

## Library Helpsheet No. 3

# Quick guide to searching health related databases



The following health related databases are available to all NHS staff and students via NHS Evidence at [www.evidence.nhs.uk](http://www.evidence.nhs.uk):

- **AMED:** Allied health professions, complementary medicine
- **BNI:** Nursing, midwifery, health visitors
- **CINAHL:** Nursing and allied health
- **EMBASE:** General medical with European focus, pharmacology
- **MEDLINE:** General medical
- **HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE:** Healthcare administration and institution management
- **HMIC:** Health service management and administration, with a UK focus
- **PsycINFO:** Psychiatry, psychology and social sciences

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

This helpsheet only provides a very quick reference guide to searching the databases. If you require a systematic search to support evidence based practice, we recommend further training and support.

Training on searching the databases is available via the Integrated Library Service. To view our Information Literacy and Skills Training Programme and to book a place on a training session please visit our website at [www.whnt.nhs.uk/library](http://www.whnt.nhs.uk/library) and follow the 'Training and Induction' link.

# 1

### Think about your question

What are the important subject areas and words that need to be in your search? Are there alternative terms or acronyms for your topics?  
How many subjects does your search cover?

What patient group, intervention, comparison, or outcome (PICO) are you interested in?

Are you interested in a particular date range?  
Do you only require articles in English?

# 2

### Select a database

Go to NHS Evidence at [www.evidence.nhs.uk](http://www.evidence.nhs.uk).

Select 'Journals and Databases', then 'Healthcare Databases Advanced Search'.

Login with your NHS Athens username and password.

Select a database from the list provided. We recommend that you search in at least two different databases.

# 3

### Enter your free text search terms

To search for free text (or natural language) terms within the title or abstract of a citation, type in your search term and select **Title and abstract**. Select **SEARCH**.

Use the **OR** command between synonyms and American/UK spellings e.g. *estrogen OR oestrogen*. Use double quotes around phrases and numbers, e.g. "frozen shoulder" or "diabetes type 2".



**TIP:** You can use truncation by placing \* at the end of a word to replace any number of characters, e.g. *pregnan\** will find *pregnant*, *pregnancy*, *pregnancies* etc. Add a number to determine the maximum number of characters replaced.

# 4

### Use the thesaurus mapping tool

Enter the same term again and tick the **Thesaurus Mapping** box then **SEARCH**. Note: you cannot thesaurus map a truncated word. Select the subject heading that matches your search term. Use the **[scope]** link for more information on subject headings.

Select an appropriate heading from the list, click on the **Explode** box adjacent to it. Selecting **Explode** will include more specific related search terms.

# 5

### Combine free text and thesaurus results

Combine the results of step 3 and 4 using the **OR** command. You may use the buttons provided and select appropriate search lines or type directly into the search box e.g. *1 OR 2*.

Repeat steps 2 to 4 for other search terms you have identified.



# 6

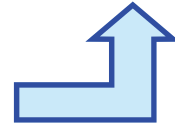
## Combine your search terms

Use **AND** where you require BOTH terms to be included in your results, e.g. *heart attack AND aspirin*. Using AND will retrieve fewer results.



Use **OR** where you want EITHER term to be included in your results, e.g. *heart attack OR myocardial infarction*. Using OR will retrieve more results.

**TIP:** To search for an author, select author in the drop down box and use the format "Smith R" Smith\* "Smith R\*" or Smith-R.



# 7

## Limit your search

Use the **Limits** section to narrow your search. Open a relevant limit by selecting the arrow on the right. The limits use menus; click on the option you require in the menu. Hold down the **CTRL** key when you select to choose multiple options.

Type the number of the search line (e.g. 3) you wish to apply limits to into the search box. Then **SEARCH**.

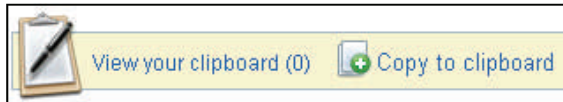
Note: remember to deselect limits before you enter more search terms.

# 8

## View your results

View the citations that your search has retrieved by clicking on the number of results. To see abstracts and other information, select the article title, or tick the **Show Abstracts** box.

Copy citations to the clipboard if you want to save them and look at them later. Select the tick box next to the citation, then select **Copy to clipboard**.



At any point you can select **View your clipboard** to view the citations you have saved.

# 9

## View full text articles online

Where a **Full Text** link is available, select the blue link to open a copy of the full article online. Save or print it. You may need to use your NHS Athens password again. If the link does not take you straight to the article, look for an Athens log-in prompt.

If the link is to a print copy at one of your local libraries make a note. Library contact details are available by clicking on the named library.

# 10

## Print or e-mail your results

When you have selected your results you can **E-mail** them or **Export** them.

Choose a format - short, medium (includes abstract) or full. To print or save your results, first export them as a PDF or Word file then save or print as usual.

Results Selected	Output Format	Display Format	Actions
No results selected. <a href="#">Select all on this page</a> <a href="#">Select all results</a>	Choose output document format. <input checked="" type="radio"/> HTML <input type="radio"/> PDF <input type="radio"/> MS Word <input type="radio"/> Text <input type="radio"/> XML <input type="radio"/> RIS (inc RefMan, ProCite, EndNote and RefWorks)	Choose output fields. <input checked="" type="radio"/> Short ⓘ <input type="radio"/> Medium ⓘ <input type="radio"/> Full ⓘ <input type="checkbox"/> Include Search History	Display, save or email results with selected fields and output formats.  <input type="button" value="Export Results"/>  <input type="button" value="Email Results"/>

# 11

**FINALLY** critically appraise your results to assess whether you can apply the results to practice.

If you require further assistance with any of the steps described above, please contact the Integrated Library Service (ILS). You can find our contact details, plus more about the services we have to offer, on the ILS web pages at [www.whnt.nhs.uk/library](http://www.whnt.nhs.uk/library).