UCT LIBRARIES

Bongani Mayosi Health Sciences Library

Guide to Database Searching via EBSCOhost

EBSCOhost

EBSCOhost is a platform for a number of full-text research databases providing access to information in various disciplines such as business, medicine, nursing, education and psychology. eBook Collection: by including this database in your search, relevant information can be retrieved from our ebooks available via EBSCOhost.

MULTI-DATABASE SEARCHING

Select the databases that you want to search by checking the boxes next to the databases, and click on C*ontinue.*

Basic Search

- You can choose to do a *Basic Search* using keywords.
- Indicate the search mode, i.e. *Boolean* or '*Find all my search terms'.*
- You can limit your search, e.g. by publication type or date, full text, etc.

Advanced Search

- Select a field to be searched, e.g. title, author, source, etc.
- More search boxes can be added using Boolean operators: *and, or, not.*
- Set limits, if required.

SINGLE DATABASE SEARCHING

Searching a single database has the advantage that the thesaurus or index unique to that database can be used, and in this way, a more relevant set of results can be obtained. The following are examples of searching the individual databases, CINAHL and PsycINFO.

CINAHL
(Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)

- Open CINAHL.
- Select CINAHL Headings on the top bar.
- Enter a search term, e.g. *scars,* and click on *Browse.* You will be given links to C*icatrix* or C*icatrix, Hypertrophic,* and others*.*
- Select the appropriate heading/s and tick the keyword *(scars),* if required. (This will broaden the search and is useful if the CINAHL Heading differs from your term or keyword.)
- *Search database* using *OR.* This creates a set in the history for Cicatrix/scars, etc.
- Further search terms can be browsed to locate the CINAHL Headings, e.g. *pressure garments.* This will link to *Compression Garments.* Select the appropriate heading as well as keyword, if required, and S*earch Database.* Another set will be created in the history.
- Go to *Search History* and combine the two sets using *AND.*
- Select *View Results.*

PsycINFO

(Psychology Database)

The following search is for articles on suicide and whether there is a correlation with poverty.

- Open PsycINFO and choose *Thesaurus* from the top bar.

- Enter search term, *suicide.* Heading in Thesaurus is *Suicide*.

- Search *Suicide* — result will be saved in *History*.

- Enter the next search term, i.e., *Poverty*. It will link to *Poverty* as well as a number of related terms. If appropriate, we could search for *Poverty,* as well as its related terms, using OR. This search can even be expanded to their related terms as well, e.g., *Homelessness+* and *Socioeconomic Status+* can be searched for related terms and a large set of related terms can be created:

DE "Poverty" or DE "Social Issues" or DE "Disadvantaged" or DE "Income (Economic)" or DE "Lower Income Level" or DE "Socioeconomic Status" or DE "Shelters" or DE "Social Deprivation" or DE "Family Socioeconomic Level" or DE "Income Level" or DE "Lower Class" or DE "Social Class" or DE "Disadvantaged" or DE "Economic Security" or DE "Income (Economic)" or DE "Socioeconomic Class Attitudes"

- Combine sets in *History,* then choose *View Results.*

HOW TO CITE
From the full bibliographic reference screen, click on *Cite* (menu on right) to view referencing style suggestions for each record.

BOOLEAN OPERATORS

- **And** – combines search terms so that each search result contains all of the terms. For example, **tuberculosis and teenagers** finds articles that contain both terms.

- **Or** – combines search terms so that each search result contains at least one of the terms. For example, **adolescents or teenagers** finds results that contain either term.

- **Not** – excludes terms so that each search result does not contain any of the terms that follow it. For example, **tuberculosis not HIV** finds results that contain the term **tuberculosis** but **not** the term **HIV**.

WILDCARD (?) AND TRUNCATION (*) SYMBOLS

Use the wildcard and truncation symbols to create searches where there are unknown characters, multiple spellings or various endings. For example, type **alumin?m** for **aluminum** or **aluminium**. To use truncation, enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with an *****, e.g. type **allerg*** to find the words **allergen(s), allergy, allergies** or **allergic.**

GROUPING TERMS TOGETHER USING PARENTHESES

A search is normally executed from left to right. When you enclose words in parentheses, these are searched first; then, based upon those results, the phrases are combined.

- **Generalized Search**: cancer or tumour and oesophagus or throat

- **Focused Search**: (cancer or tumour) and (oesophagus or throat)

In the first example, the search will retrieve everything on cancer, as well as tumours of the oesophagus *as well as* everything on throat.

In the second example, we have used the parentheses to control our query to find articles about cancer or tumours of the oesophagus or throat.

USING QUOTATION MARKS

Typically, when a phrase is enclosed by *double quotations marks*, the exact phrase is searched, e.g. "rural hospitals". This is not true of phrases containing stop words. A stop word will never be searched for in an EBSCOhost database. Examples of stop words include: about, across, after, afterwards, again, etc.

SETTING LIMITS

Limits allow you to narrow your search, e.g. full text only, peer-reviewed journals, date published, etc. Some limits apply to a particular database only. When doing an advanced search using a single database, the number of options in *'select a field'* is greatly increased, e.g. in CINAHL the fields offered include CR Commentary, CT Gender, IN Instrumentation, PT Publication Type, etc. The following is a search for review articles on research instruments for *Depression.*

Advanced search (CINAHL)	Depression	TI Title
	Questionnaire	IN Instrumentation
	Review	PT Publication Type

CITED REFERENCES AND CITING ARTICLES

Some databases such as Academic Search Premier, CINAHL, PsycINFO and PsycArticles, have the additional features of a list of **Cited References** per article as well as the number of times an article has been cited by other authors in the database (**Times Cited**).