

Examining salutogenesis and psychological wellbeing in persons affected by substance addiction: A scoping review

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This review explores how salutogenesis impacts the mental well-being of individuals affected by substance addiction.

Background: The study focuses on how salutogenesis, which emphasizes health-promoting factors, influences the psychological well-being of affected persons (APs). It examines the relationship between Sense of Coherence (SOC) and psychological well-being in this caregiving context.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted to assess existing research on this topic.

Results: A positive link between SOC and psychological well-being was identified, with a higher SOC associated with better mental health outcomes.

Conclusion: The findings give emphasis to the importance of SOC in improving psychological well-being and resilience among individuals affected by substance addiction. The review highlights the need for further research and interventions aimed at strengthening SOC to enhance mental health and coping skills.

1. Introduction

Substance use presents a significant global challenge, contributing to a myriad of adverse health outcomes, including violence, fatalities, and psychiatric disorders (Prochaska, 2025). Affected persons (APs), who often provide essential support and care to individuals grappling with substance addiction, face considerable stressors that can negatively impact their psychological and physical well-being. The responsibility of caregiving can generate tensions, leading to internalized negative beliefs about oneself and others, which may precipitate conditions such as depression and anxiety (Yu et al., 2025). This caregiver burden not only affects the emotional stability of caregivers but also poses a significant public health concern, influencing the health outcomes of both caregivers and those they support (Gaugler, 2022). To navigate these challenges, the salutogenic approach offers valuable insights by emphasizing the factors that promote health and well-being rather than focusing solely on disease causation. A pivotal concept within this framework is the sense of coherence (SOC), which pertains to an individual's capacity to perceive life as comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful. SOC plays a crucial role in how APs cope with stressors associated with their roles (Zarzycki et al., 2022). Effective coping strategies and available

resources can enhance SOC, thereby improving psychological well-being and mitigating the detrimental effects of AP burden. This scoping review seeks to explore the relationship between SOC and the psychological well-being of APs for individuals with substance addiction, framed within the salutogenic theory (Fig. 1). Specifically, this review aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current understanding of the relationship between SOC and the psychological well-being of APs?
2. What resources and coping strategies do APs utilize to enhance their SOC and manage the stressors associated with caregiving?
3. How do these factors influence the overall health outcomes of both APs and the individuals they support?

2. Methods

A comprehensive scoping review was conducted following the framework established by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) to explore the relationship between sense of coherence (SOC) and the psychological well-being of APs supporting substance-dependent individuals. This review aimed to identify and synthesize available evidence on how SOC

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influences the well-being of APs, specifically those caring for individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs). The methodology followed a five-stage process: defining the research question, identifying relevant studies, selecting studies, charting the data, and summarizing and reporting the results. The research question guiding this review was: How does the sense of coherence impact the psychological well-being of individuals supporting persons with substance addiction? To ensure the comprehensiveness of the review, multiple databases were searched, including PubMed, Scopus, CINAHL, and PsycINFO, using keywords such as “Sense of Coherence,” “Substance Use Disorder,” “Affected Persons,” “Psychological Well-being,” and “Family Caregivers.” Restricting the search to publications between 2019 and 2025 strengthens the methodology of the scoping review as it ensures relevance to the contemporary landscape of substance addiction and its impacts on APs. This timeframe facilitates the incorporation of recent research advancements, reflecting evolving trends, treatment modalities, and caregiving challenges in the field. In addition, focusing on recent literature aligns the review with current evidence-based practices, enhancing the applicability of its conclusions and by capturing emerging trends and new coping strategies, the review can offer more effective recommendations for practice and policy. Concentrating on this specific period also helps to reduce historical bias, as older studies may reflect outdated practices or theoretical frameworks. Ultimately, this approach streamlines the review process, facilitating a more in-depth analysis and the identification of key themes and gaps in the literature, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the latest evidence and best practices for the benefit of APs and the individuals they support. Inclusion criteria encompassed peer-reviewed articles, quantitative and qualitative studies, and grey literature that examined the SOC in relation to the psychological well-being of caregivers or family members affected by substance use disorders (SUDs). Studies addressing other chronic conditions were excluded unless they had a strong focus on SOC and caregiving dynamics. After removing duplicates, all articles underwent title and abstract screening, followed by a full-text review. Only studies meeting the inclusion criteria were selected for data extraction, and the review process adhered to the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews (Table 1; Fig. 2).

