

This worksheet will give you a taster of the information available to you via Medline. Literature searching from the website of any database is more powerful than searching via Primo and unless you have used either of these particular databases before you are likely to benefit from attending a workshop where we cover the database features in more detail.

Please ask for help at any time if you need it

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## 1. Plan your search

Refer to your planning table/matrix of keywords and other information you created earlier in this session on your research topic to decide on the keyword search approach you will use in this database. Remember to apply the search rules for Medline.

Search rules for Medline:

- Boolean operators: **and, or, not**
- Exact phrase: e.g. **heart attack**
- Truncation symbol: \$ e.g. **adolescenc\$** will find *adolescent, adolescents, adolescence*
- Wildcard symbol: # e.g. **p#ediatric** will find *paediatric, pediatric*

## 2. Carry out your initial search in Medline

1. Go to **<https://shibboleth.ovid.com/>**
2. Select your region: **UK Access Management Federation**
3. Choose your institution: **University of Aberdeen**
4. Login using your university computer username and password
4. 5. Scroll down the list and click on **Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to [current month, week, year]**
5. Carry out your search in the default **Advanced Ovid Search** screen. Let's try a "quick and dirty" search using only one of your words/phrases for each of your ideas. Don't use any truncation symbols at this point – you will use them later to see if they make a difference!

Type one keyword or phrase for your first concept (idea) in the search box

6. Click on **Search**
7. Click on **Search History** to look at the Medline results. How many records have been found?

8. Now improve your search – go back and look at the search terms you thought about on your planning sheet/matrix. Try searching for your alternative words/phrases for the first idea. Search for MeSH terms (MEdical Subject Headings). Make sure that you apply the truncation symbol at appropriate points.
9. Search each idea separately, each time using the same techniques
10. Combine your different searches using the **And** button

Look at the Medline results. How many records have been found?

**You will use a combination of the options presented in Section 3 (View and evaluate results) and Section 4 (Refine your results) to improve the records that you find.**

### 3. View and evaluate your results


You never get the perfect search first time and you will modify and refine your search as you go along. This involves looking at what you have found and modifying, refining and improving your search strategy.

1. **Viewing your results:** there are a number of options available to you.

a) Click on **View Abstract**

b) Click on the **Complete Reference** link for any of the papers. Skim down the information given in this display. Are there any other MeSH terms that you could use to improve your search? If there are note them down as you may want to use them at a later stage of your search.

c) Click on the **Full Text** link for any of the papers that have this option.

d) Identify a reference where there is no Full Text link and instead click on the  link. Use the **Go** link to move through to the library catalogue to check our paper holdings for the journal in which this paper was published. Do we have the reference that you were interested in?

2. **Displaying/sorting your results:** the default setting is the most recent item is at the top of your results list with the oldest item at the bottom. You can change this sort order to assist your evaluation of what you have found. In the left-hand **Results Tools** column, click on the drop-down **Sort by:** menu and select how you want to sort your list of results.
3. **Evaluating your results:** this depends on your own knowledge of the topic. Skim read the results and abstracts as appropriate. Look for: relevant words in the title and in the abstract; recognised/known authors or institutions. Consider the references used and the number of times a paper has been cited since publication. Click on the **Find Citing Articles** link to find this out (does not apply if it is a recent paper!). Think about whether the journal in which the paper was published is an important one in this subject area.

### 4. Refine your search

You never get the perfect search first time. You have to modify and refine as you go along. There are different ways in which you can do this. The following options are available and you will use a combination of these as you evaluate your results and develop your search strategy to identify relevant papers.

1. Refining by **keyword:** You can add another set of keywords – e.g. a third idea/concept. Just do another search and combine the results with your other searches.

How many records are found?

You can continue to add more ideas and combine

2. Applying limits: In the **Advanced Ovid Search** box click on the **Limits (Click to expand)** link. Put a tick against **Review Articles** and click the **Search** button to limit your results to review articles. These can be extremely useful in the early part of a literature review.

How many records are found?

3. Click on the **Additional Limits** button. Here you will find more extensive limits for refining your search. Under **Subject Subsets** highlight one (or more) subject and then click on the **Limit A Search** button.

How many records have you found?

4. Limiting by other means: under **Additional Limits** Medline allows you to refine/limit your results by a variety of means including **Age Groups, Journal Subsets, Clinical Queries** and **Publication Types**.

Do any of these options provide you with useful results?

5. If you are having problems identifying a MeSH term, use the **Permuted Index**, located under **Search Tools**.

## 5. Output your results

Almost all databases allow you to mark and output results in a variety of ways.

1. **Selecting/marking results:**
  - a) you can select small numbers of individual records by clicking in the check box to the left of each record
  - b) to select a greater number of references use the **All** check box in the header bar above the results or enter a range of references in the **Select Range** box in the same header bar
2. Once records have been selected click on any of the options provided in the same header bar above your results: Print, Email, Export, Add to My Projects

To export your references to reference management software, do the following. Click on the **Export** link. A pop-up window called **Export Citation List** will open. In **Export To** select the software you want. In **Select Fields to Display** select **Citation + Abstract**. Click the **Export Citation(s)** button

## 6. Advanced features

Many databases allow you to set up time saving features such as personal profiles (or accounts), saved search strategies or results lists and alerting features

To create a personal account in Ovid, follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://shibboleth.ovid.com>
2. Login and click on the **Ovid MEDLINE(R) 1946 to [current month, week, year]** entry (instructions in Section 2)
3. Click on **My Account** on the top bar of the Ovid screen
4. Click on **Create a new Personal Account** and complete the required steps (note the password must be between 6 and 8 characters long – a combination of numbers and letters). Click the **Create** button.
5. You've now set up your own personal account in Ovid, and can save search strategies, set up alerts and eTOCS alerts, and manage your settings

To save a **Search Strategy**: return to the main search page and click the **Save Search History** button. Give the search a name and save it as a **Permanent** search.

Top Tip: when saving a Search Strategy, include the name of the database (e.g. Medline) in the title

To set up an **Auto alert**: return to the main search page and click the **Save Search History** button. Give the search a name and save it as an AutoAlert.

## 7. Help and advice

If you have any problems with accessing Medline or using any of the features, please contact Susan, Elaine or Janet below, or the Service Desk. Information Consultants and Advisers can also help with any difficulties you encounter with subject specific topics.

<p><b>IT service Desk</b>  servicedesk@abdn.ac.uk  tel. 01224-273636</p> <p>Use the phone number for the out of hours service – leave a message including your name, your computer username, telephone number and a brief description of the problem. A member of the out of hours service team will call you back as quickly as possible.</p> <p><b>Information Consultants:</b></p> <p>Arts &amp; Humanities  Janet MacKay  j.i.mackay@abdn.ac.uk  tel: 01224 272572</p> <p>Education, Social Sciences &amp; Music  Claire Molloy  c.a.l.molloy@abdn.ac.uk  tel: 01224 274813</p>	<p>Law &amp; Business Studies  Elaine Shallcross  e.shallcross@abdn.ac.uk  tel: 01224 273848</p> <p>Life and Physical Sciences, Engineering  Susan McCourt  s.mccourt@abdn.ac.uk  tel: 01224 273287</p> <p>Medicine &amp; Biomedical Sciences  Mel Bickerton  m.bickerton@abdn.ac.uk  tel: 01224 437876</p>
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