

# Searching For Healthcare Information

## Accessing OVID databases

Go to the library webpage [www.mft.nhs.uk/library](http://www.mft.nhs.uk/library) > Online resources > Healthcare Databases.

You will then see the Ovid databases available to you. Login using your OpenAthens username and password. You will also need to create an account with OVID if you wish to save your searches.

After logging in with OpenAthens you will be taken to the resources list. In order to make full use of advanced searching features, we strongly recommend you search **one database at a time**.

Select Resource(s) to search:

☒ All Resources

- ☐ Books@Ovid November 15, 2021
- ☐ Journals@Ovid Full Text November 18, 2021
- ☐ Your Journals@Ovid
- ☐ AMED (Allied and Complementary Medicine) 1985 to November 2021
- ☐ Embase 1974 to 2021 November 17
- ☐ Ovid Emtree 1995 to 2021 Week 45
- ☐ HMC Health Management Information Consortium 1979 to September 2021
- ☐ Ovid MEDLINE(R) ALL 1946 to November 17, 2021

OK Add Group Delete Group

## How to Search

Firstly you need to formulate a clear question. This should generate search terms. There are models which may help you do this such as PICO:

**P** = Population, (e.g. patient group, problem, condition, disease gender, age etc.) - what's the problem about? Who's affected?

**I** = Intervention (e.g. treatment, exposure, diagnostic test, drug, procedure) – what is being done?

**C** = Comparison (not always applicable) – what's the alternative, comparing your intervention with another treatment or test.

**O** = Outcome (e.g. reduced mortality, improved quality of life, length of stay, cost effectiveness, complications) - what effect will it have?

You may want to include a separate search for a setting if this is relevant, e.g. critical care, hospital, primary care etc. If you want a particular study type. e.g. RCT, this can be added as a limit at the end of your search. (see Applying Limits below).

A question such as '*Does the flu vaccine help reduce absenteeism in healthcare workers?* Could be broken down as follows:

<b>P</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>
Health personnel Healthcare workers Healthcare staff Nurses Doctors Hospital staff etc.	Flu vaccine Influenza vaccination Influenza immunization etc.		Absence Sick leave Absenteeism etc.

## AND and OR

The process is to list synonymous / similar terms under each column heading. These are then combined using **OR**

Once this has been done, combine each column using **AND**.

It is not necessary to fill each column. Your question may not even be suitable for the PICO model.

**The main thing to remember is you MUST break your question down into different concepts.**

## Carrying Out A Search.

Sample Question: *Is there a relationship between passive smoking and lung cancer in males?*

We will break down this question into two main concepts:

1. Passive smoking
2. Lung cancer.

We will then limit the results to Males

Begin with one of the concepts and carry out a keyword search for the term. Then continue searching the same concept, thinking of synonymous terms, potential alternative spellings (e.g. American), singular and plurals.

The search for passive smoking may include the following keywords:

passive smok\*  
second hand smok\*  
secondhand smok\*  
Involuntary smok\*  
tobacco pollution  
etc.

**Note: the \* is used as a wildcard to truncate a word. Thus, smok\* will retrieve the words smoke, smokes, smoked, smoking.**

In OVID, when you want to limit your search to title and abstract you must type *.ti,ab* at the end of the term, like this: *Involuntary smok\*.ti,ab*.

To search for the subject heading you need to click the 'Map term to Subject heading' box.

By using a combination of both keywords (which will bring up the most up-to-date- information) with subject headings (used to index the articles in the database) you will have a more comprehensive search and eliminate the risk of missing out important information. *You do not need to use truncation when search subject headings.*

Basic Search | Find Citation | Search Tools | Search Fields | **Advanced Search** | Multi-Field Search

1 Resource selected | [Hide](#) | [Change](#)

Embase 1974 to 2017 May 22

Enter keyword or phrase (\* or \$ for truncation)

☒ Keyword ☐ Author ☐ Title ☐ Journal

passive smoke

☒ Limits (expand) ☐ Include Multimedia ☒ Map Term to Subject Heading

From here you can select *Explode*, which expands results to include records about the broader topic and all related topics and *Focus* which retrieves only those results that pertain to the subject heading.