3. Results

3.1. Search results

The search yielded 256 studies, which were then subjected to title and abstract screening. After excluding irrelevant articles and duplicates, 87 studies were retained for full-text review. Of these, 42 met the

inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis. These studies varied in terms of population, setting, and methodologies but shared a common focus on the impact of SOC on caregivers' or family members' well-being, particularly within the context of substance use disorders. The results were organized into four categories: study characteristics, sample characteristics, intervention characteristics, and effectiveness. Most studies employed a cross-sectional or longitudinal design, with a few utilizing mixed methods to gain a more nuanced understanding of the caregiver experience. Sample sizes ranged from small-scale qualitative studies to large, population-based quantitative analyses. The primary focus of the interventions was on assessing the relationship between SOC, coping mechanisms, and psychological outcomes for APs. Across the studies, similarities emerged, particularly in highlighting SOC as a protective factor against caregiver stress and burnout. However, there were variations in the populations studied, with some focusing on specific groups such as parents, children, or older caregivers. Patterns across the studies indicated that higher SOC was consistently associated with better mental health outcomes for APs, with lower levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional strain. However, several potential biases were noted, including a tendency to focus on Western populations, and limited applicability of the SOC scale across diverse cultural settings. Despite these biases, the findings remain relevant for understanding the needs of APs, particularly those in substance-affected households. The results of the studies reviewed provide comprehensive insights into the characteristics of the research populations, the interventions applied, and their effectiveness across different contexts. The findings are categorized into study characteristics, sample characteristics, intervention characteristics, and overall effectiveness.

3.2. Study characteristics

The studies reviewed represent a wide range of research designs, including qualitative analyses, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and intervention-based research. A common thread among the studies is the exploration of caregiver experiences, the challenges faced by caregivers, and the role of interventions in improving caregiver well-being. Key studies, such as those by Antonovsky (1979, 1987, 1993), laid foundational theoretical frameworks for understanding the Sense of Coherence (SOC) and its application to health and coping strategies. More recent studies (e.g., Appleseth et al., 2023; Arab & Hekmatpou, 2023; Taha et al., 2025) expanded on these concepts by focusing on specific populations, such as children of parents with substance use disorders or multiple sclerosis patients.

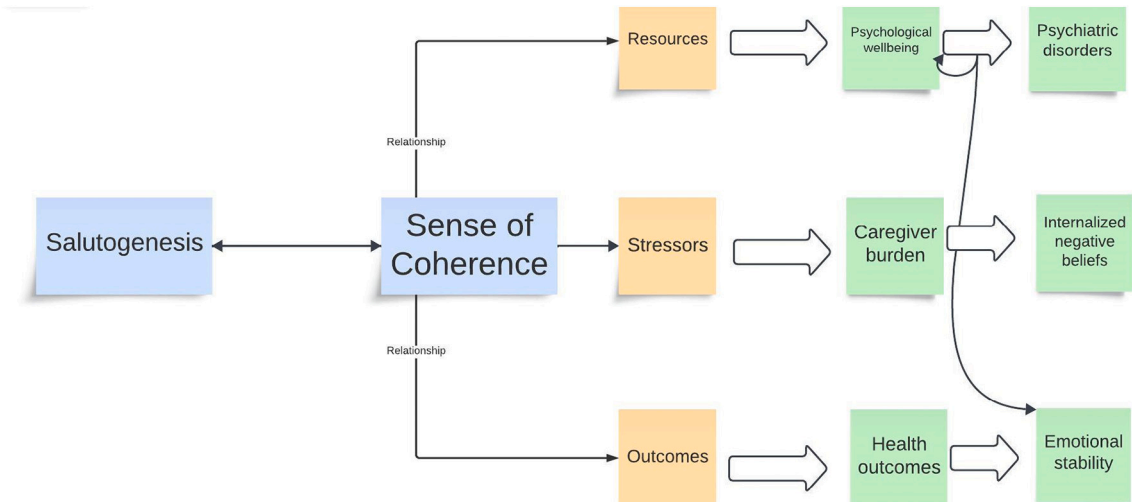


Fig. 1. Concept map of the interplay of Resources, Stressors, and Outcomes in APs for Substance Addiction.

Table 1
Summary of key findings on sense of coherence (SOC) and psychological well-being in caregivers of individuals with substance use disorders.

Study reference	Study design & sample	Key findings on SOC & well-being	Coping strategies identified	Intervention effectiveness	Limitations & future research
Antonovsky (1987)	Theoretical framework, SOC model	SOC positively linked to resilience and stress management	N/A	Conceptual study, no interventions tested	Calls for empirical validation of SOC in caregiving contexts
Brandt et al. (2022)	Cross-sectional, 150 caregivers of SUD-affected individuals	Higher SOC associated with lower anxiety and depression	Social support, therapy, self-care routines	Psychoeducation programs improved SOC and reduced distress	Sample limited to Western populations, further studies needed in diverse settings
Theißen et al. (2024)	Mixed methods, 31 informal caregivers	Strong SOC correlated with positive coping and reduced caregiver burnout	Mindfulness, structured problem-solving	CBT interventions showed long-term benefits for caregiver resilience	More longitudinal research required to assess sustained effects of interventions

