Searching Medline and CINAHL via EBSCO

About Medline and CINAHL

Medline and CINAHL are bibliographic databases for searching the journal literature, and are just two of the many databases available. We recommend CINAHL as a good starting point for nursing, midwifery and allied health searches, and Medline for medical topic searches. Both of these are available to search by all NHS staff and students, and require an NHS OpenAthens account to login.

Medline
Medline is a vast source of medical information, covering all aspects of medicine, including dentistry, veterinary medicine and medical psychology. Medline can also be searched via the Ovid or ProQuest interfaces if preferred.

CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)
CINAHL covers nearly all English language nursing journals, as well as journals from 17 allied health disciplines.

Getting onto the database

Visit the library website at www.library.sath.nhs.uk and on the OmniSearch box select the Article tab and follow the link to 'Advanced searching for articles' or go straight to www.library.sath.nhs.uk/articles.

Scroll down to the 'Advanced searching for articles' section and follow the links to Medline or CINAHL under EBSCO Interface.

Enter your NHS OpenAthens account details and this will then take you to the advanced search screen.

Starting your search

On the search screen, enter your search terms in one or more of the search boxes.

If your search consists of two or more distinct concepts (e.g. is St. John's Wort effective in reducing depression as compared to fluoxetine?) it is best to put each concept in a different box. For example:

Click 'Search' to begin your search, and the number of results will be displayed in your search history, with the first 20 references displayed below.

A search using the advanced search screen will search for the words or phrase that appear in the title, abstract and subject headings of references, but you can search specific fields if you wish.

Searching in specific fields

You can use the dropdown under 'Select a Field' if you wish to search in a specific part of the record.

Phrase searching

If you want your search terms to be searched as a phrase (for example, "patient flow") you can place the phrase in double quotes. Items that contain the words next to each other, and in the order specified, will be returned.

Truncation

When using free-text searching, you can use the truncation symbol (*) to broaden your search to variations of a term. For example, 'school*' will find school, schooling, schooled etc.

Combining searches

You can do separate searches and combine them together at the end.

To carry on with the search and add a second concept, type in a second word or phrase and do a second search.

For example, to find articles about both patient flow and emergency care, click to select the two searches, and click on 'Search with AND'. You can also choose 'Search with OR' instead if you are grouping searches.

You should end up with something like:

Search History/Alerts

Print Search History   Retrieve Searches   Retrieve Alerts   Save Searches / Alerts

| ☐ Select / deselect all | Search with AND | Search with OR | Delete Searches | | Refresh Search Results |

	Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions
☐	S3	📶 S1 AND S2	**Expanders** - Apply equivalent subjects **Search modes** - Find all my search terms	🔍 View Results (702) ⓘ View Details ✏ Edit
☐	S2	📶 emergency care	**Expanders** - Apply equivalent subjects **Search modes** - Find all my search terms	🔍 View Results (198,756) ⓘ View Details ✏ Edit
☐	S1	📶 "patient flow"	**Expanders** - Apply equivalent subjects **Search modes** - Find all my search terms	🔍 View Results (2,244) ⓘ View Details ✏ Edit

Click 'View Results' under Actions to see the references for your newly combined search.

Grouping search terms

You can also group search terms and use Boolean operators in the search box. For example, you could search:

Searching: **MEDLINE** | Choose Databases
☐ Suggest Subject Terms

| (emergency OR urgent) AND (care OR department | Select a Field (optional) ▼ | Search |

This would search for articles that contain any word in the first group AND any word in the second group, so could include 'urgent care', 'emergency medical care', 'department of emergency medicine' etc.

It is not essential to use capital letters for Boolean operators.

Words near each other (proximity searching)

By default, results will be returned that include all the words, but not necessarily together (unless you use double-quotes for phrases). You can specify if you'd like words to be near each other by using the N operator follows by the number of words within, for example N3 for within three words.

For example, emergency N5 care would find phrases such as 'care in the emergency department', 'emergency care', 'emergency medical care' and so on. The words can be in any order.

Searching: **MEDLINE** | Choose Databases
☐ Suggest Subject Terms

| emergency N3 care | Select a Field (optional) ▼ | Search |

Searching using the Subject Terms (thesaurus searching)

Both Medline and CINAHL offer subject term searching. Medline uses MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) as its thesaurus and CINAHL uses it's own adapted version of MeSH. Not all topics have suitable subject terms, but if there is one it is recommended to use it as it will cover synonyms, variant spelling and plurals of a term.

Medline and CINAHL can offer suggested Subject Terms for one topic at a time, but you can combine multiple searches at the end.

