Wellington Medical and Health Sciences Library
http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/library

Searching CINAHL

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Preparing to search

Before you start your search:

- define your search topic and break it into significant concepts
- click on Databases and select CINAHL from the Library webpage.

Subject heading searching

Searching using subject headings will retrieve all references on a topic regardless of the wording used by individual authors.

Example search topic: care of terminally ill patients with melanoma

The default is for subject searching. Remove the tick to do a keyword search.

Enter your search term and click Search.
You will see a list of subject headings. Choose the heading that best matches the meaning of your search term. Search other relevant terms later as CINAHL is unable to search multiple subject headings at once.

## Tree structure

The tree structure displays your heading in the context of more general or more specific concepts.

Select your search term and click on in the top right corner.
The first set of results will appear.

To search your term as a keyword select TX from the drop down menu after Select a Field.

Repeat the above steps to search for other concepts. Each new concept will appear on a separate numbered line as a separate set.

**Combining concepts or sets**

Combine concepts using AND or OR to retrieve results that are relevant to your search topic.

Select the terms to combine by ticking the check boxes and use the buttons

**Search with AND**  **Search with OR**

*Example search topic – combining subject headings:*
*Melanoma AND Palliative care OR terminal care OR hospice care OR hospice and palliative nursing*
Results display

From the blue navigation bar you can sort your results e.g. by journal or by relevance. You can change the page layout e.g. to view more results per page. You can drop a page of results to your folder or save the search (see below).

Scroll down to see the results of the most recent search. Point your mouse over the magnifying glass symbol beside the article to display the abstract of the article if there is one.

Finding full text

Click HTML Full Text or PDF Full Text links to read the article in full.
Refining search results

Options for refining your search appear on the left side of your results. Click on a Source type, limit the date range or select Age or Gender.
Other search options

Click Show More to display more search options.

Popular limits are:
- English Language
- Clinical Queries
- Peer Reviewed

Select the limits then click Search. To close the screen click the X in the top right corner.
Saving, printing or emailing results

To print, email or save articles of interest click on the ![Add to folder](image) icon for each reference.

On the right hand side panel the items will be building up in the folder.

To see the items in the folder click on “Go to Folder View”.

From the folder you can select citations and ![print](image), ![email](image), or ![save](image)

If you are using EndNote you can export them ![to](image) EndNote.
Viewing citations in different styles

You can display references in different citation formats, e.g. APA, which you can copy and paste into your document or assignment.

Click on the blue underlined article title to display the article details.

Click on the “Cite this article” icon

Your reference will be displayed in a variety of citation styles.
Saving your search

To save your search or set up an alert click the Save Searches/Alerts link. Alerts notify you by email when new references are added to the database on your topic.

To save a search create an account. Click Sign in then Create new Account. Make a note of your user name.

This process will save the actual search strategy, rather than the results (for which see above).

Give your search a meaningful name e.g. Melanoma Palliative Care. Click on the Folder icon to check that it’s there.
If you want to retrieve a Saved Search later, click on Sign In. Click on “Retrieve Searches”, then on the “Retrieve Saved Search” button nearest the search you want to run; the search history will be displayed.

If you have logged in during the session you should log out at the end by clicking on Sign Out at the top of the screen.

For further assistance please see our online Libguides
(http://otago.libguides.com/wmhslibrary)

Or contact:
The Reference team during office hours on
04 385 5561 x5561 | medlibref.wsmhs@otago.ac.nz
Developing your search strategy: a quick guide

1. Formulate your question
2. Separate concepts in your question
3. Formulate your search strategy
4. Choose a database
5. Find subject headings for each concept
   - Check Scope
   - Notes
   - Check Tree structure
   - Use Explode / Focus if necessary
6. Apply subheadings if appropriate
7. Use text words if necessary
8. Combine sets using AND or OR (Boolean logic)
9. Apply limits
10. Evaluate your results
    - Good 😊
    - Not good 😞
11. Use the data
12. Results off topic?
    - Look at subject headings of relevant citations and repeat search incorporating the best of these
13. Too many results?
    - Try again using focus, subheadings, limits
14. Too few results?
    - Try again using text words or fewer subheadings
15. Use the data
16. Still no good?
17. Ask a librarian! 😊