Your term mapped to the following Subject Headings:  
Click on a subject heading to view more general and more specific terms within the thesaurus.  
See term mapped to thesaurus term

☐ Include All Subheadings

Combine with:

Select	Subject Heading	Explode	Focus	Scope
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	passive smoking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">i</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	passive smoke.mp. search as Keyword			

## Exploded terms:

Select Term(s)	Subject Heading	Hits	Explode	Focus	Scope Note
[Back up in List]					
<input type="checkbox"/>	passive movement ▼		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">i</a>
	passive personality disorder ▼	3014			
<input type="checkbox"/>	passive skin anaphylaxis ▼		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">i</a>
	passive smoke ▼	2606			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	passive smoking	10322	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">i</a>
	[Used For]				
	passive cigarette smoke				
	passive cigarette smoking				
	passive smoke				
	passive tobacco smoke				
	passive tobacco smoking				
	second hand cigarette smoke				
	second hand smoke				
	second hand smoking				
	second hand tobacco smoke				
	secondhand cigarette smoke				
	secondhand smoke				
	secondhand smoking				
	secondhand tobacco smoke				
	smoking,passive				
	tobacco smoke pollution				
	[Broader Terms]				
<input type="checkbox"/>	smoking	246381	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">i</a>

Now we want to combine these terms with the Boolean operative **OR**. So far our search on EMBASE looks like this:

The screenshot shows the Ovid search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Search', 'Journals', 'Books', 'Multimedia', 'My Workspace', and 'Mobile'. Below this is a 'Search History (6)' section. It contains a table with columns: #, Searches, Results, Type, Actions, and Annotations. The table lists four searches:

#	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
3	secondhand smok*.ti,ab.	2167	Advanced	Display Results   More	
4	Involuntary smok*.ti,ab.	118	Advanced	Display Results   More	
5	exp passive smoking/	10322	Advanced	Display Results   More	
6	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5	12924	Advanced	Display Results   More	

Below the table, there are buttons for 'Save', 'Remove', and 'Combine with: AND OR'. The 'OR' button is highlighted with an arrow.

We can now add our second search term, 'lung cancer'. Remember, there are various synonyms for 'cancer', and you must use all of these in your keyword search. You can search for them like this: *(lung\* AND (cancer\* OR neoplasm\* OR carcinoma\*)).ti,ab* Notice that the search terms must be in parentheses.

The screenshot shows the Ovid search interface with a 'Search History (9)' section. It contains a table with columns: #, Searches, Results, Type, Actions, and Annotations. The table lists nine searches:

#	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
1	passiv* smok*.ti,ab.	5443	Advanced	Display Results   More	
2	second hand smok*.ti,ab.	1299	Advanced	Display Results   More	
3	secondhand smok*.ti,ab.	2167	Advanced	Display Results   More	
4	Involuntary smok*.ti,ab.	118	Advanced	Display Results   More	
5	exp passive smoking/	10322	Advanced	Display Results   More	
6	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5	12924	Advanced	Display Results   More	
7	(lung* and (cancer* or neoplasm* or carcinoma*)).ti,ab.	273098	Advanced	Display Results   More	
8	exp lung cancer/	227777	Advanced	Display Results   More	
9	7 or 8	356148	Advanced	Display Results   More	

Below the table, there are buttons for 'Save', 'Remove', and 'Combine with: AND OR'. The 'OR' button is highlighted with an arrow.

Now we can combine the two search components, in this instance lines 6 and 9:

The screenshot shows the Ovid search interface with a 'Search History (10)' section. It contains a table with columns: #, Searches, Results, Type, Actions, and Annotations. The table lists ten searches:

#	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
1	passiv* smok*.ti,ab.	5443	Advanced	Display Results   More	
2	second hand smok*.ti,ab.	1299	Advanced	Display Results   More	
3	secondhand smok*.ti,ab.	2167	Advanced	Display Results   More	
4	Involuntary smok*.ti,ab.	118	Advanced	Display Results   More	
5	exp passive smoking/	10322	Advanced	Display Results   More	
6	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5	12924	Advanced	Display Results   More	
7	(lung* and (cancer* or neoplasm* or carcinoma*)).ti,ab.	273098	Advanced	Display Results   More	
8	exp lung cancer/	227777	Advanced	Display Results   More	
9	7 or 8	356148	Advanced	Display Results   More	
10	9 and 6	1510	Advanced	Display Results   More	

Below the table, there are buttons for 'Save', 'Remove', and 'Combine with: AND OR'. The 'AND' button is highlighted with an arrow.

