

Horizon Research

Medical Aid in Dying

March 2018



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives the results of a survey of 1,121 members of Horizon Research's national panel, which represent the New Zealand adult population (18+) at the 2013 Census. The survey looked at adult New Zealanders' support or opposition to various aspects of medical aid in dying.

Support and opposition for medical aid in dying

65% of respondents - equivalent to 2,102,000 adults 18+ - supported the legalisation of some form of medical aid in dying in New Zealand – with 38% (equivalent to 1,164,000 adults 18+) rating their support as “strong”.

14%, equivalent to around 435,000 New Zealanders 18+, opposed any legalisation of medical aid in dying, while 13% neither supported nor opposed it and 7% said they did not know.

A majority of the 2017 general election voters for each party currently in Parliament supported the legalisation of some form of medical aid in dying.

Medical assistance to die – preferred method

Asked to choose between self-ingestion or intravenous administration of drugs to medically aid death, more respondents indicated that they had no specific preference than indicated either option. Where a preference was declared by those in support of legalisation of medical aid in dying, it was nearly twice as likely to be for intravenous administration than self-ingestion.

Conscientious objection from doctors

Respondents were asked whether they thought that a doctor, who had a conscientious objection and who would not provide assistance to die, should be obliged by law to refer a person requesting medical aid in dying to another doctor, who would arrange for the request to be considered.

60% of respondents overall - equivalent to around 1,916,000 New Zealanders 18+ - supported such a requirement. Almost all of this support came from those who supported legalisation of medical aid in dying being legalised.

A majority of the 2017 general election voters for each party currently in Parliament supported a requirement for a doctor to refer a patient requesting medical aid in dying to another doctor if they had a conscientious objection to providing assistance to die.

End of Life Choice Directive

Respondents were asked whether they would support or oppose passing a law in New Zealand which would legalise an End of Life Choice Directive. This would allow a person to authorise medical aid in dying, in certain circumstances, should they later become incompetent.

As with the other questions, there was majority support from respondents, 64% of whom felt that End of Life Choice Directives should be legalised - equivalent to around 2,054,000 New Zealanders 18+

A majority of the 2017 general election voters for each party currently in parliament supported legalisation of this type of End of Life Choice Directive

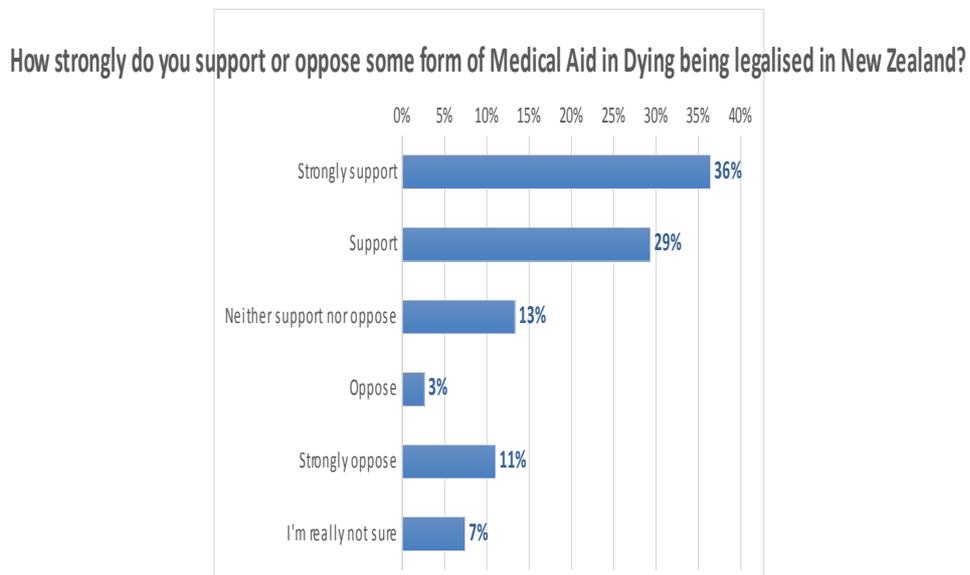
REPORT

1. Support and opposition for medical aid in dying

A majority of respondents supported some form of medical aid in dying being legalised in New Zealand – 65%, equivalent to around 2,102,000 adults 18+, with 38% (equivalent to 1,164,000 adults 18+) rating their support as “strong”.

