Quick Guide to PubMed

What is PubMed?

- PubMed is a service of the National Library of Medicine that includes over 15 million citations from MEDLINE and other life science journals for biomedical articles back to the 1950s.
- PubMed includes links to full text articles and other related resources

Starting a search

IMPORTANT NOTE: Be sure to access PubMed from the eLibrary website in order to get full-text articles from the records you find.

1. Go to the Distributed eLibrary Homepage http://delib.qatar-med.cornell.edu
2. Click on Databases
3. Click on P, then click on PubMed (MEDLINE)

Keyword or phrase searching

Via keyword

1. To perform a search, click in the search box and enter a keyword or phrase related to your topic. Multiple terms will automatically be combined with AND. For phrase searching, use quotations: e.g. “HIV testing”.
2. Press the enter key or click on the Go button to begin and view your results.

Mapping term to subject heading

Automatic term mapping

1. PubMed automatically takes your keywords or phrases and interprets them in an attempt to map them as subject headings used by the database. These words are matched (in this order) against a MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) Translation Table, a Journals Translation Table, and an Author Index.
2. Click on the Details tab below the search box to verify how your terms were translated and to edit your search strategy.

In this example PubMed translates the search for vitamin h into: "biotin"[MeSH terms] or vitamin h [Text Word].
MeSH database

Efficient searching- controlled vocabulary

1. Click on the MeSH Database link under PubMed Services on the left sidebar.
2. To look up the correct MeSH term, enter your term in the search box.
3. PubMed will check against the MeSH mappings and display the associated MeSH term(s).
4. Click on the MeSH term that is appropriate for your topic; from this screen you can directly attach subheadings and/or restrict terms to a MeSH Major Topic.
5. PubMed will automatically explode your MeSH term (i.e. picks up all related narrower terms).
6. To deselect this option, click in the check box provided.

Since cancer is not a MeSH term, PubMed suggests neoplasms; the closest associated term to search.

Combining two or more terms

Boolean logic

1. Use and to retrieve all of the terms: e.g. NSAIDs and arthritis.
2. Use or to retrieve any of the terms: e.g. diet or nutrition.
3. Use not to eliminate terms: e.g. depression not bipolar disorder.
4. To search a complex topic, enclose an individual concept in parentheses. The terms inside the parentheses will be processed as a unit and then incorporated into the overall strategy: e.g. "common cold" and (vitamin c or zinc).

You can also combine separate searches. After performing your searches, click on History. To combine searches, use # before the set number: e.g. #1 and #2.

Limiting a search

Specifying results

1. After entering your search terms, click on the Limits tab below the search box.
2. Select as many limits as you want by choosing from the pull-down menus (e.g. age group, languages, gender, human or animal studies, publication types, etc.).
3. Click on the Go button.
4. A check mark will appear in the box next to the word Limits to indicate that this feature is in use. The limits in effect will be displayed in a yellow bar across the top of the search set.

To limit to recent articles, enter a date range in the form provided next to the Publication Date menu.
Displaying and marking search results

Viewing complete records

1. PubMed automatically displays your search results in a Summary format (author, title, and journal information). To view the abstract for an individual record, click on the author’s name(s).
2. To change the format of your search results, choose from the Display pull-down menu of options (e.g. abstract, brief, citation, MEDLINE, etc.).
3. You can also increase the number of records displayed on each page by choosing from the Show pull-down menu.

When viewing complete records use the GET IT @ WCMC-Q button to access full-text articles or order through Document Delivery.

Using the clipboard

Temporary storage

1. The clipboard allows you to temporarily save or view selected citations from one search or several searches.
2. To place item(s) on the clipboard, click on the check box(es) to the left of the citations.
3. Click on the pull-down menu beside the Send to menu, and choose Clipboard.
4. Once you have added a citation to the clipboard, the record number color will change to green.
5. To view the contents of your clipboard, click on the Clipboard tab below the search box.

If you click Send to Clipboard without selecting citations, PubMed will add all (up to 500) & eliminate any duplicate records.

Printing, emailing or saving citations

Clipboard items or current search set

1. Format the clipboard items or current search set in the desired display format using the Display and Show pull-down menus.
2. If printing/saving/emailing from the current search set, select desired records by using the check boxes to the left of the citations.
3. For printing, click on the Send to pull-down menu and choose the Text option. Then, use the print function of your web browser.
4. For saving, choose the File option.
5. For emailing, choose the Email option. The display options available include HTML or Text.

If you chose HTML, your email message displays as a results page does in PubMed and includes hyperlinks to Related Articles and other features.
**Single citation matcher**

**Verifying citations**

1. Click on **Single Citation Matcher** from the list of PubMed Services on the left sidebar.
2. Enter as much information as you have (e.g. journal, volume, author, first page, title words, etc.) to locate a record for a specific article.
3. You can also use this service to find multiple items indexed from a particular volume or issue of an individual journal.
4. Click on the Go button.

To verify numerous items, choose the **Batch Citation Matcher** from the list of PubMed services.

**Journals database**

**Finding a journal abbreviation or full title**

1. Click on **Journals Database** from the list of PubMed Services on the left sidebar.
2. Search by journal title, title abbreviation, or the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).
3. Press the enter key or click on the Go button.
4. If you click on the PubMed link from the Links pop-up menu, PubMed will return an exhaustive search of all the records for that journal indexed as far back as 1952.

**Clinical queries**

This specialized search query with built-in research methodology filters is intended for clinicians. Five study categories or filters are provided: therapy, diagnosis, etiology, prognosis and clinical prediction guides. You may indicate whether you wish your search to be more sensitive (e.g. includes many articles but probably some less relevant) or more specific (e.g. more precise articles with less retrieval). You can also use this service to find systematic reviews. See the filter table for more details.

**Saving a search strategy**

Use **My NCBI** to store a new search, see a list of your stored searches, set up email alerts to new content, display links to web resources and choose filters that group search results. First-time users must create a user name and password. To create a user name and password for My NCBI, click on “register for an account”.

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