## Applying Limits

To apply limits to your search, tick the line you wish to limit (in our case line 10) and then tick the

'Limits' box and choose the limits you want. To see the full list of available limits, *select Additional Limits*. Then click 'Limit A Search'. Here we have limited to English, Male, Adult, Full text and the dates 2007 -2017.

Basic Search | Find Citation | Search Tools | Search Fields | **Advanced Search** | Multi-Field Search

1 Resource selected | [Hide](#) | [Change](#)

**Embase** 1974 to 2017 May 22

Enter keyword or phrase (\* or \$ for truncation)

☒ Keyword ☐ Author ☐ Title ☐ Journal

**Limits (close)** ☐ Include Multimedia ☒ Map Term to Subject Heading

☐ Full Text ☐ Latest Update ☐ Abstracts  
☐ Human ☐ Cochrane Library ☒ English Language

Publication Year  -

Status: -  
Article In Press Status  
Conference Abstract Status  
Embase Status  
InProgress Status

NLM Status: -  
In-Data-Review  
In-Process  
PubMed-not-MEDLINE  
PubMed/MEDLINE

☐ Ovid Full Text Available  
☐ Priority Journals  
☐ Animals  
☒ Male  
☐ Exclude MEDLINE Journals

Publication Year  -

To select or remove multiple items from a list below, hold down the Shift, Ctrl, or "Apple" key while selecting.

Records From: -  
Conference Abstracts  
Embase  
MEDLINE  
NLM Status: -  
In-Data-Review  
In-Process  
PubMed-not-MEDLINE  
PubMed/MEDLINE  
Clinical Trials: -  
Clinical Trial  
Randomized Controlled Trial  
Controlled Clinical Trial  
Multicenter Study  
Phase 1 Clinical Trial  
Languages: -  
Danish  
Dutch  
English  
Esperanto  
Estonian  
Finnish  
Source Types: -  
Book  
Book Series  
Conference Proceeding  
Journal  
Major Reference Work  
Experimental Subjects: -  
Animals <Category Heading>  
... Amphibia  
... Ape  
... Bird  
... Cat  
Star Ranking: -

Status: -  
Article In Press Status  
Conference Abstract Status  
Embase Status  
EBM-Evidence Based Medicine  
Evidence Based Medicine  
Consensus Development  
Meta Analysis  
Outcomes Research  
Clinical Queries  
Prognosis (maximizes specificity)  
Prognosis (best balance of sensitivity and specificity)  
Causation-Etiology (maximizes sensitivity)  
Causation-Etiology (maximizes specificity)  
Causation-Etiology (best balance of sensitivity and specificity)  
Economics (maximizes sensitivity)  
Publication Types: -  
Abstract Report  
Article  
Article in Press  
Books  
Book Review  
Human Age Groups: -  
Infant <to one year>  
Child <unspecified age>  
Preschool Child <1 to 6 years>  
School Child <7 to 12 years>  
Adolescent <13 to 17 years>  
Adult <18 to 64 years>  
Routes of Drug Administration: -  
Buccal  
Epidural  
Inhalational  
Intraarterial  
Intraarticular  
Year Published: -

☐ Full Text ☐ Latest Update  
☐ Abstracts ☐ Human  
☐ Animal Studies ☐ Cochrane Library  
☐ Female ☒ English Language  
☐ Retraction Notice



You can also filter for Clinical Query.

## The Clinical Query Limit

Clinical queries are pre-tested search strategies (or filters) which are made up of search terms that identify the methodology of a study. They are used as an effective way to retrieve particular types of studies that answer questions relating to therapy, diagnosis, prognosis, aetiology/etiology etc.

