

**CANNABIS — PSYCHOSIS RISK**

*Statement*

**HON DR BRIAN WALKER (East Metropolitan)** [6.22 pm]: I start my short member's statement by first of all thanking the minister for that fascinating member's statement. I did not really want to spread any personal information, but after the tragic passing of my father, my mother married a boyfriend from the war years who was an ex-soldier and became a brewer. He was a master brewer for Carlsberg in Denmark, so I heartily approve of the statement the minister made.

Moving on, when it comes to cannabis, I have often pointed out the difficulty I have in reconciling the perceived dangers of alcohol with the perceived non-dangers of cannabis. At least in my eyes it is often turned around by the non-aware public. As I am sure members are all aware, I am intensely concerned about truth, facts and science. I think it is entirely proper that Parliament is concerned to do the best for the people around our state and we would be remiss if we were to permit things to be made easily available if it were to cause damage in society. On a regular basis I have felt moved to bring forward scientific facts that support the concept that the perception of cannabis is completely wrong and it is generally a safe and healthy healing herb.

A few weeks or months ago I pointed out and tabled a paper that showed very clearly that the perceived risks of psychosis with cannabis are grossly overplayed. In fact, if we compared cannabis with alcohol and tobacco, we would find the most dangerous substance is alcohol, at a risk of causing psychosis; followed by tobacco, which is certainly associated with psychosis; and cannabis to a small degree, but not a great degree. I have great pleasure in mentioning to members the *Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open* and a paper called "State Cannabis Legalization and Psychosis-Related Health Care Utilization". The beauty of this is that it looked at two trillion person-months and 63 million beneficiaries over a good number of years. I have lost the time period for a moment. That significant study showed, in conclusion —

In this retrospective cohort study of commercial and Medicare Advantage claims data —

It looked at figures produced by insurance companies —

state medical and recreational cannabis policies were not associated with a statistically significant increase in rates of psychosis-related health outcomes. As ... states continue to legalize the use, production, promotion, or sale of cannabis, continued examination of the implications of state cannabis policies for psychotic disorders may be informative ...

In this case it suggests that there is no significant increase in the occurrence of psychosis. For the information of not only the members in this chamber but for all posterity, I seek leave to table this paper.

[Leave granted. See paper [2423](#).]