# Searching using PubMed

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## Before you start searching

To search on the database it will help you if you’ve thought about what terms you are going to put in and how you are going to enter them.

If you haven’t already done so, I recommend having a look at the Constructing a Search Strategy tutorial and, if you find it helpful, completing your own Constructing a Search Strategy Support Sheet.

Throughout your studies, you can access both of these on the Library Health and Social Work subject pages in our How to… Guides section

## Why PubMed?

It’s an incredibly large database

It’s really good for looking at the science behind conditions

It covers journals from all around the world

It’s appropriate for the majority of healthcare topics

## How do I find PubMed?

Go to the Library homepage http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/

Click on Subject Help

Choose Health and Social Work

Click Databases

## PubMed Search Screen

The only thing on the PubMed homepage is one single search box.

## Entering your search

You need to enter the search strategy you’ve already prepared.

Begin by typing (or copying and pasting) all of the alternative terms you’ve thought of for your first keyword, all separated by OR.

If this doesn’t sound familiar and make sense, then you need to have a look again at When to use AND and OR and Constructing a Search Strategy.

## Entering another search

Click Search.

Next enter the terms identified for your next keyword into the box at the top of the results screen then click Search.

If you have another line of terms, repeat the process again.

PubMed stores each set of terms ready for you to work with.

Click Advanced to see…

## Search History

PubMed has kept a list of your entered searches in History and Search Details

At the moment there are 2 separate searches, one finds us all the articles on the database which have to do with handwashing and one that finds all the articles on complying with something. They aren’t linked in any way.

Look at the numbers of results for each search on the right. If these are very low (unless it’s a very niche topic) try and think of some more alternative terms as you probably haven’t yet thought of the term that the majority of people are using.

## Combining Terms

To get a list of the articles on the database which are about handwashing AND compliance

Click the … under Actions. For your first search line, choose Add query, then for any other lines choose Add with AND.

Your search will appear in the query box with AND automatically added.

Click Search

## PubMed Results

The results of your search will be displayed in PubMed relevancy ranked order.

If you’re very lucky, the top one will be just what you’re looking for.

Remember, no matter how good your search terms you’ll always get some results which aren’t relevant to you.

## Adding limits to your search

Options to limit what results are displayed appear on the left of the results screen.

You can choose things like

Date

Article Type

Clicking Additional filters will give you more options like

Language

Age

If you’re still struggling with too many results, try our Too many results? guide

## Finding full text

If you’re interested in reading the full text of any article on PubMed, click on the article title in the results list.

A link to check Brookes resources for that article appears on the right of the screen.

Ignore any other links to publishers’ websites as these are just advertising and they will charge you to access.

If any link isn’t working, please email healthcarelibrarians@brookes.ac.uk and let us know.

You can also use the Cairns Library at the John Radcliffe hospital to access additional resources, or the Access to Research scheme at your local public library.

## Further help

For more help with forming a search strategy look at the Constructing a Search Strategy guide

If you’re wondering what the \* means, then you can look at our guide Truncation and Wildcards

For more help with what AND and OR mean and when to use them look at our When to use AND and OR guide

If want to try your search on a different database, look at the database specific guides on our How to… guides page

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

## Any Questions?

healthcarelibrarians@brookes.ac.uk

Ask for help if you need it.