Selecting the appropriate filter, will:

- increase the relevancy of your search
- introduce a level of consistency to your searching making it more systematic
- save you time in when conducting your search
- provide you with a particularly useful way of limiting a broad search

Clinical queries are available in Embase and CINAHL.

Filters may have: High sensitivity (broad) - giving most results  
High specificity (narrow) - giving least results  
Optimized – giving medium results

## The Search Results

Below you can see the final results with limits.



To view the results click 'Display results'. The results are displayed as follows:

**Search Information**

You searched:  
limit 10 to (male and english language and yr=2007 - 2017\* and adult <18 to 64 years>)

Search terms used:  
cancer\*  
carcinoma\*  
hand  
involuntary  
lung cancer  
lung\*  
neoplasm\*  
passiv\*  
passive smoking  
second  
secondhand  
smok\*

Search Returned:  
154 text results

Sort By:  
-

Customize Display

**Filter By**

Add to Search History

Selected Only ( 0 )

**Years**

All Years  
Current year  
Past 3 years  
Past 5 years

Specific Year Range

**Subject**  
**Author**  
**Journal**  
**Publication Type**

To search Open Access content on Ovid, go to [Basic Search](#).

Print Email Export + My Projects Keep Selected

All Range Clear 10 Per Page 1 Go Next >

1. **Fanconi anemia genes in lung adenocarcinoma - A pathway-wide study on cancer susceptibility.** Abstract Reference Complete Reference  
Yang S.-Y., Hsiung C.-N., Li Y.-J., Chang G.-C., Tsai Y.-H., Chen K.-Y., Huang M.-S., Su W.-C., Chen Y.-M., Hsiung C.A., Yang P.-C., Chen C.-J., Wu P.-E., Yu J.-C., Shen C.-Y., Hsu H.-M.  
*Journal of Biomedical Science*. 23 (1) (no pagination), 2016. Article Number: 23. Date of Publication: 03 Feb  
[Article]  
Publisher  
BioMed Central Ltd. (E-mail: info@biomedcentral.com)  
► Abstract + My Projects + Annotate

2. **The fraction of cancer attributable to ways of life, infections, occupation, and environmental agents in Brazil in 2020.** Abstract Reference Complete Reference  
Azevedo E Silva G., De Moura L., Curado M.P., Da Silva Gomes F., Otero U., De Rezende L.F.M., Daumas R.P., Guimaraes R.M., Meira K.C., Da Costa Leite I., Valente J.G., Moreira R.I., Koifman R., Malta D.C., De Campos Mello M.S., Guedes T.W.G., Boffetta P.  
*PLoS ONE*. 11 (2) (no pagination), 2016. Article Number: e0148761. Date of Publication: February 2016.  
[Article]  
Publisher  
Public Library of Science (E-mail: plos@plos.org)  
► Abstract + My Projects + Annotate

3. **Secondhand smoking and the risk of esophageal squamous cell carcinoma in a high incidence Region, Kashmir, India: A case-control-observational study.** Abstract Reference Complete Reference  
Rafiq R., Shah I.A., Bhat G.A., Lone M.M., Islami F., Boffetta P., Dar N.A.  
*Medicine (United States)*. 95 (1) (no pagination), 2016. Article Number: e2340. Date of Publication: 2016.  
[Article]  
Publisher  
Lippincott Williams and Wilkins (E-mail: kathiest.clai@apta.org)  
► Abstract + My Projects + Annotate

4. **Case-control study of cumulative cigarette tar exposure and lung and upper aerodigestive tract cancers.** Abstract Reference