For example, enter a term e.g. 'st johns wort', tick the 'Suggest Subject Terms' tick box, and click on 'Search'.

You then should see a list of possible thesaurus terms to use. Click the one you want to use.

You're then given the choice to limit the search to specific subheadings of a search (for example, adverse effects or diet therapy). The subheadings are taken from a restricted list so none of them may be appropriate. They should be treated with caution - it is better not to use them unless a subheading directly matches your requirements.

The box on the right shows the choices you have made so far, and when you're ready to search, click 'Search Database'.

Explode checkbox

The thesaurus terms are arranged in hierarchical trees. 'Exploding' a search means that you also search for any narrower terms that appear under your term in its tree. For example, if you do a search for 'Depressive disorder' in Medline, topics such as 'Depression, Postpartum' and 'Seasonal Affective Disorder' are narrower topics, and by ticking 'Explode' for 'Depressive Disorder' all of these topics are covered in your search.

If the 'Explode' checkbox is available, you can click the subject heading itself to see what the narrower terms are.

In most cases, it is worth using 'Explode' for any terms that are relevant.

Major Concept checkbox

This allows you to restrict your search to those articles where the topic you have chosen is a major topic of the article. This should limit your search to more relevant articles, but may in the process remove some articles of interest, so use carefully.

Refining your search using the search filters

You may wish to limit your search in various ways, such as to documents in English only, or only documents that relate to children only.

You can apply limits by using the options under 'Refine search' on the left-hand side of the results panel.

For example, to limit to older people in Medline, click 'Age' to expand the section.

You'll see some of the age groups available, and the number of results these refinements would find. You may need to click 'Show More' to see further refinements (such as age groups not shown).

You can use the 'Language' limits to limit to English-language only.

To limit by date of publication, you can either type the years in the boxes, or drag the slider across.

Search refinements you've applied are shown under 'Refine Results' and can be removed by clicking the X

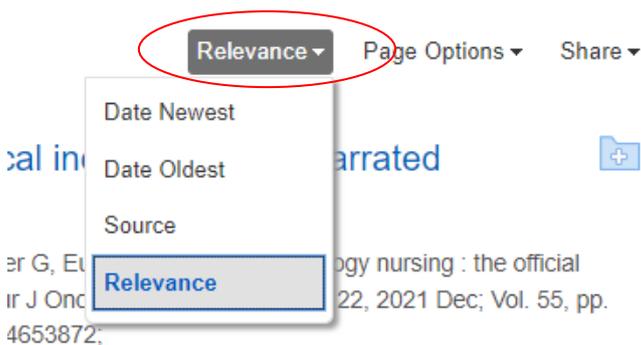## Displaying the results

Normally, the results of the last search will be displayed below the Search History. If not, click on 'View Results'

20 references per page are displayed in order of relevance. To change the sort order, click 'Relevance at the top of the list and select a new sort order, for example 'Date Newest'

Viewing Full-text Articles

If an item is available in full-text, you may see a link to the PDF, or to 'Access Online'.

The link will take you to the site that carries the full-text (e.g. EBSCO, BMJ Journals). You may need to login again (make sure you click on 'login with Athens' if appropriate), or click on the relevant article, depending on the site. Note that some items may be very short if they are letters or comments.

The options for printing, saving or emailing full-text articles differ according to which site holds the electronic journal.

If there is no full-text available, there should be a 'Request this item' link and this will take you to our article request form and add the article details for you. You then just need to add your personal details and agree to the copyright statement. We will obtain a copy for you if we can, and there is no charge to you.

Printing, saving or e-mailing results

If you wish to select references for printing or saving, click on the folder icon to the right of that reference.

Your selected references will be added to a folder that can be accessed from the 'Folder' link at the top of the page.

Items in the folder will be saved in the current session. If you'd like to save results so they're available next time, or if you want to create multiple folders, click the 'Sign In' link. You can then create new folders, save searches, and create alerts. These will be available next time you login to the EBSCO interface.

To print, save or e-mail you current results, open the folder and select the references you want to use (or click 'Select All').

Select Print, E-mail, Save as File or Export as appropriate.
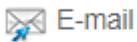
When emailing, if your selected articles had HTML or PDF full-text, Ie, these will come through as separate emails.

When exporting, you can export to reference manager packages such as RefWorks or you can download as a RIS file for import in packages such as Mendeley.

Getting further help and training

We're here to help you make effective use of the knowledge base of healthcare, and to do this we provide help and assistance in using databases for evidence searching.

We can provide individual training and support by phone, email, in the library, via MS Teams, or at your place of work. Visit our website **library.sath.nhs.uk** for more information.

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