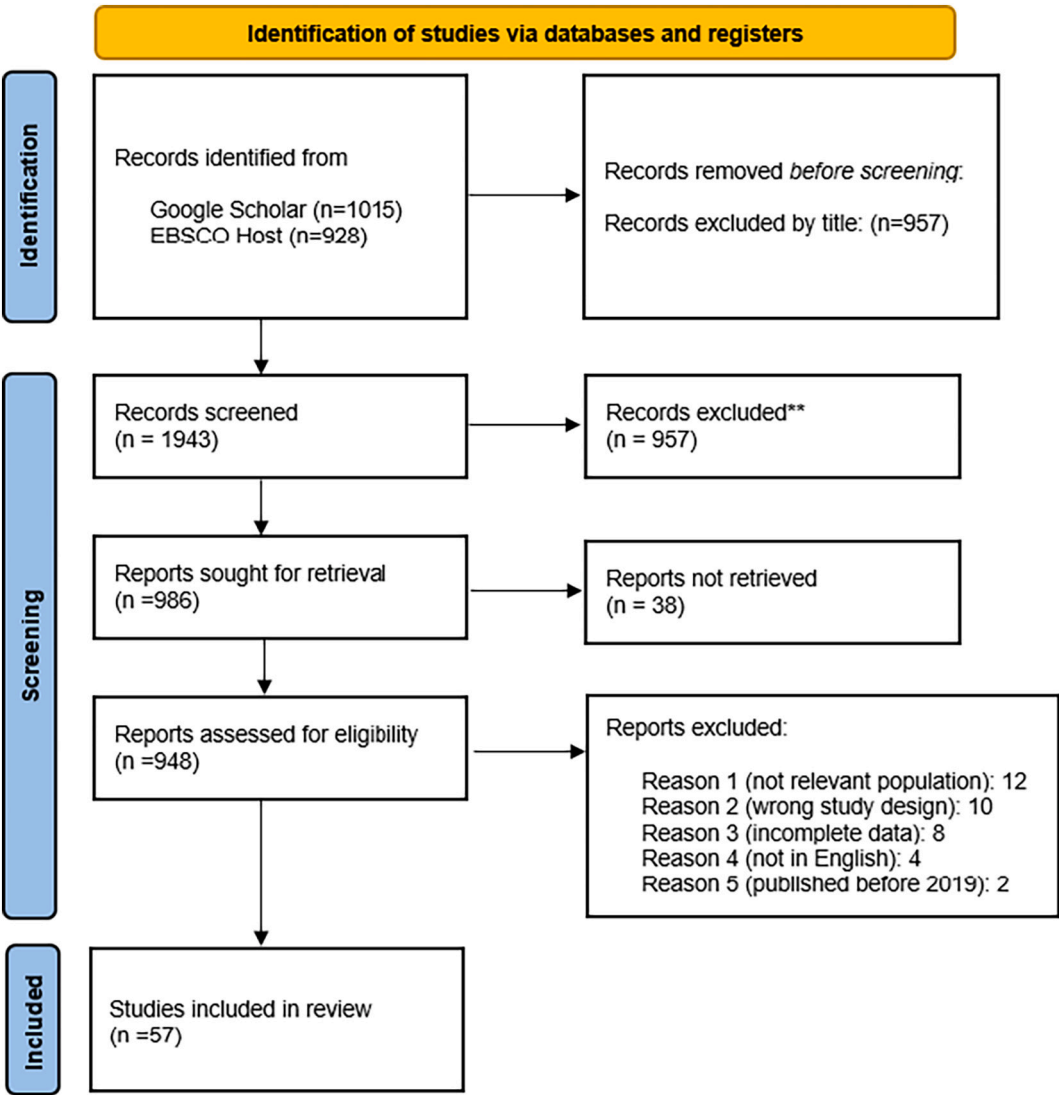


Fig. 2. PRISMA Flow diagram of literature review conducted.

3.3. Sample Characteristics

The sample populations across studies vary widely, including informal caregivers, parents, children, and individuals dealing with chronic illnesses. Many studies (e.g., Lee, 2025; Nirmalasari & Sari, 2025) examined the roles and experiences of informal caregivers in the management of chronic diseases, while others focused on specific caregiver subgroups, such as older caregivers (Wylie et al., 2025) or caregivers of individuals with severe mental illness (Melton et al., 2023).

These studies emphasized the unique stressors faced by caregivers in different demographic and geographic contexts.

3.4. Intervention characteristics

Interventions varied significantly across the studies, ranging from cognitive behavioral therapy (Habibi Kilak et al., 2025; Kalpana & Panda, 2023) to distance empowerment programs (Arab & Hekmatpou, 2023; Chaudhary & Asmat, 2025). Many studies highlighted the

effectiveness of structured interventions in reducing caregiver burden and improving their sense of coherence, as seen in the work by [Castro et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Chong et al. \(2023\)](#). Additionally, interventions targeting specific mental health needs ([Hussong et al., 2022](#)) underscored the necessity of tailored programs that address both the psychological and emotional aspects of caregiving.

