

Take a Walk through a Simple Search in CINAHL

1. Formulate your research question:

As an example, let's use this search query:

"Is there evidence that **psychological support** affects patient outcomes in women with **breast cancer**?"

2. Select a database:

Using Research Guide 1: Health Sciences Indexes and Abstracts

<http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/sci/health/healindx.htm> we can read descriptions of databases related to the health sciences. Let's begin with CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature) which covers the literature of nursing and allied health from 1982-present. (Keep in mind that for any nursing topic you should always also search MEDLINE, the premier biomedical database that also covers literature in selected international nursing journals. Health Reference Center Academic is another database with links to full text as well. Because of the behavioral aspect of this topic, related information may be found by searching PsycINFO and/or Social Science Citation Index.) All of these databases are available to nyu.edu users at the Bobst Databases Page at: <http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/database.htm>

To connect to CINAHL go to: <http://gateway.ovid.com/autologin.html> and then click on the link to CINAHL from the menu (remember, if you are off-campus you will need to first make sure your browser is configured so that you are recognized as an NYU user; see directions at: <http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/database/proxy.htm>)

3. Select Search terms

From the CINAHL search page, enter a single concept to search on the command line. In this example we type in the first concept: **breast cancer** and then click on "continue"

Continue

The Mapping Display page, which lists up to ten controlled vocabulary terms most likely to be used for your desired subject, will appear. Controlled vocabulary terms (also known as CINAHL subject headings or MeSH terms in Medline) are assigned to articles to ensure consistency. If you use these terms as a searcher you will have better search results. The online thesaurus and mapping feature of the search software assist you to find out what these terms are.) In this example it has mapped to **Breast Neoplasms**, the controlled vocabulary term used by the indexers. Click on "continue."

Next you will be presented with the subheading display. Subheadings can be used to restrict the focus of your search. You could select one or more subheadings by clicking in the checkbox that precedes each desired subheading. If you do not wish to restrict the focus of your search, then select: Include All Subheadings. As a beginning searcher it is recommended that you choose Include All Subheadings to keep the search broad. Click on "continue."

Back on the main search page, you can see the results of searching the first concept. **Breast neoplasms** has retrieved over 4800 articles! Don't worry; we will be restricting these results.

Now let's add the second concept. In the text entry box, enter the second search concept: **psychological support** and then click on "continue." The term maps to **support, psychosocial**; you can read the scope note to the right by clicking on the info icon:



You can see that this term is used for all of the following concepts:

- networking, psychosocial
- psychosocial support
- social support
- support, psychological
- networking, psychological
- psychological support

From the scope note you can return to the previous page by clicking on:



and then select "continue" Once again, select: Include All Subheadings, and click on "continue."

4. Consider synonyms: as you go along keep notes about other ways your terms could be expressed.

5. Back on the main search page you can see that the results of your two searches are displayed in the search history. Now, decide which concepts you want to combine using the AND operator. (Remember, you want to retrieve articles that include both of your search concepts. The **AND** operator (also known as a Boolean operator) retrieves articles with both). Select the combine icon at the top of the page:



Then select the sets to combine, and click on "continue." In the search history sets 1 and 2 have been combined. You can see that the intersection of the two sets retrieved over 200 articles. At this point begin to view what you have retrieved. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to see the brief citations for the first ten articles. From this point you can read the complete citation for an article (which may give you ideas for related searching) or you can read the abstract. To compile a selected bibliography, select the check box to the left of any desired article.

6. Evaluate Results

As you view relevant records, notice subject headings used; redo or expand the search using alternate terms. Consider synonyms to expand the search using **OR** (these may be controlled vocabulary terms or they may be key words).

For example, you might notice that the subject heading "Caring" has been assigned to a relevant article. Reading the Scope Note you see that this term is defined as: "The personal response of one person to another which conveys a recognition of the other as a unique individual and a perception of the other's feelings." You might consider adding the synonym **Caring** to the search set: Support, Psychosocial to see if you retrieve any additional relevant articles. Other synonyms like counseling or psychotherapy might be used to expand the search results. Create a set of synonyms using the **OR** operator to create a set of articles that contain either term. *Caring/ OR Counseling/ OR Psychotherapy/ OR Support, Psychosocial* retrieves over 12,000 articles. Now you can combine this set with **AND Breast Neoplasms**.

Here is what the search looks like so far:

SET #	SEARCH TERMS	ARTICLES
1	Breast Neoplasms/	4811
2	Support, Psychosocial/	6992
3	1 and 2	202
4	Caring/ or Counseling/ or Psychotherapy/ or Support, psychosocial/	12146
5	1 AND 4	251

After evaluating search results, you may go back to step 5 to Apply Limits to narrow your results:

If needed, you can reduce your results with criteria such as publication dates or publication type. When searching CINAHL, if you are looking for articles with "data-based" evidence to support the results you should restrict to the publication type "Research."

From the main search page, use the limit icon:



Then select the set you wish to limit to the left of the set number, and then scroll down to the box of Publication Types. Highlight the term "Research" as a publication type, then select



which will limit your set to research articles only.

Again, review your retrieved articles to evaluate and perhaps explore other relevant search terms. Go back to step 3 to find and include other terms. Or go back to step 5 to include more limits.

7. Print, Save, or E-mail search results

As you peruse the articles you retrieved you can select a customized bibliography of articles. Use the Citation Manager at the bottom of the page to: Display, Print, Save, or E-mail the selected citations.

8. Once you have completed your database search you will need to locate the full text of articles. To determine library holdings you can search one of the library catalogs

Nat's HD:Desktop Folder:Take a Walk through a Simple Se

--Bobcatplus (Bobst Library Catalog holdings of books, journal titles)

<http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/cat.htm>

--Medcat (Ehrman Medical Library Catalog holdings of books, journal titles)

<http://medcat.nyu.edu/>

or check to see if the journal is available electronically:

--Bobst Electronic Journals Page <http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/etext.htm>

If the article is not available at one of the libraries above you can order a copy via Interlibrary Loan at: <http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/ill/>

Or for expedited service, request an article from the Bobst Ninth Floor Science Desk (some restrictions apply).

Questions? Need help? Stop by the Ninth Floor Science Desk and speak with a librarian to help you with your search. There is no substitute for hands-on practice and experience. Good luck with your assignment!