Getting started in PubMed
http://www.pubmed.gov/

PubMed is the National Library of Medicine's free search interface providing access to over 20 million citations in MEDLINE and PreMEDLINE.

Simple Searching

Enter your search terms in the search box. One or more terms may be entered, or you may choose from the auto-complete list that appears as you type.

Click Search

Note: Terms are automatically ANDed together.

Check how PubMed translates your search terms by clicking on the See more link in Search details from the right-hand sidebar.

Keyword searching: Truncation and Phrase Searching

Use the asterisk to find all terms starting with a given word stem, e.g. smok* will find smoker, smoking, smoke etc.

Use double quotes to search for terms as a phrase. e.g. “single cell” will find only those references where these words appear together as a phrase.

Note: the two features described above disable the automatic MeSH mapping.

Always check the Search Details box to see how PubMed has interpreted your search terms.
Sharpening the focus of your search
To improve the relevance of your results, you can edit the strategy in the Search Details box by adding, removing or modifying the terms. For example, the above search may be edited down to

"arthroplasty, replacement, hip"[MeSH Terms] OR "hip replacement"[All Fields]"

When you are happy with the strategy, click Search.

Limits
Refine your results by using the links in the left-hand sidebar to apply limits e.g. language, or date.

Advanced Search Options
Click on the Advanced link at the top of the page to use the Advanced Search Builder, and to see your Search History.

Advanced Search Builder
The Advanced Search Builder can be used to construct a precise search strategy. Build a search concept by concept, specifying fields, e.g. Title/Abstract, MeSH Major Topic, from the menu.

Note: Check out the YouTube tutorial on the Advanced Search page for hints

Search History
Search strategies displayed on this page are saved while you continue to work in the database, but will be lost after 8 hours of inactivity. You can add previous searches to the Advanced Search Builder from here.
Results

Display
Use the options under the Display Settings menu to choose how your results are displayed, e.g. Abstract, or to vary the sort order.

Selecting to Clipboard
The clipboard stores selected citations from your search(es). To add an item to the clipboard, click on the checkbox to the left of the citation then choose Clipboard from the Send to menu and click Add to Clipboard.

The Clipboard icon now appears on the search page. You can lodge up to 500 items in Clipboard, but the records will be lost after 8 hours of inactivity.

Saving / Printing
Use Send to to save or email your search results in the desired format from the results page or from Clipboard. Before printing, adjust the Format and Items per page options from the Display Settings menu.

Special Features

Single Citation Matcher
To find or confirm full citation details select Single Citation Matcher from the PubMed Tools section of the PubMed homepage. Enter the details you know into the form: PubMed will list the articles that match the entered details.

Note: Click on PubMed from the popular menu at the foot of the page to return to PubMed searching.
MeSH Database

MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) terms provide a consistent way to retrieve information on a concept with variable terminology, e.g. hip replacement, hip arthroplasty. The MeSH Database is available from the More Resources section. Useful search terms identified here can be transferred to a PubMed search.

Note: to find out more about using MeSH terms in PubMed, and other advanced searching options, check out the PubMed tutorials (see below) or contact the Reference team for an appointment.

Clinical Queries to identify higher evidence

The clinical queries function of PubMed filters the results of your search to retrieve methodologically sound studies in five categories: treatment, diagnosis, aetiology, prognosis and clinical prediction guides.

In the Advanced window, Clinical Queries is available from the More Resources menu.

Copy a one-line search strategy from your Search History, or make a note of the number from the most relevant line of your Search History, e.g. #3, then click on Clinical Queries from the menu and enter your information into the search box.

Choose the category most appropriate to your search topic, then select narrow (a specific search for more rigorous studies) or broad (a sensitive search for more general studies).

Need more help?

The PubMed homepage has a link to tutorials recommended by the US National Library of Medicine.

For more information, or to make an appointment with a reference librarian, contact the Reference Desk
385 5561 or x5561
medlibref.wsmhs@otago.ac.nz

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