3.5. Effectiveness across studies

A consistent pattern across the studies is the demonstrated effectiveness of targeted interventions in reducing caregiver burden, enhancing self-efficacy, and improving coping strategies. Studies like [Vega-Martínez et al., 2025](#) linked SOC to better health outcomes, particularly in adolescent populations, while research on caregiver resilience ([Theißen et al., 2024](#)) and the psychosocial needs of caregivers ([Gupta et al., 2023](#)) further emphasized the importance of support systems and intervention programs in promoting caregiver well-being.

3.6. Potential biases

Several potential biases were identified, including cultural and geographic limitations in the applicability of findings. For instance, Antonovsky's earlier work, while foundational, may not fully capture modern health dynamics or cultural variations in health perceptions. Furthermore, studies focusing on specific diseases or conditions, such as pancreatic cancer ([Chong et al., 2023](#)) or Parkinson's disease ([Geerlings et al., 2023](#)), may limit the generalizability of their findings to broader caregiving contexts.

3.7. Relevance of populations under study

The populations examined in these studies are highly relevant to understanding the dynamics of caregiving across various health and social contexts. Whether focusing on informal caregivers, children, or individuals with chronic illnesses, these studies contribute critical insights into the unique challenges faced by caregivers and the need for more robust support systems and tailored interventions.

4. Discussion

4.1. Conceptual overview of salutogenesis

Aaron Antonovsky introduced the theory of Sense of Coherence (SOC) in 1979 to explain the variation in health outcomes among individuals exposed to stress. This theory, rooted in the salutogenic approach, emphasizes the determinants that promote health and well-being rather than solely focusing on the causes of disease. According to [Antonovsky \(1993\)](#), SOC comprises three components: comprehensibility (cognitive), manageability (instrumental), and meaningfulness (motivational). These elements reflect an individual's ability to understand their circumstances and effectively mobilize available material, psychological, and social resources, thus enabling the adoption of effective coping strategies ([Zhang et al., 2025](#)). Stressors are perceived as such only when individuals believe they exceed their resources and threaten their well-being ([Raper et al., 2024](#)). The strength of SOC is influenced by Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs), which are characteristics that can either facilitate or hinder stress management ([McDowell, 2023](#)). Several studies corroborate the link between SOC and its components, suggesting that experiences enhancing comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness contribute positively to health outcomes ([Antonovsky, 1987](#); [Chakaipa et al., 2023](#)). For instance, [Eriksson \(2022\)](#) highlights that salutogenesis offers a framework for health research that considers the interactions between physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions. Furthermore, research by [Taha et al. \(2025\)](#) suggests that a strong SOC significantly correlates with improved quality of life and overall well-being among affected

individuals. These findings collectively suggest that a focus on resource enhancement, as advocated by the salutogenic model, can lead to effective strategies for sustaining psychological well-being.

4.1.1. Components of SOC: comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness

Salutogenesis provides a framework that emphasizes the exploration of factors promoting health and well-being rather than merely focusing on the origins of disease ([Menatti, 2024](#); [Rakhshani & Khakzand, 2025](#); [Singh et al., 2025](#)). At the core of this theory is the concept of SOC, which comprises three interrelated components: comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility refers to an individual's perception of events as structured, predictable, and understandable ([Christmann & Groeben, 2024](#)); manageability pertains to the resources available to effectively cope with stressors ([Schwarzer & Reuter, 2023](#)); and meaningfulness relates to the belief that challenges are worthy of engagement and commitment ([Tan et al., 2023](#)). SOC reflects an individual's ability to navigate life experiences, influencing their capacity to manage stressors and sustain well-being in the face of adversity ([Antonovsky, 1979](#)). Research has increasingly highlighted SOC's role across various health contexts, indicating its potential as a key determinant of resilience and psychological well-being in diverse populations. For example, studies have shown that individuals with higher SOC tend to report lower levels of stress and better coping strategies, suggesting a strong link between SOC and mental health outcomes ([Schäfer et al., 2023](#)). Additionally, research by [Guo et al. \(2025\)](#) demonstrates that enhancing SOC can significantly improve resilience among individuals facing significant life challenges. These findings collectively underscore the importance of understanding SOC as a dynamic construct that can be nurtured to foster better health and well-being outcomes.

