

The Algerian state's health policy, the Corona pandemic as an example

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Submission Date : 20.08.2025 | Acceptance Date : 01.01.2026 | Publication Date : 11.02.2026

Summary:

After the transmission of the Corona virus from the Chinese city of Wuhan, the first case in Algeria, the country's higher authorities took responsibility for managing the Corona 19 pandemic; A special budget was allocated to manage this crisis and confront this virus, and a set of measures were taken and a number of decisions were issued coinciding with the changes in the epidemiological situation. Efforts were focused on getting out of this pandemic with the least damage and the fewest deaths, as it was decided to impose compulsory quarantine on travelers coming from abroad. Suspension of studies, a complete closure of the country, and quarantine and social distancing measures were imposed to control the spread of the virus.

The Ministry of Health has played a key role in supervising the implementation and control of health policies in coordination with various other sectors, and a green number has been launched around the clock and an application for smart phones to enable people to access information and resources related to the Corona virus, and all material and human capabilities have been exploited to prevent the virus. or treat the injured.

And with the increasing number of infections, the matter prompted more measures to be taken, represented in imposing partial and total quarantine in the states and cities that witness a daily increase in the number of infections, and commercial activities were suspended, the suspension of studies extended, and other decisions aimed at limiting the spread of the Corona virus and taking care of the injured.

Keywords: politics, health, health policies, corona pandemic.

Introduction:

At the end of 2019, the world witnessed the emergence of the new Corona virus (Covid-19) for the first time in the Chinese city of Wuhan, after which it spread quickly like wildfire throughout the world, turning into an exceptional health event, which greatly affected the course of the lives of the individual and society, and led to great losses that destabilized stability. Humanitarian, which prompted the World Health Organization to classify it as a pandemic that threatens all aspects of social, economic and other life. Given the importance of public health,

With the first case of infection with the Corona virus recorded in Algeria in February 2020, the highest levels of government were represented by the President of the Republic, the interests of the Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Health, the primary responsible for establishing health policies and following up on their implementation regarding the Corona virus 19, in coordination with the Corona Virus Monitoring and Follow-up Committee, which

CORPS & PSYCHISME

P-ISSN: 2496-4476 E-ISSN: 2273-1571

Volume 13/ Issue 1/ 2026

was created specifically to follow up on the situation. Epidemiology in the country. The Corona pandemic has posed a challenge since the first confirmed infection with this virus was recorded. This issue has posed a challenge since the first confirmed infection with this virus was recorded.

This exceptional health situation prompted us to shed light on the health policies that Algeria adopted during the Corona pandemic to combat it and limit its spread.

The first section: a conceptual introduction

The first requirement: politics.

The Dictionary of Political Literature defined it in 1870 by saying: Politics is the science of governing states.

Robert's Dictionary defined it in 1972 by saying, "Politics is the art of governing human societies."

Bringing these two definitions, which are separated by a century of time, is important, as they both make governance the subject of politics, but the modern definition includes the rule of states and the rule of other human societies, and the word rule means, when authorized, in each group the organized authority and institutions of leadership and coercion.

Specialists argue about this, as some of them still see that politics is the science of the state in that the state is the organizing authority in the national group, but most researchers see that politics is the science of organized authority in all human groups. (Morris, 1981, p. 7)

Policy is also defined as purposeful action programs followed by individual or collective performance in addressing a problem and confronting an issue, issue, or set of decisions taken by known actors with the aim of achieving a public purpose. (Wessal, 2003, p. 14)

The second requirement: health.

The most commonly used definition of health is the definition developed by the World Health Organization, describing it as: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (Wafa et al., 2002, p. 15)

The third requirement: health policies.

The definition of the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences indicates that health policies are a set of basic goals and programs declared in the field of health, accompanied by a set of actions embodied in legislative and executive decisions and work programs proposed for governments. The method of establishing general health goals is determined, accompanied by the method of implementation and management of health services, with government involvement and influence in Activities of both the private and public sectors in the health field, in order to achieve public goals efficiently and effectively. (Omar, 2011, p. 29)

Fourth requirement: Definition of the Corona pandemic:

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is a global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), where the virus responsible for the outbreak is known as SARS-CoV-02.

It is a newly discovered virus that is closely related to coronaviruses, and the Coronavirus is responsible for severe acute respiratory syndrome. (Afaf and Ahmed, 2021, p. 124)

Coronaviruses are a large family of respiratory viruses, some of which cause less illness than others, such as the common cold, and other more severe illnesses, such as Middle East respiratory syndrome and severe acute respiratory syndrome. Some of these viruses are easily transmitted from person to person, unlike other viruses. (United, 2023)

The second topic: Health policy in Algeria in light of the Corona pandemic.

