



How to Search PubMed on the Web

Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Health Care System, & Preclinical Sciences

Introduction

PubMed provides the most up-to-date access to the world's literature in medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the healthcare system, and the preclinical sciences. PubMed is primarily comprised of MEDLINE, the National Library of Medicine's premier biomedical database. MEDLINE contains over 12 million citations and abstracts from more than 4,600 biomedical journals published from 1965 – present. In addition to MEDLINE, PubMed also provides access to an older set of 1.5 million citations from 1950 – 65 called OLDMEDLINE. PubMed coverage is worldwide, including literature from the U.S. and 70 other countries, but most records are from English language sources and all have English translations for their titles and abstracts.

Online Access:

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/> → UConn Libraries homepage → Most Used Databases → PubMed

The print version of *Index Medicus*[®] covers a subset of MEDLINE, 1916-2000.

Index Medicus[®] is located on **Level B / Babbidge Federal Documents Collection / at HE 20.3612.**

What is MeSH?

MeSH Terms, also known as **Medical Subject Headings**, are the controlled vocabulary used in MEDLINE. They are the **preferred terms** for searching MEDLINE because:

A single concept in medicine is often referred to by variant terms. This is troubling for a user who, when searching for information about the topic strokes, for instance, finds that they have missed all articles that use alternate terms for strokes (i.e. stroke, cerebral infarction, cerebral infarct, cerebrovascular disease, cerebrovascular accidents, poststroke). Medical Subject Headings provide a solution for searchers who want to find all articles on strokes, regardless of which term the article uses to refer to the concept. The purpose of MeSH is to assign one term for each medical concept. All citations in MEDLINE are analyzed and assigned MeSH terms for the topics they cover. Each citation in MEDLINE has approximately 10-15 MeSH Terms assigned to it. So if users find and search MEDLINE for the correct Medical Subject Heading they should find all citations about this one concept, regardless of the terms the author chose to use. For more information about MeSH, consult the website of the National Library of Medicine:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/mesh.html>

Subject, Author, and Journal Title Searches

To conduct a simple search by subject, author, or title, enter one or more search terms in the text box and click **GO**. PubMed automatically converts subject terms into correct Medical Subject Headings (MeSH terms).

Author names must be entered in the format *last name first initial middle initial*. Example: **smith ja**

Do not use **full** first or middle names.

To find a complete journal title using a journal abbreviation, use the **Journal Browser** screen.

Search Examples:

Find: **poison ivy therapy**

(Finds records with the terms poison ivy and therapy anywhere in the record. Also finds records

with

the MeSH terms toxicodendron, therapy and therapeutics.)

Find: Hanson AM
(Finds records with the author A.M. Hanson)

Find: American Journal of Nursing
(Finds records from the American Journal of Nursing)

Three commands, called Boolean operators, are available to combine concepts: AND, OR, NOT. When typing the Boolean operators, **CAPITALIZATION is REQUIRED**.

AND – Combines search terms so that each result contains *all* of the terms. AND is used to narrow searches.

Find: diabetes AND patient centered care
(Finds records containing **both** concepts *diabetes and patient centered care*.)

Find: lyme disease AND dobson a
(Finds records containing the subject *lyme disease and* are written by *A. Dobson*.)

OR – Combines search terms so that each result contains at least one of the terms. OR is used to broaden searches. OR is very useful for grouping synonyms or variant spellings of a single concept.

Find: low back OR lower back
(Finds records containing **at least one** of the concepts *low back or lower back*.)

NOT – Excludes terms so that each result will not contain the term that follows the not operator. NOT is used to focus searches.

Find: eating disorders NOT anorexia
(Finds records containing the concept *eating disorders* but **not** the concept *anorexia*.)

Often it is necessary to use multiple Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) in a search. To insure that the search is run correctly, use **Parentheses ()** to group sets of terms.

Find: vending machines AND (cigarettes OR tobacco)
(Finds records containing the concept *vending machines and* also contains either or both of the concepts *cigarettes or tobacco*.)

Find: (vitamin c OR zinc) AND (Ayello EA OR Thomas DR)
(Finds records containing **either or both** of the concepts *vitamin c or zinc* and that are written by at least one of the authors *E.A. Ayello or D.R. Thomas*.)

Truncation is a very useful tool when one word may have variant endings. For example, the concept *nursing* may be identified by the words *nurse, nurses, or nursing*. To account for all possible suffixes, truncate the term using the asterisk.

Find: nurs*
(Finds records containing all words having the root **nurs**, such as *nurse, nurses, nursing*)

Limiting a Search

Limits provide a way to search specific fields (i.e. **article title, issue, page number**).

Other limits include:

Publication Type	Language	Age Group
Human or Animal study	Gender	Subset (i.e. nursing, dental)
Date of Publication	Date of Entry into PubMed	

Other Search and Display Options

Buttons are available to **Display** and **Sort** results in different formats (with or without abstracts and MeSH Terms).

To **Save** results, chose **Send to File**.

Use the **Print** button on your browser for printing.

There are a number of other tools available to help you create advanced searches and to manipulate results.

To learn more about these tools, please consult the **Help | FAQ** Screen.