14%, equivalent to around 435,000 New Zealanders 18+, opposed any such legalisation. Most of the opposition was strong (11%).

13% - equivalent to around 425,500 adults - neither supported nor opposed it and 7% - equivalent to around 237,000 adults - said they did not know.



Support peaked among 35-64 year olds, over 70% of whom supported medical aid in dying, including 45% strong support among 35-54 year olds.

Maori, NZ European and “Other European” (Australian, South African, British, etc.) respondents were the most likely to support medical aid in dying while Indian respondents were the least likely.

A majority of the 2017 voters for each party in Parliament supported the legalisation of some form of medical aid in dying.

2. Medical assistance to die – preferred method

Respondents were asked to put aside their views on medical aid in dying and to suppose that at some stage in the future, they were in the position where they had requested medical aid to die. They were asked whether, if they were in that situation, they would prefer to ingest/swallow the drug by themselves, or to have a doctor administer the drug intravenously.

Those opposed to some sort of legal medical aid in dying seemed to have difficulty in divorcing their views from the method they might prefer.

More than 50% of those who support some form of Medical Aid in Dying being legalised in New Zealand had no specific preference, although where a preference was declared by this group, it was nearly twice as likely to be for intravenous administration than self-ingestion.

Regardless of your views on medical aid in dying, just suppose for a moment that at some stage in the future you were in the position where you had requested medical aid to die. Do you think you would prefer to ingest/swallow the drug by yourself, or to have a doctor administer the drug intravenously?	ALL	How strongly do you support or oppose some form of Medical Aid in Dying being legalised in New Zealand?					
		Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	I'm really not sure
Intravenous	20%	23%	26%	18%	21%	10%	1%
Ingestion	14%	13%	14%	24%	14%	8%	5%
Either intravenous or ingestion	42%	59%	51%	28%	9%	13%	9%
Neither of these	8%	2%	1%	5%	42%	50%	5%
Not sure	16%	4%	8%	26%	14%	19%	81%
N (unweighted)	1,121	423	328	110	53	153	54

Where Asian, Indian, Pasifika or “Other European” (Australian, South African, British, etc.) respondents had expressed a preference, it was more likely to be for self-ingestion than intravenous administration. Where Maori or NZ European respondents had expressed a preference, it was more likely to be for intravenous administration than self-ingestion.

Males were evenly split between the two methods, while female respondents preferred intravenous administration.

3. Conscientious objection from doctors

Respondents were told:

“Some doctors may object to providing medical assistance to die. Countries deal with this in different ways.

“In some, the doctor is obliged to refer the requesting person on to another doctor or organisation which will arrange to deal with the request.

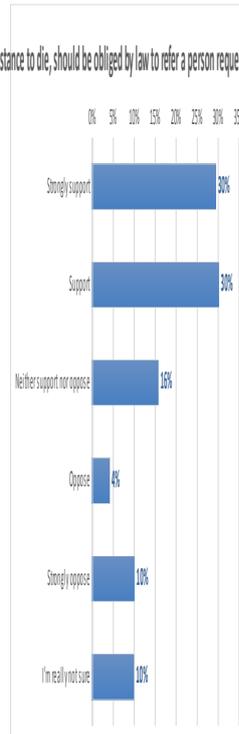
“In other situations, the patient can be left in limbo because the doctor considers that they are implicated in an act they disagree with if they refer a patient on.

“The End of Life Choice Bill now before a select committee of New Zealand’s Parliament requires referral in this circumstance.”

Respondents were asked whether they thought that a doctor, who had a conscientious objection and who would not provide assistance to die, should be obliged by law to refer a person requesting medical aid in dying to another doctor, who would arrange for the request to be considered.

60% of respondents overall - equivalent to around 1,916,000 New Zealanders 18+ - supported such a requirement. This support was from virtually all those who supported medical aid in dying being legalised.

