# What is a Database?

healthcarelibrarians@brookes.ac.uk

## What are health care databases?

They are indexes to thousands upon thousands of different journal articles.

These may be qualitative research, quantitative research, systematic reviews, clinical trials or reports. There may also be links to government or charity publications, dissertations and book chapters.

You can do searches on them to find out what articles have been written on your topic

## Why databases? (Instead of Google)

On a health care database you’ll only find information about health care

Search Labour and you’ll get articles about birth

But you won’t have to sift through hundreds of articles about the political party

## Why databases? (Instead of Google)

You are more likely to be able to rely on the information for accuracy, currency and authority

99% of the articles in Medline are peer reviewed

This means they’ve been assessed by other experts in the field before being published.

Articles appear on merit, not because they’re funded by a drug company

## Why databases? (Instead of Google)

They provide a very comprehensive coverage of research – you’ll get even the most recent research findings. A textbook can take a year or more from idea to publication, with a journal the process takes place much faster.

In addition…

## Why databases? (Instead of Google)

Health care databases are designed to help researchers finding evidence in the way you need to for your studies

They provide lots of options for broadening and narrowing your search

You can save your search and come back to it later

They will help you do well in your assignments

## Further help

If want help with what search words to use, watch Constructing a Search Strategy

If you want to try using a database start by trying Searching using CINAHL, then move on to look at the other individual database searching guides on our Library Health and Social Work How to…guides page.

If you have questions you’d like to ask a librarian…

## Any Questions?

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Ask for help if you need it.