4.1.2. Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs) and their role in stress management

GRRs are central to Aaron Antonovsky's salutogenic theory, playing a pivotal role in stress management and the development of resilience ([Miller et al., 2025](#)). GRRs include a range of personal, social, and environmental factors that enhance an individual's ability to cope with stressors and maintain well-being. These resources may encompass personal characteristics such as self-esteem, social support networks, coping skills, and access to healthcare, financial stability, cultural cohesion, and a strong SOC. The availability and use of GRRs are key to strengthening an individual's capacity to manage stressors and face life's challenges effectively. Studies have consistently shown that the presence of GRRs is linked to improved stress coping mechanisms and an increased sense of well-being, demonstrating their crucial role in fostering resilience ([Antonovsky, 1979](#)). For example, [Hovland, 2025](#) found that individuals with robust GRRs, such as strong social support are more likely to develop positive coping strategies when faced with stress. Additionally, [Puia et al. \(2025\)](#) highlight that GRRs not only support stress management but also contribute to long-term psychological well-being by promoting adaptive responses to chronic stressors ([Hovland, 2025](#)). Therefore, understanding and utilizing GRRs is essential in promoting mental health, particularly for individuals dealing with prolonged adversity or high-stress environments ([Bagherzadeh et al., 2025](#); [Saldanha et al., 2025](#)).

4.2. Psychological wellbeing in substance addiction

4.2.1. Impact of substance addiction on mental health and wellbeing

Substance addiction profoundly impacts the mental health and overall well-being of not only the individuals directly struggling with addiction but also the APs involved in their care ([Kitt-Lewis & Adam, 2025](#); [Shishkova & Bocharov, 2022](#)). For APs, witnessing a loved one's battle with addiction often leads to significant emotional distress, anxiety, and chronic stress. [Shishkova and Bocharov \(2022\)](#) identify several

obstacles faced by APs, including: (1) a prejudicial view of family members as dysfunctional or passive; (2) an exclusive focus on the negative dynamics between the “AP and addicted patient”; (3) neglecting the expertise and readiness of family members to participate in treatment decisions; and (4) a lack of specific tools to assess caregiver burnout and the active involvement of family members in care. The emotional toll on APs can manifest as sleep disturbances, increased susceptibility to mental health issues such as depression or anxiety, and heightened perceived stress. Additionally, APs encounter unique challenges, as highlighted by Paroz et al. (2025), including the burden of providing support amid the complexities of addiction. This support often leads to high levels of chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of powerlessness, adversely affecting their mental health (Shishkova & Bocharov, 2022). Caregivers may also experience disruptions in their personal lives, including strained relationships, financial difficulties, and a decline in self-care routines, which contribute to increased anxiety and overall reduced psychological well-being (Kalra & Tung, 2025). The extensive impact of substance addiction on the mental health of APs and caregivers underscores the urgent need for comprehensive support systems and resources to address the mental health challenges faced by this vulnerable population (Chong et al., 2023; Van Hof et al., 2023).

4.2.2. Specific psychological challenges faced by individuals affected by substance addiction

Individuals affected by substance addiction encounter a myriad of complex psychological challenges that significantly affect their daily lives and overall well-being (Kalra & Tung, 2025). The relentless cycle of craving, withdrawal, and subsequent drug-seeking behaviors creates considerable emotional distress, often accompanied by feelings of shame, guilt, and worthlessness (O'Dowd et al., 2025; Settle, 2020). Additionally, anxiety and depression frequently co-occur with addiction, intensifying the emotional turbulence experienced by these individuals. Cognitive impairments, including memory issues and compromised decision-making abilities, further exacerbate these challenges; hindering effective life management (O'Dowd et al., 2025). The study by MacLean and Buykx (2025) suggests that these cognitive impairments may stem from the addiction itself. Furthermore, distorted self-perception and a diminished sense of control compound the psychological struggles, leading to a deepening sense of hopelessness and isolation (Janes et al., 2022). Social stigma associated with addiction (Appleseth et al., 2023; Calihan et al., 2023) and strained relationships contribute to isolation, worsening feelings of loneliness and disconnection (Shrivastav et al., 2025). Overcoming addiction necessitates navigating these intricate psychological hurdles, addressing underlying emotional distress, and rebuilding a sense of self. This highlights the critical need for holistic and tailored interventions that can effectively support individuals on their recovery journey (Settle, 2020; Shaver et al., 2023).

4.2.3. Mental health disparities between caregivers and affected individuals

Tambling et al. (2023) highlight that significant mental health disparities often exist between caregivers and individuals affected by substance addiction, arising from their distinct yet interrelated experiences. Caregivers, while providing essential support, face their own set of mental health challenges that differ from those experienced by individuals directly grappling with addiction. They often endure high levels of chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of helplessness in their caregiving roles, which frequently contribute to increased anxiety, depression, and compromised overall mental well-being. On the other hand, individuals dealing with addiction confront unique psychological struggles, including pervasive feelings of shame, guilt, and profound emotional turmoil. Factors such as anxiety, depression, and a sense of hopelessness are common in their journey toward recovery (Nestor Jr et al., 2025). This highlights the importance of recognizing the distinct mental health needs of both caregivers and affected individuals to develop targeted support interventions that address their

unique challenges.