Do you think that a doctor, who has a conscientious objection and who will not provide assistance to die, should be obliged by law to refer a person requesting Medical Aid in Dying to another doctor, who will arrange for the request to be considered?



14%, equivalent to around 457,500 New Zealanders 18+ - opposed a requirement to refer.

A majority of the 2017 voters for each party in Parliament supported a requirement for a doctor to refer a patient requesting medical aid in dying to another doctor if they had a conscientious objection to providing assistance to die.

4. End of Life Choice Directive

Respondents were told:

“The end of Life Choice bill before the Select Committee doesn’t provide for using Medical Aid in Dying where a patient is incompetent.

“It is said some people fear they could get dementia, especially as they age. In the Netherlands and Belgium, it is possible, while a person is still competent, to write an End of Life Choice Directive.

“It allows a doctor to help the person die later when they are not competent.

“A possible End of Life Choice Directive could be written something like this:

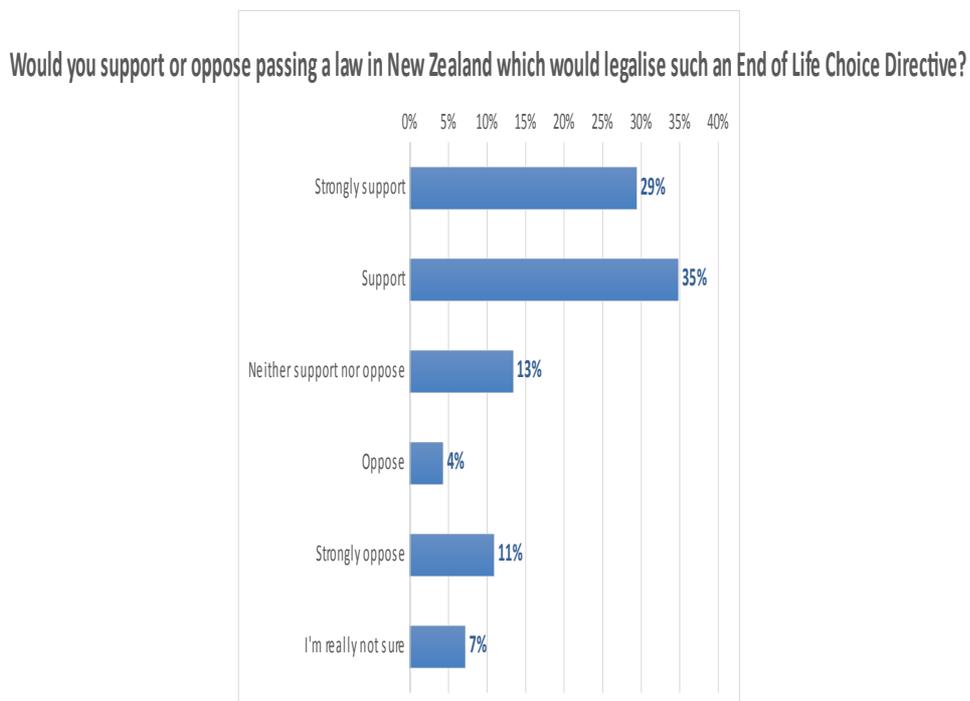
‘If I develop severe dementia from Alzheimer’s Disease or other degenerative brain disease, and my mental competence has deteriorated to the state that I am no longer able to recognise close relatives or friends; am totally dependent on others for physical needs e.g.

feeding and drinking and need to have spoon feeding by others; need toileting for incontinence; and have to be dressed by others – I request that I be given medical assistance to die.'

Respondents were asked whether they would support or oppose passing a law in New Zealand which would legalise such an End of Life Choice Directive.

As with the other questions, there was majority support from respondents, 64% of whom felt that End of Life Choice Directives of this type should be legalised - equivalent to around 2,054,000 New Zealanders 18+

There was 15% opposition – equivalent to around 486,000 New Zealanders 18+.



A majority of the 2017 general election voters for each party currently in parliament supported legalisation of this type of End of Life Choice Directive.

APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE

Sample

1,121 members of the HorizonPoll national panels, representing the New Zealand population 18+, responded to the survey between 20 and 27 March, 2018.

The sample is weighted by age, gender, ethnicity, education, and employment and has a maximum margin of error at a 95% confidence level of $\pm 3.0\%$ overall.

Contact

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APPENDIX 2 – TABLES

How strongly do you support or oppose some form of Medical Aid in Dying being legalised in New Zealand?	ALL	SEX		AGE GROUP						
		Male	Female	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or over
Strongly support	36%	38%	35%	23%	34%	45%	45%	36%	30%	29%
Support	29%	29%	30%	23%	26%	26%	31%	37%	32%	29%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	11%	16%	12%	19%	12%	7%	6%	19%	25%
Oppose	3%	4%	1%	0%	2%	4%	0%	4%	4%	10%
Strongly oppose	11%	13%	9%	10%	14%	10%	9%	15%	11%	4%
I'm really not sure	7%	6%	9%	32%	5%	3%	7%	2%	4%	3%
N (unweighted)	1,121	565	556	68	195	235	238	171	152	62

How strongly do you support or oppose some form of Medical Aid in Dying being legalised in New Zealand?	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP MEMBER					
		Asian	Indian	Maori	NZ European/ Pakeha	Other European (includes Australian, South African, British etc)	Pasifika
Strongly support	36%	12%	20%	32%	38%	41%	17%
Support	29%	25%	37%	37%	28%	42%	16%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	46%	10%	9%	13%	4%	17%
Oppose	3%	2%	0%	2%	3%	1%	0%
Strongly oppose	11%	11%	24%	6%	12%	12%	9%
I'm really not sure	7%	4%	10%	15%	6%	1%	41%
N (unweighted)	1,121	30	21	167	845	99	45

How strongly do you support or oppose some form of Medical Aid in Dying being legalised in New Zealand?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2017													
		ACT New Zealand	Conservative Party	Green Party	Labour Party	MANA Movement	Maori Party	National Party	New Zealand First Party	The Opportunities Party	United Future	Other party	Chose not to vote	Was not eligible to vote	Don't know or can't remember
Strongly support	36%	41%	0%	54%	39%	74%	47%	34%	43%	40%	0%	0%	38%	0%	38%
Support	29%	50%	0%	31%	32%	8%	22%	31%	23%	42%	100%	84%	23%	44%	22%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	2%	0%	5%	12%	0%	10%	15%	8%	13%	0%	8%	18%	6%	16%
Oppose	3%	1%	10%	3%	1%	0%	0%	4%	4%	3%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Strongly oppose	11%	5%	90%	3%	7%	0%	21%	15%	13%	1%	0%	8%	13%	12%	12%
I'm really not sure	7%	1%	0%	5%	10%	19%	0%	2%	9%	2%	0%	0%	6%	38%	12%
N (unweighted)	1,121	24	7	157	393	5	17	314	93	37	2	5	29	9	26

Regardless of your views on medical aid in dying, just suppose for a moment that at some stage in the future you were in the position where you had requested medical aid to die. Do you think you would prefer to ingest/swallow the drug by yourself, or to have a doctor administer the drug intravenously?	ALL	SEX		AGE GROUP						
		Male	Female	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or over
Intravenous	20%	18%	22%	20%	16%	23%	19%	16%	27%	18%
Ingestion	14%	17%	11%	8%	17%	14%	16%	12%	10%	17%
Either intravenous or ingestion	42%	44%	41%	27%	45%	42%	46%	49%	42%	33%
Neither of these	8%	10%	7%	4%	12%	9%	4%	12%	11%	10%
Not sure	16%	12%	20%	41%	10%	12%	14%	12%	11%	23%
N (unweighted)	1,121	565	556	68	195	235	238	171	152	62