The first requirement: an overview of the development of health policy in Algeria.

Immediately after independence, Algeria sought to achieve comprehensive development in various sectors, including the health sector, which witnessed many health policy developments and changes that can be summarized in five stages:

The first stage: trying to manage the health crisis inherited from French colonialism (1962/1974).

After independence, Algeria inherited a deteriorating health situation characterized by a significant lack of material and human resources and a fragile infrastructure. Most Algerians were suffering from the scourges of poverty, hunger, ignorance, and the spread of various deadly diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, and others, in addition to the lack of health coverage.

This situation inherited from French colonialism necessitated reforming the health system by re-exploiting the health structures inherited from colonialism. We were also assisted by frameworks from some countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Russia and others, in addition to sending many Algerian doctors abroad for their training and establishing the National Institute of Public Health in the year 1964,

Then came the establishment of national health programs to combat tuberculosis, malaria, and trachoma in 1965, with the support of the World Health Organization, stipulating the obligation of free vaccination with the aim of eliminating infectious diseases, all of which were policies in order to organize and structure the health system inherited from French colonialism to be compatible with the new situation.

The second phase (1974-1980): Free treatment and treatment of accompanying problems.

Free treatment was approved on December 28, 1973, and was announced in the Constitution of January 1974 as a first step towards giving more effectiveness to the health sector, and developing health programs related to the social and economic problems of individuals.

All means and procedures were provided to protect and promote health in the country, and the formula of free medicine was disseminated as stated in the National Charter of 1976, which explicitly stated that all citizens have the right to protect their health, and this right is guaranteed by free public health services (Article 67 of the 1976 Constitution). I focused This stage focused on investment in the field of health on curative medicine and neglected preventive medicine.

The third stage (1980-1990): The trend towards openness.

At this stage, the trend towards a policy of openness and a trend towards liberalism began, and for the first time in the history of Algerian health policy, the concept and technical definition that defines health as: freedom from disease was excluded and the sociological concept was adopted, which considers health to be a social, cultural and economic activity

with a preventive dimension, which came in the recommendations of the extraordinary conference of the ruling party (FLN) in 1980.

At this stage, free medicine was excluded and all its articles were dropped, and this is what was stated in Article 51 of the 1989 Constitution: The state undertakes to prevent and combat epidemic and infectious diseases for health care for citizens. This means that the state undertakes to prevent and combat diseases, not treat them.

In 1990, the general report on health system reform referred to a new concept of the health institution, defining it from an organic point of view, meaning that it should adapt to the new conditions of development and be able to meet health needs in a better way.

The fourth stage (1990-2001): Lack of compatibility between the organizational transformation of the health system and the epidemiological and demographic transformations.

The most prominent feature of this stage is the beginning of the emergence of a new type of morbidity, which is chronic diseases, led by cancer, which has become one of the first causes of death in Algeria with the continued spread of infectious diseases and the emergence of chronic non-communicable diseases.

Unlike developed countries, where we find a pattern of symptoms characterized by the control of chronic diseases after infectious diseases have been almost eliminated, as for the demographic transition, we find that the population of Algeria has increased significantly.

The fifth stage: from 2002 to the present day: reforming hospitals and trying to give impetus to the health system in the absence of a forward-looking vision.

The most prominent feature of this stage was the initiation of a new reform of the health system starting in 2002 in an attempt to give impetus to the health system and raise the level of its performance while beginning to review methods of health financing through the contracting system.

Health expenditures doubled to match the increasing demographic growth, and the organization of health sectors was seconded to become a problem of public hospital institutions and public neighborhood health institutions, separating hospitalization from treatment, which is a type of decentralization whose goal is to facilitate access to treatment and bring health institutions closer to the citizen. (Salima, Walid, and Wafa, 2018, pp. 303-305).

Regarding the demographic transition, we find that the population of Algeria has increased significantly, from about 8 million before independence to reach 38.7 million people in 2014, and this is due to improved living conditions and the availability of health care. At the same time, this number has put pressure due to the increasing demand for health services. These social and demographic changes necessitated the development of health policies in line with the requirements of these changes.

The second requirement: health policy objectives:

The health situation in Algeria has witnessed major changes affecting the health sector due to the health policies adopted that relied on several programmes, the most important of which is the provision of necessary vaccines to limit the spread of diseases and the enactment of laws that ensure treatment is spared for all members of society with the aim of raising the level of

public health, and among the most prominent goals pursued by successive health policies. It achieved the following in Algeria: (National Assembly, 2004, pp. 64-65)

Improving the capabilities of the health system: This is through updating the health map aimed at equitable distribution of resources within the framework of unifying the health system, ensuring access to treatment throughout the country, and continuing hospital reform procedures.

