The complexity of management of COVID-19 outbreak in Iran

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Introduction:

COVID-19 epidemic arrived, in Iran, stormy and spread in a short time. Based on the latest official figures (October 10, 2020), the total number of approved cases is approaching 492,378 and the number of related deaths is around 28,098, with case fatality rate 5.7%. To combat, Iran started to run active and passive case detection, closed schools and universities, banned the mass gatherings and initiated inter-sector collaboration to engage all sectors. The question is that why, despite all of these measures specially the efforts of Iranian health ministry with such a strong health system and successful past experiences in control of many communicable diseases, Iran has many challenges to control this epidemic?
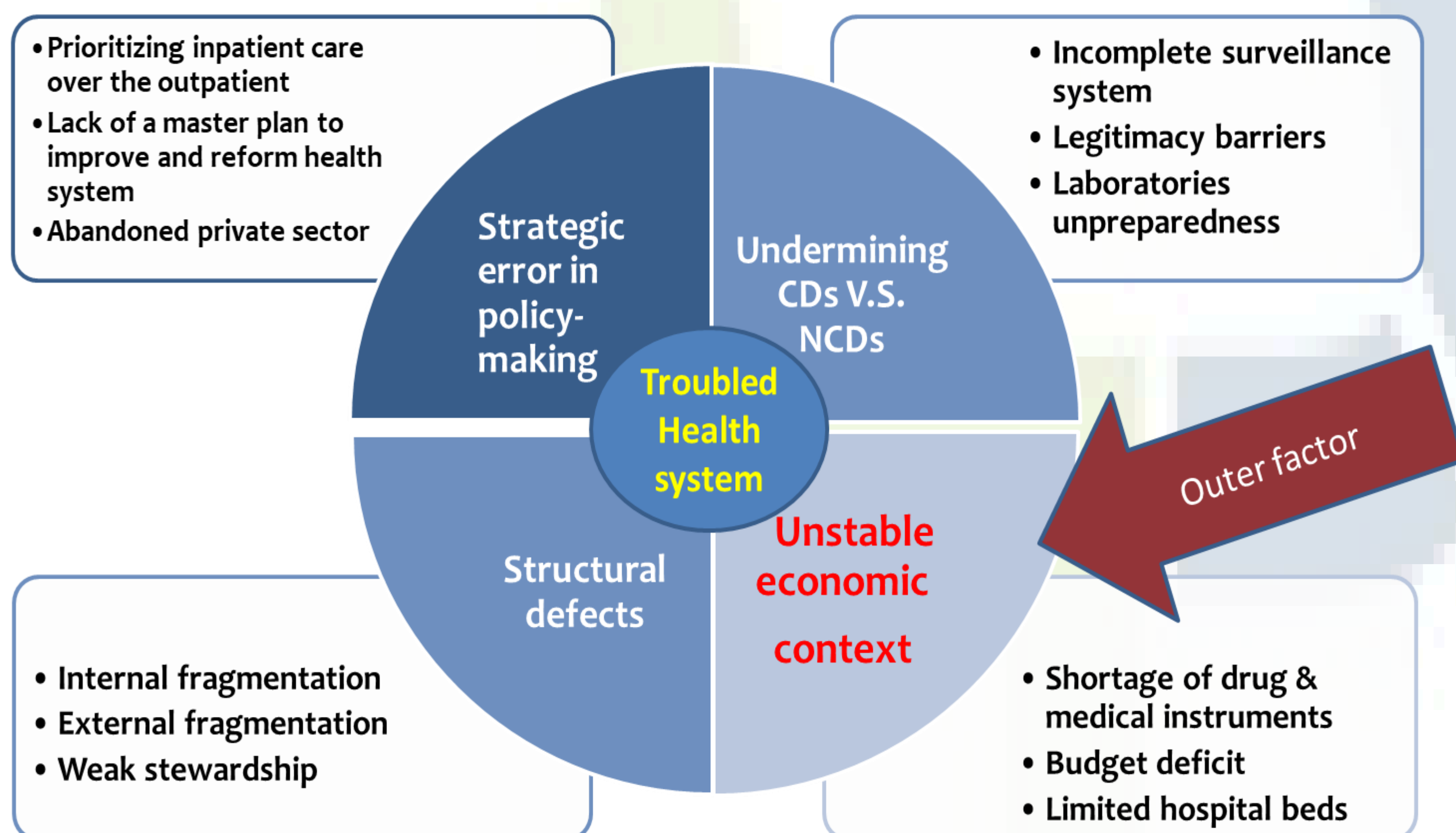
Methods:

This is a narrative review which is implemented to clarify the successful and failed policies applied to control COVID-19 epidemic in Iran. To do, google scholar, PubMed, Scopus and official Websites of Iran's Ministry of Health and WHO were searched. Our keywords were, covid-19 AND Iran AND healthcare, OR primary care, hospital care, fatality rate, mortality rate, strategy, coronavirus cases, communicable diseases, surveillance system, lockdown, risk communication. The relevant documents and articles were analyzed by using content analysis.

