Using Healthcare Databases : Introductory Guide   June 2012

You will need an NHS Athens Username and Password to search the databases within this resource[1]:-The databases included are:

Allied and Complementary Medicine (AMED) 1985 -
Covers occupational therapy, physiotherapy, rehabilitation, plus alternative medicine: acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy, yoga, hypnosis, etc. Indexes over 400 English and European journals.

British Nursing Index (BNI) 1994 -
This UK focused database covers A&E, neonatal, cancer, theatres, orthopaedic nursing, etc. Details of articles from over 250 key English language nursing and midwifery journals

Cumulative Index of Nursing & Allied Health (CINAHL) 1981 -
A US database covering all aspects of nursing and allied health. Subjects covered include optometry, radiologic technology, speech and language pathology, nutrition. Contains materials from over 1,200 journals, theses and pamphlets.

EMBASE 1980 -
With particular emphasis on European sources, this database covers the whole field of medicine. Drugs, pharmacology and substance abuse are particularly well covered using 5,000 journals about 1,500 not used in Medline.

HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE
Health Business Elite contains full text content from 480 journals, detailing all aspects of health care administration and other non-clinical aspects of health care institution management.

HMIC
Comprises DH Data and Kings Fund databases both of which cover UK NHS health services management, policy and standards and social care. DH Data includes planning - financial, building and equipment; public health; toxicity studies on specific chemicals. Kings Fund's focus is on improvements in health and health care, covering health inequalities, partnership working and workforce development.

MEDLINE 1950 -
This is a large US database of medical information. Other subjects covered include dentistry, veterinary medicine, medical psychology, genetics and advanced nursing practice.   The database covers over 5,000 journals from 70 countries.

PsycINFO 1806 -
Subjects covered relate to clinical, social and biological areas of psychology. These include addiction, pharmacology, anthropology and law. Published by the American Psychological Association, material is included from 2,000 international periodicals.

Healthcare Databases Advanced Search

Select Database | Saved Searches | Search | Recover Searches | Alerts | My Account

Home » Database select

Select the database(s) you want to search

Select / Unselect all   The Healthcare Databases search is more effective if you search one database at a time, so that you can use thesaurus subject headings, limits and field codes.   **Search »**

☑ **AMED**
Allied and Complementary Medicine
1985 to present
Allied health professions, complementary medicine
About

☐ **BNI**
British Nursing Index
1992 to present
Nursing, midwifery, health visitors
About

☑ **CINAHL**
Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature
1981 to present
Nursing, allied health professions
About

☐ **EMBASE**
Excerpta Medica Database
1980 to present
Drugs and pharmacology, other aspects of human medicine
About

☐ **Health Business Elite**
1922 to present
Healthcare administration, institution management
About

☑ **HMIC**
Health Management Information Consortium
1979 to present
Records from King's Fund and Department of Health
About

☐ **Medline**
1950 to present
General medical database
About

☑ **PsycINFO**
1806 to present
Psychology and allied fields
About

When to use these resources

You can search the healthcare databases available to:

- find specific information on a topic or combination of topics
- answer a clinical query
- find work by a particular author
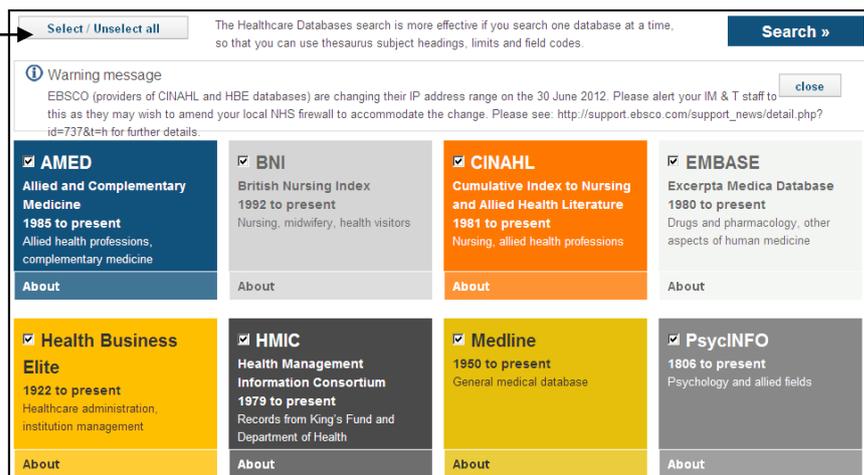- search or browse a particular journal

The databases contain references, often with informative summaries or abstracts, of articles in journals, guidelines, manuscripts, dissertations and book chapters. The databases cover every aspect of healthcare – from buildings and equipment through public health and social care to medicine, nursing and everything in between.

Where a **full text** copy of a document is available a link will be displayed with the reference. The link will lead to the article where you may read it online or download the article **free of charge**.

A search topic will determine how to search and which databases to use. You may find a basic search across a variety of databases will give you enough results for your needs. However, a systematic search to support evidence based practice will require an Advanced Search. It is advisable that you search more than one database and that you search each database separately.

1. Searching Across Databases

- Go to Health Information for London Online (HILO) www.hilo.nhs.uk
- Click 'Search for Evidence' and then 'Healthcare databases'.
- Enter your NHS Athens username and password in the LOGIN box to search across all available healthcare databases.
- Select all databases by clicking on 'Select' as shown below and click 'Search'.