Click on title link to display the full reference

Look out for links to full text on the right of the screen

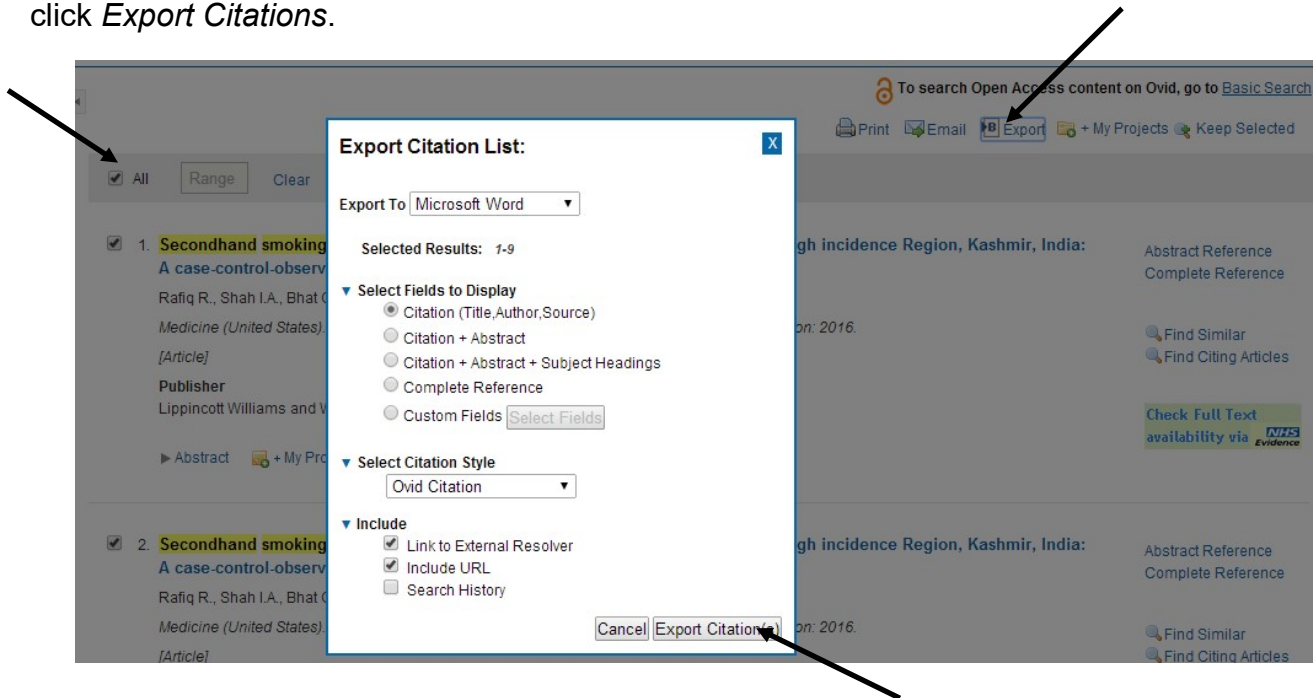
Check Full Text availability via NHS Evidence

If you require the full text for a journal article but so not see a link, you have the following options:

1. First check the library catalogue to make sure it is not held at the library.  
[www.mft.nhs.uk/library](http://www.mft.nhs.uk/library) > Library catalogue
2. Check Browzine. <https://browzine.com/libraries/2901>
3. Use our document supply service. [www.mft.nhs.uk/library](http://www.mft.nhs.uk/library) > Document supply