- Developing preventive health by strengthening the means of epidemiology services and basic health units in order to rehabilitate the health surveillance network,

Continuing vaccination campaigns, organizing awareness campaigns, working to improve health care, especially in the school environment, and developing awareness programs that include the dangers of transmitted diseases.

Hospital reform: working to improve the conditions for receiving and staying patients and ensuring health care for them, as well as improving the provision of the necessary means for specialized medical services, searching for alternatives to hospitalization in health centers and mobile treatment, and reviewing the laws of health institutions.

Supervising human resources: through implementing a policy of matching those seeking training with the necessary needs, disseminating continuous training, and organizing and developing research in the field of health.

The third section: The effects of the Corona crisis and measures to confront it in Algeria.

The first requirement: The effects of the Corona crisis in Algeria

The Corona epidemic caused a social crisis that affected a number of sensitive sectors, most notably the health, security, economic and educational sectors, and the higher education and scientific research sectors, resulting in a set of effects that can be summarized as follows:

The popular protest movement was active on Friday and Tuesday of every week from February 2019 until March 13, 2020, when the Corona pandemic showed its impact with the increasing number of infections among Algerian citizens, and calls emerged from political figures and societal elites to stop the marches, especially in this difficult stage.

As a necessary measure aimed at avoiding the spread of this virus, and adhering to the preventive conditions called for by the government, after which President Abdelmadjid Tebboune announced on March 17, 2020 to ban all demonstrations, whatever they were, for fear of the spread of infection and an increase in the number of infections.

Implications on the economic aspect: The Corona pandemic greatly affected the economic aspect, as the growth rates of the global economy declined as a result of three main channels:

First: the supply side due to the disruption of production as a result of infection with the virus, as well as the measures to contain it.

Second: The demand side was affected globally, especially in the tourism sector.

Third: These effects spread globally as a result of the virus being transmitted across borders, as well as a result of the decline in global demand rates in the major industrialized countries and China, which negatively affected the economies of the Arab countries, the most important of which is the decline in tourism and oil export revenues. In return, other sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry, communications, and partners benefited. e-commerce,

The Algerian economy has been greatly affected due to the preventive measures taken in the fields of industry, transportation, tourism, and various economic service facilities. The Corona pandemic has caused global economic paralysis that has had negative consequences on the Algerian economy, which depends greatly on imports, especially from China, which has been greatly affected by this epidemic.

Algeria also lost half of its hard currency income during the Corona crisis due to the collapse of oil prices in global markets, which put decision makers in a new dilemma on the social and economic fronts, in addition to the political crisis that began at the beginning of 2019, which created a budget deficit as the price of... Since the beginning of the global pandemic, oil has fallen below \$30 per barrel, with losses estimated at about \$24 million per day

Algeria also lost 18% of European demand for natural gas. Algeria depends for its basic income on hard currency that comes from oil and gas by 98%, and pays 70% salaries from these incomes, which led to a severe deficit in the general budget amounting to 1,500 billion dinars. With Algeria's decision to close its air, land and sea borders, the services, tourism, insurance, entertainment and other sectors were affected

Which caused a contraction in the hotel, transportation, and financial transactions sector due to the decline in port and airport traffic, and some public facilities and hotels turned into quarantine centers for travelers coming from abroad. The tourism agency sector was also affected, especially those active in the field of religious tourism, such as Hajj and Umrah, after the... Suspending its activity, and to confront the repercussions of the crisis, political decision-makers in Algeria worked to take a set of decisions, the most prominent of which are:

Issuing a supplementary finance law in a step aimed at taking more austerity measures, looking for new sources to finance the public treasury affected by the decline in oil revenues, reducing imports, and freezing government investments for another period.

Reconsidering the level of public spending and the 2020 budget, which was programmed in 2019 with total expenditures amounting to \$65 billion based on a reference oil price of \$50 per barrel, and these are indicators that changed in the year 2020.

Taking exceptional recovery measures for companies and institutions that were more severely affected during the Corona phase resulting from the decline in economic activity, whether in terms of taxes or payment of social insurance fees.

The effects of the crisis on the education, higher education and scientific research sectors.

The Corona pandemic has caused more than 1.6 billion children and youth to drop out of education in 161 countries, or approximately 80% of the students enrolled in schools worldwide, causing a global education crisis, and Algeria is among the countries affected in the fields of education.

