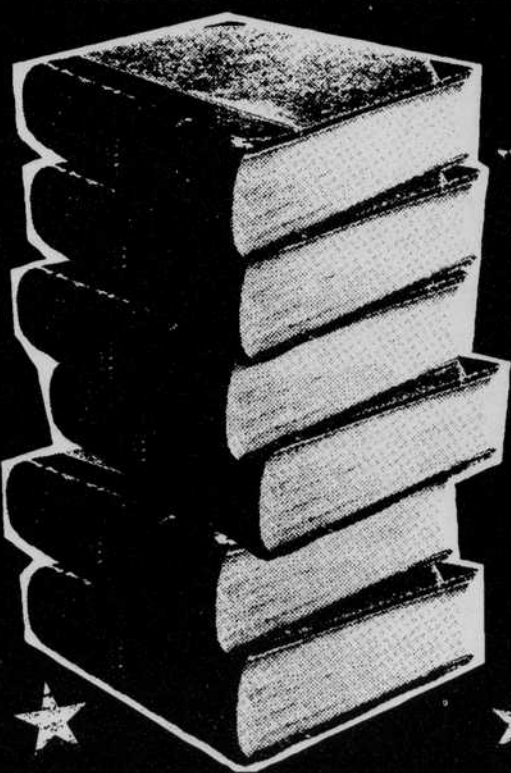
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