PubMed – Quick Guide

COVERAGE
PubMed comprises 23 million+ citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, life science journals & online books. Citations may include links to full-text content from PubMed Central & publisher web sites.

For systematic searching, you are advised to use MEDLINE (Ovid) in preference to PubMed. A user guide for Medline is available from the Library Website or contact science@library.ulster.ac.uk

ACCESS
PubMed is available on and off-campus.
- Go to the Library Homepage at https://www.ulster.ac.uk/library
- Select the Databases link, displayed under Quick Links
- The A-Z listing of Library Databases is displayed on the screen. Click on P and scroll down to select PubMed or PubMed Central.
- If you see this screen, enter Ulster and click on the Ulster University link:

![OpenAthens login screen]

- Enter your Ulster University email address and Ulster University network password (the same password as the Portal, IT workstations).

SEARCHING
PubMed will open to the Simple Search screen. Click Advanced to add multiple search terms.

![PubMed search interface]

You can combine terms using the connectors AND, OR, NOT from the drop down menus beside the boxes or by typing them directly into the box.
COMBINING SEARCH TERMS – all operators must be entered in Upper Case - OR, AND, NOT

OR – use OR to find articles which use any or several of your search terms, or to combine terms that are similar
This will increase the number of articles found
e.g. cancer OR carcinoma OR neoplasm

AND – use AND to find articles which use all of your search terms, or to combine terms that are different
This will reduce the number of articles found
e.g. cancer AND lung AND afatinib

NOT - use NOT to exclude terms
e.g. smoking NOT passive
*Use this with caution as it may exclude relevant results*

Advanced searching techniques can also be used:

Truncation - placing a * at the natural end of a word (the stem) will find all variations
e.g. cancer* will find cancer, cancers, cancerous, cancer-causing, etc.

Phrase searching – Placing double quotation marks around terms will search for it as an exact phrase
e.g. “small cell lung cancer”

Please note:
PubMed uses automatic term mapping and will map the search term/s to the MESH.

For example, if you enter child rearing in the search box, PubMed will translate this search to: "child rearing"[MeSH Terms] OR ("child"[All Fields] AND "rearing"[All Fields]) OR "child rearing"[All Fields]

You can turn this off by using truncation and phrase searching.

Example search
To perform a simple keyword search, enter each of your search concepts in a separate box:

All Fields ▼ “small cell lung cancer” or SCLC
AND ▼ All Fields ▼ “passive smoke” or pollut*
AND ▼ All Fields ▼ women
To search PubMed using MeSH Subject Heading terms, change the All Fields dropdown menu to MeSH Terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MeSH Terms</th>
<th>carcinoma, small cell lung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>MeSH Terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>passive smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>All Fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VIEWING RESULTS

Your results will be displayed as a list of references, with the total number of results found at the top of the results box. Click on the article for more information including the abstract, if available. There will be some links to the full text; for others, you will need to search for the full text using our Electronic Journals link on the Library Homepage.

PubMed and PubMed Central also have a help section which you can access at any time by clicking How To at the top of the screen.

Don’t worry if you are having problems using the database; just contact a member of the Life and Health Sciences subject team who will be happy to help.

For further information please contact your Subject Librarian.