The study was suspended indefinitely to protect the safety of learners, and to limit the effects of the crisis on the education sector, the distance education strategy was used, and Amal in the higher education and scientific research sector was based on an electronic platform to complete as much of the curriculum as possible. (Khaled, 2020, pp. 99-102)

The second requirement: health policy objectives:

The health situation in Algeria has witnessed major changes affecting the health sector due to the health policies adopted that relied on several programmes, the most important of which is the provision of necessary vaccines to limit the spread of diseases and the enactment of laws ensuring that treatment is spared for all members of society with the aim of improving the level of public health.

Among the most prominent goals that successive health policies have sought to achieve in Algeria are the following:

- Improving the capabilities of the health system: This is through updating the health map aimed at equitable distribution of resources within the framework of unifying the health system, ensuring access to treatment throughout the country, and continuing hospital reform procedures.

The fourth section: The problems faced by health policy in Algeria.

The first requirement: Imbalances in the companionship policy in Algeria.

Organizational imbalances.

The functional relationships that govern the administrative logic in hospital institutions are not clearly defined, as there are many intervention agencies, which results in a double membership relationship of submission that appears in the following:

- Complete submission to the central administration regarding its business planning.

- Complete submission with regard to the management methodology authorized by legislation, relating to employees and accounting rules.

- Lack of motivation for citizens, which led to the stagnation of their activity due to the adaptation of their basic law, poor working conditions, and low wages compared to the private sector.

- Inequality in the distribution of human and material resources between the regions of the country, and even within each region, where we find large differences, as we record in the north one doctor for every 800 residents, compared to a doctor for every 1,200 in the south.

Imbalances related to management methods:

It includes the shortcomings of the health media system and health training. The current media system does not give complete information about therapeutic medicine and the quality of health services available to the population. This defect is due to poor handling of medical reports and files.

The inflexibility of administrative records, and the lack of employee training, in addition to the fact that training in the health field does not take into account the needs required by the health sector, and thus the incompatibility between academic training and the qualifications imposed in the applied reality.

Imbalances related to financial management:

Poor distribution of available financial resources, as the structuring of expenditures and revenues related to the health sector budget is not arranged according to priorities.

- Inaccurate data related to the costs of health services and activities

- *Lack of organization of health services, despite their changing number. Public health structures only respond to part of our health needs, as we find an increasing lack of care for diseases.*

- *Poor professional distribution, as the southern region is witnessing a shortage in the number of specialist doctors, despite the state's efforts to encourage them to work in the south through numerous incentives and privileges.*

- *Lack of qualification of human staff to provide quality services and improve work on advanced medical equipment. (Omar, 2011, pp. 14-15)*

The second requirement: the basic starting points for solving the problems facing the health sector.

In order to solve the problems that the health sector suffers from in Algeria, we must focus on considering economic stability a basic condition in the process of achieving health development in particular, while alleviating the severity of poverty, through employment and the provision of permanent jobs and seeking to involve the various segments of society in the processes of planning, implementing and evaluating activities. Health, while giving priority to investment in health and strengthening the role of the public sector and government hospitals, Giving importance to the private sector as a support for the state's efforts in the health field, in addition to financing strategic health research, with attention to health supervision in the public sector, especially doctors and nurses, and working to consolidate the principle of cooperation of sectors related to health affairs, education, housing, urban and rural life, energy, agriculture, environment and others to implement activities and events. Healthy development. (Suleiman, 2022, p. 1606)

Conclusion:

After it was discovered in the Chinese city of Wuhan and spread rapidly within the Chinese Republic, then spreading throughout the globe, the Corona virus caused a global pandemic that threatens the lives of billions of people. Global efforts from health organizations and epidemiological laboratories joined together to study ways to prevent this microscopic killer that cannot be seen. Media bulletins and health instructions on ways of prevention and treatment were issued successively. Preventive and curative measures varied according to health policies from one country to another.

Algeria was among the first countries to take the preventive measures recommended by the World Health Organization, and as soon as the first infection was recorded in the country, the Algerian state rushed to acquire preventive supplies and medical equipment, and for this it allocated a special budget to manage this health crisis.

Algeria was able to emerge from this pandemic, through which the health system and health policy were put to an actual test through which the effectiveness of health policies in Algeria was discovered to correct shortcomings and enhance gains.

The reviewer:

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CORPS & PSYCHISME

P-ISSN: 2496-4476 E-ISSN: 2273-1571

Volume 13/ Issue 1/ 2026

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