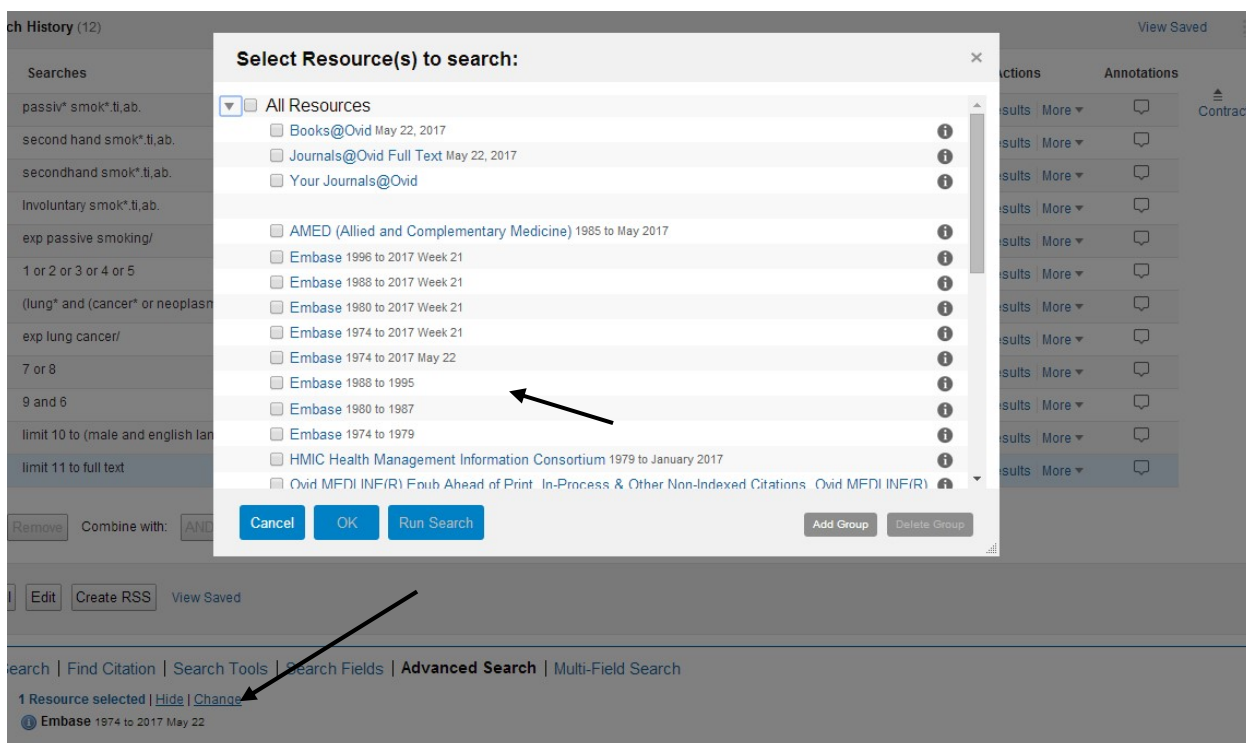
## Exporting results

To export your results, tick the line corresponding to the results you want to export, or choose *All*. Click on *Export* and choose the format you'd like and how you'd like your results displayed and then click *Export Citations*.



## Changing Databases

Once you have finished your search you have the option of searching again using a different database. Click on *Change* and choose a different database from the menu.



## Saving your search

In order to save your searches, you will need to register with OVID:

My Account Support & Training

My Workspace Mobile

### Personal Account Login

Personal Account Name:

Password:

Login

[Forgot Account Name or Password?](#)

**Don't have an Account?**

Use a Personal Account to save searches, create alerts and manage research.

[Create Account](#)

Once logged in you can save selected rows or the entire search.

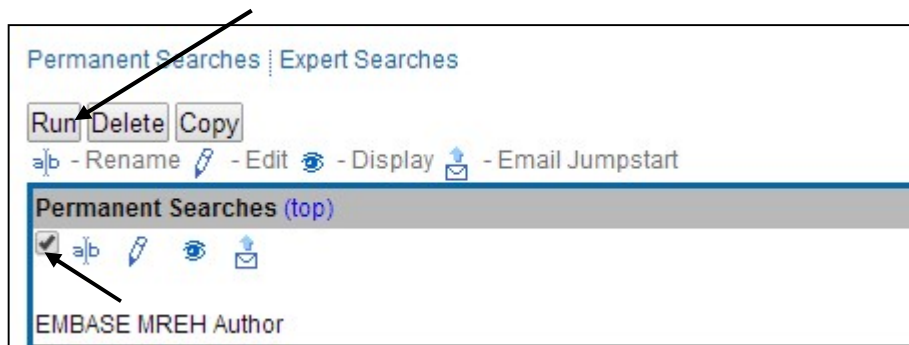
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	(lung* and (cancer* or neoplasm* or carcinoma*)).ti,ab.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	exp lung cancer/
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	7 or 8
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	9 and 6
<input type="checkbox"/>	11	limit 10 to (male and english language and yr="2007 - 2017" and adult <18 to 64 years>)
<input type="checkbox"/>	12	limit 11 to full text

Save Remove Combine with: AND OR

Save All Edit Create RSS View Saved

To view or open saved searches click on 'View Saved' in the top right corner. To re-run the search tick the box and select *Run*.





