Twitter Thread by Matt McClure



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As Mark Twain once said, "there are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics." Here's a thread that looks at Premier Kenney's claim that the international border testing pilot program of air travellers has been a "success." #ableg

At his Jan. 1 presser, Kenney noted the the pilot program had a test positivity rate of 1.48% compared to an overall positivity rate from testing done in the province of about 7%. See video link at approximately 3:15: https://t.co/z90mJNTB8y

Indeed, Kenney's numbers for the pilot project are accurate. Of the 18,021 travellers who had participated as of December 17, 1.48% had tested positive after arriving in Alberta.https://t.co/KMX7RZdtnY

But was it appropriate to compare the results among travellers who were presumably screened before boarding and found asymptomatic to those from recent testing results among Albertans who are overwhelming if not entirely symptomatic or have had a known contact with the disease?

Perhaps, it would have been better if Kenney had compared those results to those done among similarly asymptomatic Albertans. As @CBCFletch noted in an October 23 tweet, 659,000 tests among people with no symptoms found a positivity rate of just 0.11%....

Using that comparison, which is arguable more apples to apples if not as current, the positivity rate among international travellers arriving in Alberta is more than 10 times the rate in the general population. That's an order of magnitude higher.

I'm no public health or statistics expert, but maybe @jkenney should be asked to justify his comparison at today's presser, and maybe @CMOH_Alberta could weigh in, too? #ableg

Kenney also cited Harvard study as evidence air travel is safe. That study cited positivity rates among passengers of less than <1 per cent where masks worn and <2 per cent when masks not worn. AB pilot project with masks and safety measures is 1.48%.
https://t.co/Qjm7LJe1SE

“Every time an airplane lands, more COVID is likely coming into the province,” says Colin Furness, an infection control epidemiologist. Premier Kenney claims risk of transmission on flights is "statistically insignificant," citing Harvard and DOD studies.
https://t.co/Nqs9VRdN4d

And here's @klaszus timely look in @sprawlcalgary at how Westjet lobbied for and got rapid testing pilot program in which 1.48% of air travellers arriving in Alberta test positive.

Oops, forgot to include the link! https://t.co/s14PB36pSP