Exhaustive Searching for Evidence Synthesis Projects

WHERE to Search

Information Databases vs. Google (or Google Scholar)

A lot of library resources can be accessed through the internet, but that does not always mean you can get to them from Google.

- Library resources are expensive: enabling access to high quality information.
- Library resources are focused: different databases for different research topics.
- Library resources give you more search power: you can limit your search by date, research type, age group, peer reviewed, etc.
- Google does not allow you to export/download all citations.
- Google searches are not reproducible. However, you should still document your process if you search this resource.

HOW to Search

Keyword Searching & Subject Searching

- Keyword searching is what most people are familiar with.
- Subject searching can take more time but tends to yield better results.
- Not all concepts have subject headings, and sometimes, you will want to use both strategies.

Tips for Keyword Searching

- Use synonyms
- Truncate: In a lot of databases, the symbol is “*.” For example, diagnos* will bring up articles with diagnosis, diagnosing, diagnostic, diagnostics, etc.
- Spelling: For instance, pediatrics or paediatrics. For more British spellings, you may want to look at this site https://www.lexico.com/grammar/british-and-spelling
- Use fields like abstract or title: One way to limit results to more relevant items is to look for keywords in the abstract or title of an article.

Tips for Subject Searching

- Look for the suggestions in the database. For example, MeSH in PubMed or “Suggest Subject Terms” in CINAHL.
- Search each concept separately so you can take advantage of term mapping.
- If the term does not map the first time, try a synonymous term. You might also try searching for your term in the title of articles and then look at the subject terms (a.k.a. headings).
Filters/Search Hedges:

- **Cochrane RCT Filters**: https://training.cochrane.org/handbook/version-6.2/chapter-4-tech-suppl (SEE: 3.6 Search Filters)
- **Cochrane Human Filter in PubMed**: [Search string] NOT (animals [mh] NOT humans [mh])
- **ISSG Search Filter Resource**: https://sites.google.com/a/york.ac.uk/issg-search-filters-resource/home
- **SIGN Search Filters for Study Type**: https://www.sign.ac.uk/what-we-do/methodology/search-filters/
- **McMaster University Hedges Project**: https://hiru.mcmaster.ca/hiru/HIRU_Hedges_home.aspx

FIND Full Text

1. Click the **Find It** button below each reference to see if full text is available.
2. If there is full text available, click on the Article or Journal link.

Further Reading/Resources

- **Ruth Lilly Medical Library guide for Systematic Reviews and other Evidence Syntheses**: (The three levels of service the library offers are outlined here.) https://iupui.libguides.com/EvidenceSynthesis
- **Cochrane Handbook**: https://training.cochrane.org/handbook/current
- **PRISMA guidelines for reporting**: http://www.prisma-statement.org/
- **Yale MeSH Analyzer**: This tool extracts indexing information from MEDLINE articles to allow users to visually scan subject headings. http://mesh.med.yale.edu/
- **RLML Endnote Guide**: http://iupui.campusguides.com/endnote/rlml

Assistance

As always, if you need assistance, do not hesitate to email us at medlref@iupui.edu or call 317-274-7182.

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