Building a search strategy in Ovid Medline

Subject heading searching

1. Enter your single idea (e.g. your concept) into the search box.
2. Select the box “Map Term to Subject Heading”.
3. A list of possible MeSH (Medical Subject Heading) terms is given. Click on blue underlined word to link to the tree A subject heading tree is for your MeSH term will be shown
4. Tick EXPLODE box to include ALL specific terms
5. Tick FOCUS box to include only MAJOR topics
6. Click on SCOPE NOTE to see the definition of the term
7. After making your selections, click on Continue.

Before choosing a subject heading in the MeSH tree, check:

- Does the definition match my meaning?
- History note: When was this subject heading introduced? Does it cover my time period?
- Are there any alternative suggestions? Words in CAPS are related MeSH
- Used for: What are keyword synonyms covered by this subject heading?
- Is this the most specific subject heading to use?
- Is it better to go broader?
- Should I use the Explode feature?
- Should I use the Focus feature?
- Do I need just one aspect of the topic?
- Will narrowing it down now be too soon?
- To choose all either click on the check box or click Continue

Your results will be displayed in the Search History box.
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Keyword searching

Use Keywords when:

- There is no suitable subject heading.
- You want to search for material not yet indexed.

Tools to use with keyword searching:

Truncation

Variant endings after the stem:
child* = children, childhood, childlike, childbirth
Balance* = balance, balancing, balances, balanced etc.

Wildcard?*

= Additional letter in Canadian spelling color, pediatric

# = replaces 1 character woman

Proximity searching adjn

Describes the relationships of words to each other: Seat adj5 wheelchair = find the word “seat” within 5 words of the word “wheelchair”

1. To search with a keyword, select keyword.mp. and click Search.
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**COMBINING results: build your search strategy:**

*Do the same process with your second single idea (e.g. your I concept from PICO)*

SEARCH RESULTS are listed by result set #

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AND</th>
<th>OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To combine different concepts eg results from P <strong>AND</strong> results from I</td>
<td>To combine similar concepts eg. Subject heading set <strong>OR</strong> Keyword set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Limit or refine search results**

1. Use limits to narrow your results.
   - Limits define human characteristics: e.g., Age, gender, race
   - Limits define publication characteristics: e.g., Language, date published, type of research

2. Limits located on the Advanced tab:

   ![Advanced Search Interface](image)
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Review Results

1. Look at Abstract
2. Click on elink to see fulltext
3. Print
4. Export to Refworks, Endnote etc.
5. Email
6. Additional refinements
7. Add your limits to your search history

TIP! Check the Subject headings for ideas to improve your search

SAVE search history to re-run your search or to set up search alerts

Contact | Charlotte Beck | http://directory.library.ubc.ca/people/view/34