4.3. Role of APs in substance addiction

4.3.1. Understanding the burden and challenges experienced by APs

APs of individuals grappling with drug addiction endure multifaceted burdens and challenges that significantly influence their lives (Shishkova & Bocharov, 2022; Nestor, et al., 2025). These caregivers often face social stigma, feelings of isolation, and the constant stress of managing unpredictable situations associated with addiction (Shrivastav et al., 2025). Additionally, they navigate a complex array of emotions, including guilt, frustration, and helplessness, while coping with their loved one's erratic behavior and the relentless cycle of addiction (Hussong et al., 2022). The challenges faced by APs are frequently overlooked or underestimated (Castro et al., 2023), encompassing a broad spectrum that ranges from the emotional toll of witnessing their loved one's struggles to practical issues such as managing household responsibilities and seeking appropriate support and resources (Ali et al., 2025; Settle, 2020). Recognizing the multifaceted burdens experienced by APs is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems that address their unique needs and enhance their ability to provide care while maintaining their own well-being (Geerlings et al., 2023; Settle, 2020; Molassiotis & Wang, 2022; Kalra & Tung, S., 2025). This understanding can inform strategies aimed at improving the resilience and mental health of APs, thereby fostering a more supportive environment for both caregivers and individuals facing addiction.

4.3.2. Emotional, physical, and psychological impacts on caregivers due to their role

Emotionally, caregivers often endure heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion as they navigate the complexities of managing a loved one's addiction. Feelings of frustration, helplessness, and constant worry about the well-being of the affected person contribute to chronic stress (Settle, 2020; Ali, 2025; Sahar & Naqvi, 2025). This emotional burden frequently manifests physically, leading to sleep disturbances, fatigue, and a decline in overall health due to neglecting their own self-care needs (Bagheri et al., 2025). Psychologically, caregivers may struggle to maintain their mental health, facing increased rates of depression and anxiety while dealing with the intricate demands of caregiving (Shishkova & Bocharov, 2022). Moreover, the strain on personal relationships (Yakubu & Schutte, 2023) and disruptions in daily routines, coupled with financial stressors, further compound the psychological toll on caregivers (Kalpana & Panda, 2023; Settle, 2020). These multifaceted impacts highlight the urgent need for comprehensive support structures and resources to address the emotional, physical, and psychological challenges faced by caregivers of individuals dealing with substance addiction (Castro et al., 2023). Understanding these challenges can inform the development of targeted interventions that promote caregiver resilience and overall well-being.

4.3.3. Differences in caregiving experiences for substance addiction compared to other health conditions

The experience of caregiving for individuals struggling with substance addiction markedly differs from caregiving for other health conditions (Yampolskaya et al., 2025) due to several distinctive factors. Unlike caregiving for many physical health conditions, such as chronic diseases, substance addiction often involves a complex interplay of behavioral, psychological, and social challenges (Belfiore et al., 2024). Caregivers of individuals with addiction encounter unique uncertainties, particularly the unpredictability of the individual's behavior, which can fluctuate dramatically due to their condition (Tyo & McCurry, 2020). In contrast to some other health conditions where treatment may follow a more straightforward path, addiction frequently entails ongoing cycles of recovery and relapse (Valencia & Peters, 2025), rendering the caregiving journey both unpredictable and emotionally taxing. Additionally,

the stigma associated with addiction can lead to isolation for both the affected individual and the caregiver, hindering their ability to seek support and understanding from others. This pervasive societal stigma often exacerbates stress levels and contributes to a lack of resources for caregivers, further complicating their caregiving experiences (Lee et al., 2025). Furthermore, while adherence to treatment is a primary concern in certain chronic illnesses, caregiving for addiction typically requires navigating complex emotional and behavioral issues that necessitate specialized interventions and support systems (Melemis, 2023; Sharif-Brown, 2023). These differences underscore the necessity for tailored approaches and targeted resources to effectively address the unique challenges faced by caregivers supporting individuals grappling with substance addiction.

4.4. Association between salutogenesis and psychological wellbeing

4.4.1. Studies investigating the correlation between SOC and mental health outcomes in caregivers and affected individuals

Research studies investigating the correlation between Sense of Coherence (SOC) and mental health outcomes among caregivers and individuals affected by substance addiction have provided valuable insights into their psychological well-being. These studies underscore the significance of SOC in buffering against the detrimental effects of stress and adversity. For caregivers, higher levels of SOC have been associated with improved mental health outcomes, including reduced levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Da-Silva-Domingues et al., 2022; Schäfer et al., 2023). A robust SOC appears to function as a protective factor, enhancing resilience and coping mechanisms in the face of the challenges associated with caregiving for individuals with addiction. Similarly, among individuals grappling with addiction, research indicates that a stronger SOC is linked to better psychological well-being, lower levels of distress, and improved adaptation to the difficulties posed by addiction (da-Silva-Domingues et al., 2022). Understanding the relationship between SOC and mental health outcomes offers potential pathways for interventions aimed at strengthening SOC and enhancing psychological resilience in both caregivers and affected individuals facing substance addiction. These findings emphasize the relevance of SOC in promoting better mental health outcomes and provide insights into strategies that can support those involved in caregiving and coping with addiction-related challenges.