Regardless of your views on medical aid in dying, just suppose for a moment that at some stage in the future you were in the position where you had requested medical aid to die. Do you think you would prefer to ingest/swallow the drug by yourself, or to have a doctor administer the drug intravenously?	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP MEMBER					
		Asian	Indian	Maori	NZ European/ Pakeha	Other European (includes Australian, South African, British etc)	Pasifika
Intravenous	20%	8%	5%	16%	21%	25%	10%
Ingestion	14%	18%	17%	7%	13%	34%	15%
Either intravenous or ingestion	42%	46%	43%	49%	44%	20%	31%
Neither of these	8%	13%	9%	6%	8%	11%	7%
Not sure	16%	15%	27%	22%	14%	10%	37%
N (unweighted)	1,121	30	21	167	845	99	45

Regardless of your views on medical aid in dying, just suppose for a moment that at some stage in the future you were in the position where you had requested medical aid to die. Do you think you would prefer to ingest/swallow the drug by yourself, or to have a doctor administer the drug intravenously?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2017													
		ACT New Zealand	Conservative Party	Green Party	Labour Party	MANA Movement	Maori Party	National Party	New Zealand First Party	The Opportunities Party	United Future	Other party	Chose not to vote	Was not eligible to vote	Don't know or can't remember
Intravenous	20%	47%	13%	19%	20%	44%	21%	23%	17%	24%	0%	8%	7%	30%	25%
Ingestion	14%	7%	13%	16%	12%	49%	7%	12%	10%	10%	0%	0%	32%	0%	1%
Either intravenous or ingestion	42%	37%	0%	49%	44%	8%	53%	44%	45%	58%	100%	84%	37%	16%	46%
Neither of these	8%	0%	59%	2%	6%	0%	17%	12%	6%	4%	0%	8%	10%	0%	7%
Not sure	16%	10%	16%	15%	18%	0%	2%	9%	21%	4%	0%	0%	14%	54%	22%
N (unweighted)	1,121	24	7	157	393	5	17	314	93	37	2	5	29	9	26

Regardless of your views on medical aid in dying, just suppose for a moment that at some stage in the future you were in the position where you had requested medical aid to die. Do you think you would prefer to ingest/swallow the drug by yourself, or to have a doctor administer the drug intravenously?	ALL	How strongly do you support or oppose some form of Medical Aid in Dying being legalised in New Zealand?					
		Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	I'm really not sure
Intravenous	20%	23%	26%	18%	21%	10%	1%
Ingestion	14%	13%	14%	24%	14%	8%	5%
Either intravenous or ingestion	42%	59%	51%	28%	9%	13%	9%
Neither of these	8%	2%	1%	5%	42%	50%	5%
Not sure	16%	4%	8%	26%	14%	19%	81%
N (unweighted)	1,121	423	328	110	53	153	54

Do you think that a doctor, who has a conscientious objection and who will not provide assistance to die, should be obliged by law to refer a person requesting Medical Aid in Dying to another doctor, who will arrange for the request to be considered?	ALL	SEX		AGE GROUP						
		Male	Female	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or over
Strongly support	30%	30%	30%	19%	30%	33%	40%	25%	23%	25%
Support	30%	28%	33%	22%	30%	29%	29%	37%	32%	37%
Neither support nor oppose	16%	17%	15%	21%	21%	16%	9%	11%	17%	22%
Oppose	4%	4%	4%	1%	1%	6%	4%	12%	4%	3%
Strongly oppose	10%	13%	7%	11%	9%	9%	8%	14%	12%	10%
I'm really not sure	10%	9%	12%	27%	9%	7%	10%	1%	12%	4%
N (unweighted)	1,121	565	556	68	195	235	238	171	152	62

Do you think that a doctor, who has a conscientious objection and who will not provide assistance to die, should be obliged by law to refer a person requesting Medical Aid in Dying to another doctor, who will arrange for the request to be considered?	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP MEMBER					
		Asian	Indian	Maori	NZ European/ Pakeha	Other European (includes Australian, South African, British etc)	Pasifika
Strongly support	30%	10%	25%	32%	29%	39%	16%
Support	30%	17%	33%	27%	33%	28%	19%
Neither support nor oppose	16%	50%	14%	14%	15%	12%	22%
Oppose	4%	7%	0%	5%	5%	1%	3%
Strongly oppose	10%	5%	9%	7%	10%	13%	11%
I'm really not sure	10%	12%	18%	16%	9%	8%	29%
N (unweighted)	1,121	30	20	70	845	99	45