Results:

Figure 1: Iran's health system before COVID-19 epidemic

- Prioritizing inpatient care over the outpatient
- Lack of a master plan to improve and reform health system
- Abandoned private sector

- Incomplete surveillance system
- Legitimacy barriers
- Laboratories unpreparedness

Strategic error in policy-making

Undermining CDs V.S. NCDs

Troubled Health system

Structural defects

Unstable economic context

Outer factor

- Internal fragmentation
- External fragmentation
- Weak stewardship

- Shortage of drug & medical instruments
- Budget deficit
- Limited hospital beds

Figure 2: Total COVID-19 cases in Iran

Total Coronavirus Cases in Iran

Total Cases (Linear Scale)

linear | logarithmic

Figure 3: Total COVID-19 death in Iran

Total Coronavirus Deaths in Iran

Total Deaths (Linear Scale)

linear | logarithmic
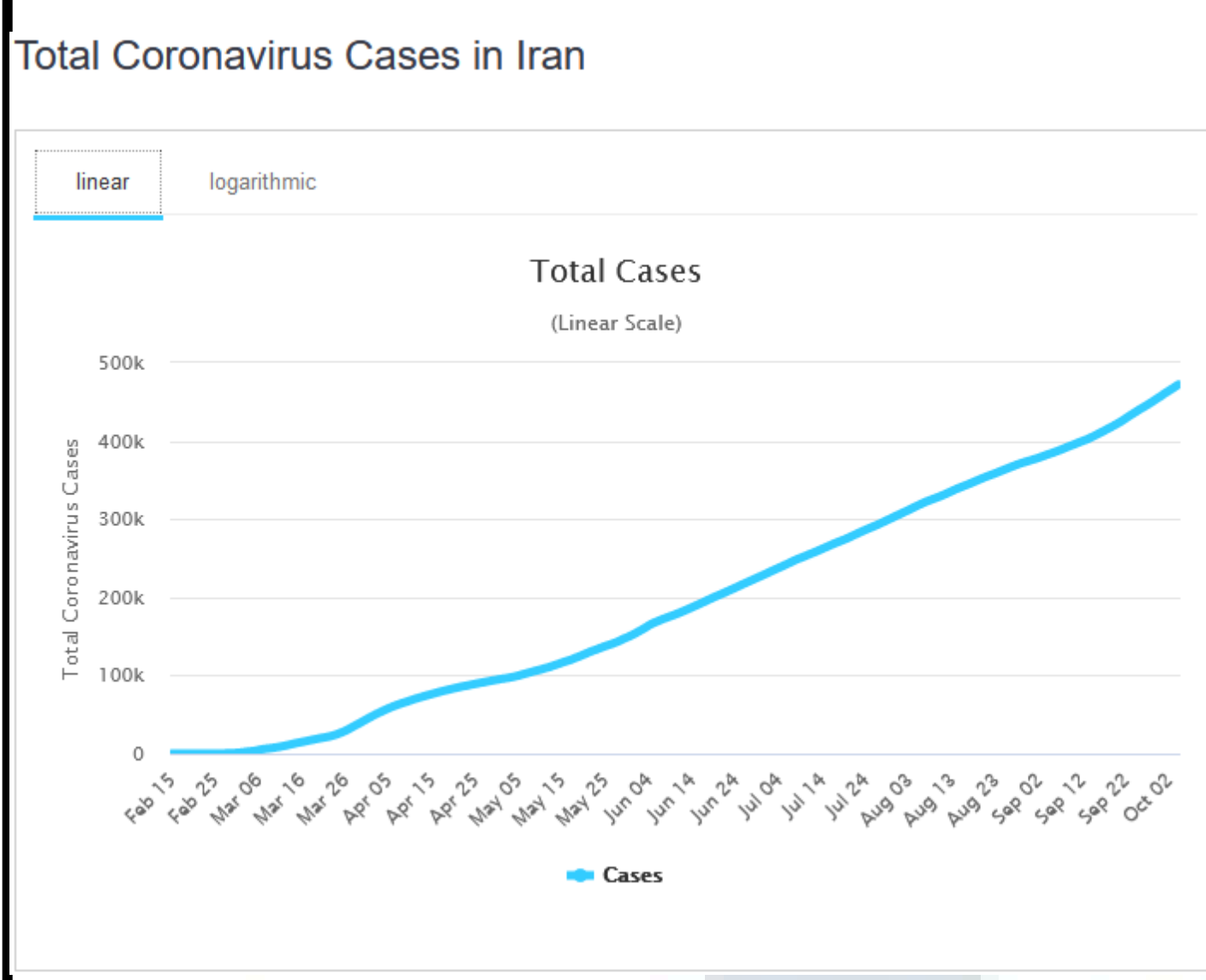
Successful and failed policy in management of COVID

Successful policy

- ✓ Involvement of high levels' politicians
- ✓ Partial improvement of hospital care
- ✓ Providing the protocols and guidelines
- ✓ Partial improvement of Surveillance system
- ✓ Engagement of other sectors
- ✓ Providing enough alcohol, Mask and sanitary materials

Failed policy

- ➢ Financial support of healthcare system
- ➢ Quarantine/ Lockdown
- ➢ Recruiting required skilled staff
- ➢ Establishing an effective risk communication plan
- ➢ Community engagement
- ➢ Effective involvement of primary care
- ➢ Providing all required medical instruments and medicines

Conclusions:

Recommendations

Effective Risk Communication

Improving Surveillance system

International support

LOCKDOWN

Inter-sector collaboration

Improving Health care

Establishing E/M- health