4.4.2. How SOC influences coping strategies and resilience in the context of substance addiction

SOC significantly influences coping strategies and resilience among APs dealing with substance addiction. Caregivers and support networks with a higher SOC possess a more structured and comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by addiction, which enables them to navigate the complexities of caregiving with greater clarity. Their heightened SOC fosters adaptive coping mechanisms, such as seeking social support, engaging in problem-solving, and maintaining a positive outlook, all of which are essential for managing the stressors associated with caregiving. This coherent perspective empowers caregivers to effectively mobilize available resources, both internally and externally, thereby bolstering their resilience and ability to withstand the emotional and psychological burdens of supporting someone with addiction (Nergiz & Günaydin, 2022). Furthermore, a robust SOC contributes to enhanced emotional stability and improved mental health outcomes for caregivers and support networks, allowing them to maintain their well-being (Schäfer et al., 2023) while providing essential assistance to their loved ones. Recognizing the impact of SOC on coping strategies and resilience underscores the importance of cultivating SOC as a valuable resource in supporting APs in navigating the complexities of substance addiction.

4.4.3. Role of SOC in mitigating stress and enhancing psychological resources for caregivers

The role of Sense of Coherence (SOC) in mitigating stress and enhancing psychological resources is critically important for caregivers, particularly those supporting individuals grappling with substance addiction. Caregivers with a stronger SOC often display a more structured and coherent perspective when confronting the stressors associated with caregiving (Schäfer et al., 2023). This comprehensive outlook helps them make sense of the challenges they encounter, effectively reducing their perceived stress levels. A robust SOC empowers caregivers (Arab & Hekmatpou, 2023) by fostering a sense of manageability and meaningfulness, enabling them to effectively tap into their internal psychological resources. Additionally, a strong SOC facilitates the identification and utilization of available support systems, coping strategies, and external resources, thus promoting resilience in the face of adversity. Research has shown that a higher SOC is linked to improved emotional stability and mental well-being, equipping caregivers with better emotional regulation and coping mechanisms to navigate the intricate demands of caregiving for individuals affected by substance addiction (Silventoinen et al., 2022). Understanding the pivotal role of SOC in mitigating stress and enhancing psychological resources underscores its significance in fortifying caregivers' capacity to manage the challenges inherent in supporting those dealing with addiction.

4.5. Interventions and strategies

4.5.1. Review of salutogenic interventions aimed at enhancing psychological wellbeing

A review of salutogenic interventions aimed at enhancing psychological well-being in individuals affected by substance addiction highlights a range of approaches focused on fostering resilience and improving mental health outcomes. These interventions prioritize empowering individuals to harness their internal resources and develop a SOC to navigate the challenges posed by addiction more effectively. Techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness-based practices, and strengths-based approaches have demonstrated promise in bolstering psychological resources and promoting effective coping strategies (Xiang et al., 2025). CBT interventions are designed to modify maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors, thereby enhancing an individual's ability to manage stressors effectively (Zamir et al., 2023). Mindfulness-based practices cultivate present-moment awareness, which aids in stress reduction and emotional regulation. Furthermore, strengths-based approaches concentrate on identifying and utilizing an individual's inherent strengths and capabilities to enhance resilience and foster a positive psychological outlook (Singha & Singha, 2024). Collectively, these interventions underscore the significance of salutogenic approaches in equipping individuals affected by addiction with the tools necessary to enhance their psychological well-being and foster a sense of empowerment throughout their recovery journey.

4.5.2. Effectiveness of interventions focused on improving SOC in APs

Research examining interventions aimed at improving SOC among APs reveals promising strategies for enhancing their psychological well-being and coping abilities. These interventions often focus on psychoeducation, resilience-building programs, and support groups tailored to the specific needs of caregivers. The primary goal is to enhance caregivers' understanding of the inherent stressors in their role and equip them with tools to develop a more coherent and manageable perspective. Psychoeducational programs provide knowledge about stress management, communication skills, and self-care practices, which enhance caregivers' abilities to comprehend and navigate the challenges they face. Resilience-building programs emphasize the cultivation of adaptive coping strategies and emotional regulation techniques, fostering a stronger SOC and improved stress management. Support groups offer a platform for mutual sharing, validation, and encouragement, promoting a sense of meaningfulness and connectedness among

caregivers (Gamal Elsayed et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2023). Overall, these interventions show significant promise in enhancing SOC among APs, empowering them to better manage the demands of caregiving while improving their own psychological well-being.