## Common syntax:

There is a common way of searching across all Healthcare using the same wildcards and operators. Here is a brief overview.

TRUNCATION	SYMBOL
A way to search for alternative endings of words. You need to think of the root of your word and apply the wildcard *. Unlimited truncation e.g. <b>manag*</b> finds manage, manages, managing, managed, management etc. Be careful however e.g. <b>nurs*</b> finds nurse, nurses, nursing, nurse-led but also nursery.	*
Limited truncation: number ( <i>n</i> ) specifies the maximum characters after wordstem e.g. <b>Child*4</b> finds child, children <b>Doesn't find</b> Childhood, childless	* <i>n</i>
The optional wild card character ? (question mark) can be used within or at the end of a search term to substitute for one or no characters. This wild card is useful for retrieving documents with British and American word variants. Example <b>colo?r</b> retrieves results that contain the words <b>color</b> or <b>colour</b> . You can use multiple wild cards in a single query word.	?

BOOLEAN OPERATORS	
Finds records containing BOTH terms. e.g. <b>heart and exercise</b>	AND
Finds records containing either term e.g. <b>smoking or tobacco</b>	OR
Use brackets to include more than one type of operator e.g. <b>(diet or nutrition) and diabetes</b>	()
Excludes terms – use with care e.g. <b>Alopecia not (cancer or chemotherapy)</b>	NOT
Will default to AND	No command

PROXIMITY CONNECTORS	
Finds records where the terms appear within <i>n</i> words of each other in either direction. e.g. <b>hyperactiv* adj7 child*</b> finds e.g. 'child/children who are diagnosed as being hyperactive....' <b>note:</b> hyperactiv* will also pick up the term 'hyperactivity' which should further	ADJ <i>n</i>

PHRASES	
Use adj between words or quotation marks to find a phrase. e.g. “ <b>play therapy</b> ” finds play therapy only. It will not find play-based therapy, play and music therapy	“.....”
HYPHENATED WORDS	
There is no need to include hyphens (-) in search terms such as <b>hand washing</b> or <b>side effects</b> , as the results will be the same. Keep in mind that terms such as <b>hand washing</b> and <b>well being</b> may also be written as <b>handwashing</b> or <b>wellbeing</b> .	-

## Refining a search

What to do if you don't find what you are looking for? Searching for literature can occasionally lead to unsatisfactory results. There are generally two types of problems that may be encountered:

- Too many irrelevant articles in the search result
- Too few relevant articles generated by the search.

Ideally when carrying out a literature search the results should find all of the articles which are relevant to the question, while excluding any article which is not relevant.

## Too Many Irrelevant Articles

If the search results contain a large number of irrelevant articles, try:

- Using the thesaurus
- Using the NOT command to exclude a concept which is not wanted. (Use only if results have a strong bias towards a topic that you do not want at all as you may remove some useful information.)
- Searching for phrases using “ ”. For example, if you search for **Mental Health** without quotation marks, the results generated include irrelevant hits where the words mental and health appear in any order, anywhere in the title or abstract.
- Think of more precise keywords that can be used/added to the search.
- Using the Limits, such as limit to geographical location, age group etc.
- Limiting the date of publication range.
- Searching by **Title**, or **title and abstract**, rather than **all fields**.
- Using the combine search option to fine tune your search.
- Select **Focus** instead of **Select**.

## Not Enough Useful Articles

If the search results do not contain enough useful articles, try:

- Alternative spelling – Use the American and European spellings of a word. For example, gynaecology or gynecology
- Different synonyms – try using alternative words or phrases to describe your search topic/concept. For example, try 'bandage' as an alternative to 'dressing' as a search term.

- Searching an alternative database. i.e. switch from Medline to EMBASE Widening your search – your search may be restricted by too many different concepts. Try removing one of the search terms or limits.
- Using the OR command, e.g. wound care OR 'wound management'
- Truncation – Use the \* command to give suffix variations. For example, bandag\* will find bandage, bandages, and bandaging
- Searching 'in any field' or 'in title and abstract' rather than just in title.

Note: If you are searching for results in a new area of research there may be few published articles.

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