Do you think that a doctor, who has a conscientious objection and who will not provide assistance to die, should be obliged by law to refer a person requesting Medical Aid in Dying to another doctor, who will arrange for the request to be considered?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2017													
		ACT New Zealand	Conservative Party	Green Party	Labour Party	MANA Movement	Maori Party	National Party	New Zealand First Party	The Opportunities Party	United Future	Other party	Chose not to vote	Was not eligible to vote	Don't know or can't remember
Strongly support	30%	55%	0%	38%	30%	74%	32%	26%	36%	46%	0%	0%	30%	4%	39%
Support	30%	34%	0%	34%	30%	26%	4%	36%	18%	34%	82%	37%	30%	37%	17%
Neither support nor oppose	16%	2%	0%	16%	17%	0%	8%	14%	17%	12%	18%	55%	21%	6%	13%
Oppose	4%	1%	10%	4%	5%	0%	38%	4%	3%	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%	8%
Strongly oppose	10%	8%	90%	2%	8%	0%	10%	15%	15%	2%	0%	8%	5%	0%	12%
I'm really not sure	10%	0%	0%	6%	10%	0%	8%	5%	11%	3%	0%	0%	13%	54%	12%
N (unweighted)	1,121	24	7	157	393	5	17	314	93	37	2	5	29	9	26

Would you support or oppose passing a law in New Zealand which would legalise such an End of Life Choice Directive?	ALL	SEX		AGE GROUP						
		Male	Female	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75 years or over
Strongly support	29%	32%	27%	18%	34%	33%	33%	28%	27%	22%
Support	35%	34%	36%	29%	32%	35%	37%	42%	31%	42%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	12%	15%	15%	10%	13%	11%	10%	24%	12%
Oppose	4%	5%	4%	6%	4%	4%	1%	3%	8%	12%
Strongly oppose	11%	13%	9%	9%	15%	11%	9%	15%	7%	9%
I'm really not sure	7%	4%	10%	23%	5%	4%	11%	2%	2%	4%
N (unweighted)	1,121	565	556	68	195	235	238	171	152	62

Would you support or oppose passing a law in New Zealand which would legalise such an End of Life Choice Directive?	ALL	ETHNIC GROUP MEMBER					
		Asian	Indian	Maori	NZ European/ Pakeha	Other European (includes Australian, South African, British etc)	Pasifika
Strongly support	29%	12%	27%	30%	28%	37%	20%
Support	35%	27%	35%	36%	36%	46%	34%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	48%	13%	10%	14%	4%	11%
Oppose	4%	2%	4%	2%	5%	1%	7%
Strongly oppose	11%	11%	11%	7%	12%	12%	8%
I'm really not sure	7%	1%	7%	15%	6%	1%	30%
N (unweighted)	1,121	30	21	167	845	99	45

Would you support or oppose passing a law in New Zealand which would legalise such an End of Life Choice Directive?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2017													
		ACT New Zealand	Conservative Party	Green Party	Labour Party	MANA Movement	Maori Party	National Party	New Zealand First Party	The Opportunities Party	United Future	Other party	Chose not to vote	Was not eligible to vote	Don't know or can't remember
Strongly support	29%	36%	0%	42%	34%	74%	66%	24%	36%	42%	0%	0%	29%	4%	36%
Support	35%	36%	0%	30%	33%	26%	8%	38%	27%	36%	100%	29%	40%	35%	25%
Neither support nor oppose	13%	3%	0%	10%	14%	0%	8%	15%	9%	19%	0%	63%	10%	11%	15%
Oppose	4%	15%	10%	6%	5%	0%	4%	6%	4%	2%	0%	0%	2%	6%	0%
Strongly oppose	11%	7%	90%	3%	7%	0%	14%	15%	15%	1%	0%	8%	13%	6%	12%
I'm really not sure	7%	3%	0%	9%	8%	0%	0%	3%	9%	1%	0%	0%	6%	38%	12%
N (unweighted)	1,121	24	7	157	393	5	17	314	93	37	2	5	29	9	26