4.5.3. Addressing gaps in research and practical implementation of salutogenic approaches

Addressing gaps in both research and the practical implementation of salutogenic approaches is imperative to harness the full potential of these methodologies, particularly in the context of substance addiction care. Research gaps often revolve around the need for more empirical evidence examining the effectiveness and long-term impact of salutogenic interventions on improving outcomes for individuals affected by addiction. This includes exploring how SOC translates into tangible improvements in mental health and well-being. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for research focused on tailoring salutogenic interventions to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of both caregivers and individuals dealing with addiction. On the practical front, there is a gap in translating research findings into real-world applications, necessitating comprehensive guidelines and training programs for healthcare providers and caregivers. Bridging these gaps entails fostering collaborations between researchers, clinicians, and policymakers to prioritize salutogenic principles in addiction care, promote the dissemination of evidence-based practices, and create a supportive environment for implementing salutogenic approaches. Efforts to close these gaps are crucial for advancing the adoption of salutogenesis and enhancing its impact on improving the well-being of those affected by substance addiction. The discussion around salutogenesis in substance addiction caregiving illuminates its profound implications for improving psychological well-being and coping strategies. Literature emphasizes the significant role of SOC in shaping the experiences of APs of addiction. Studies have consistently shown that a stronger SOC correlates with better mental health outcomes, reduced stress levels, and enhanced resilience among caregivers facing the challenges of supporting someone with addiction. Interventions focused on enhancing SOC have demonstrated efficacy in alleviating psychological distress and fostering adaptive coping mechanisms for both caregivers and affected individuals. However, despite these promising findings, integrating salutogenic principles into addiction care poses multifaceted challenges. The pervasive stigma surrounding addiction hampers the acceptance and implementation of salutogenic approaches, affecting not only individuals with addiction but also caregivers' ability to access resources and support. Additionally, practical obstacles such as resource limitations, time constraints, and the complexity of addressing diverse needs in caregiving contexts hinder the seamless application of salutogenic interventions. While research indicates the potential of SOC in improving mental health outcomes, gaps remain in understanding how exactly SOC translates into tangible improvements. Further research is needed to elucidate the mechanisms through which SOC influences coping strategies and resilience in the context of addiction caregiving. Tailoring interventions to suit the individualized needs of both caregivers and those affected by addiction is crucial but requires more empirical evidence and practical guidelines. To bridge these gaps and realize the full potential of salutogenic approaches, concerted efforts are necessary. Education and training initiatives can raise awareness and understanding of salutogenesis among caregivers and healthcare professionals. Advocacy and destigmatization efforts are vital to create environments conducive to the acceptance and application of salutogenic principles in addiction care. Additionally, developing tailored interventions and evidence-based practices is essential to effectively address the diverse needs within caregiving contexts. In conclusion, while the integration of salutogenic principles in substance addiction caregiving holds promise for improving psychological well-being and resilience, challenges must be addressed. By leveraging the strengths of salutogenesis and tackling identified obstacles and research gaps, caregivers and individuals affected by addiction can benefit from more

holistic and resilient approaches, ultimately leading to improved mental health outcomes in this complex landscape.

5. Conclusion

This systematic review has examined the intricate relationship between salutogenesis, SOC and psychological wellbeing among individuals affected by substance addiction. The findings underscore the critical role of SOC as a protective factor that fosters resilience and enhances coping strategies in both caregivers and those directly affected by addiction. Unlike caregiving for other health conditions, the unique challenges associated with substance addiction—such as the unpredictability of behavior, societal stigma, and complex emotional dynamics—necessitate tailored approaches that prioritize the cultivation of SOC and other psychological resources. The review highlights the efficacy of various salutogenic interventions, including psychoeducation, resilience-building programs, and support groups, which have shown promise in enhancing SOC and psychological wellbeing. These interventions equip caregivers and affected individuals with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of addiction, thereby reducing stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Moreover, the correlation between SOC and improved mental health outcomes reinforces the need for a deeper understanding of how SOC influences coping mechanisms and resilience within this context. However, significant gaps remain in both research and the practical implementation of salutogenic approaches in addiction care. The lack of empirical evidence regarding the long-term effectiveness of these interventions, coupled with the need for tailored strategies that address the diverse needs of caregivers and affected individuals, calls for further investigation. Additionally, the pervasive stigma surrounding substance addiction presents a formidable barrier to the acceptance and implementation of salutogenic principles, highlighting the necessity for advocacy and destigmatization efforts. In conclusion, integrating salutogenic principles into substance addiction care holds substantial promise for enhancing psychological wellbeing and resilience among those affected. By addressing identified gaps in research and practical application, and fostering collaborative efforts among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, we can develop comprehensive guidelines that support the effective implementation of salutogenic approaches. Ultimately, these initiatives can lead to improved mental health outcomes and a more holistic understanding of the caregiving experience within the realm of substance addiction.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Chantal Settle: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

Disclaimer

I certify that this article is my own work and that all sources of information used in this report have been fully acknowledged.

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Declaration of competing interest

This statement affirms that there are no conflicts of interest that could potentially influence the research or its outcomes and assures transparency in the submission.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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