There are over 1000 online journals available full text. These have been purchased for you by NHS England or your local NHS Library service. Your NHS Athens username and password gives you direct access to these journals at http://www.library.nhs.uk/booksandjournals/journals as well as links from the healthcare databases. Links to free open access collections like PubMed Central archives may also be included

> *Query example*: Find some articles which discuss the use of cognitive behaviour therapy in patients with depression.

1.1. Entering your search terms

- Type **cognitive behaviour therapy** into the text box to search it in 'title and abstract' field (default setting).
- Note that you can select different field to search such as 'Author', Journal name', etc.
- Note that the title and abstract field needs to be unchecked if you use another field.
- Click Search. This is shown below.

- Results are displayed in the Search history table, as below.
- The Search history table displays the set number, databases used, search term/s and hits (total number of results found).

- We also need to include **depression** in our search. Type **depression** into the search box and click **Search.**
- The Search history now includes two sets of searches as shown below.

1.2. Combining different search terms

To find results which include **all** terms:

- Select the boxes to the left of the 'Database' column
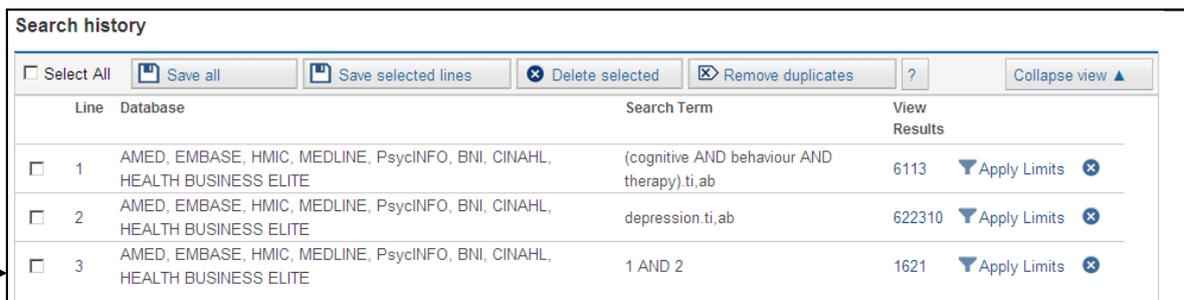- Make sure AND is selected
- Click **Combine Selected**

Search history

	Line	Database	Search Term	View Results		
☑	1	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	(cognitive AND behaviour AND therapy).ti,ab	6113	▼ Apply Limits	✖
☑	2	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	depression.ti,ab	622310	▼ Apply Limits	✖

Select All | 💾 Save all | 💾 Save selected lines | ✖ Delete selected | ✖ Remove duplicates | ? | Collapse view ▲

Your results should appear as below.

> You could also type **1 AND 2** into the text box and click **SEARCH** to obtain the same results

Search history

	Line	Database	Search Term	View Results		
☐	1	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	(cognitive AND behaviour AND therapy).ti,ab	6113	▼ Apply Limits	✖
☐	2	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	depression.ti,ab	622310	▼ Apply Limits	✖
☐	3	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	1 AND 2	1621	▼ Apply Limits	✖

Select All | 💾 Save all | 💾 Save selected lines | ✖ Delete selected | ✖ Remove duplicates | ? | Collapse view ▲

- Click on the number of hits to display records.

> In the same ways outlined above, to find results where **any** of your terms are present, use OR instead of AND.

1.3. Using alternative terms for your topic

You used **cognitive behaviour therapy** and **depression** as search terms, each of these could be searched with similar or alternative terms to improve the result.

- consider synonyms, alternative phrases, and commonly used abbreviations or acronyms e.g. cbt / cognitive behaviour therapy
- terminology may change over time, e.g. elderly / older
- differences in UK / US terminology and spelling e.g. behaviour / behavior
- inter-changeable concepts, e.g. depression / depressive disorder / depressed patients
- putting the words in the search box means that they could appear in any order, e.g. depressed patients, patients who are depressed

1.4. Using phrases

Use quotation marks to search for a phrase, e.g., "heart attack". Your results will only contain these terms next to each other in the order entered.

1.5. Using truncated words

To capture all variants of a word, the wildcard symbol * can be used, e.g. depress* will find depressed, depressive as well as depression. Limited truncation may also be used **therap*4** will find **therap**y, **therap**ist but not **therap**eutic.

1.6. Limiting results by date
- Enter the appropriate search set in the search box (set 3 in the above example).
- Click **'Apply Limits'**

- You can set date limits by selecting publication years from the drop down menus under **'Date'**. Add both From and To Dates. In the screenshot below, 2009 to Current are selected.

The final search history for this Search using the tips above, including results from all the databases selected and limited to 2009 to Current looks like this:

	Line	Database	Search Term	View Results		
☐	1	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	(cognitive AND behaviour AND therapy).ti,ab	6113	▼ Apply Limits	⊗
☐	2	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	depression.ti,ab	622310	▼ Apply Limits	⊗
☐	3	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	1 AND 2	1621	▼ Apply Limits	⊗
☐	4	AMED, EMBASE, HMIC, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, HEALTH BUSINESS ELITE	3 [Limit to: Publication Year 2009-Current]	484	▼ Apply Limits	⊗

Search history
Select All | Save all | Save selected lines | Delete selected | Remove duplicates | ? | Collapse view ▲

For a systematic search to support evidence based clinical practice, selecting and searching databases one at a time is recommended. More details about systematic or complex searches are covered in **Using Healthcare Databases: Advanced Guide.**

1.7. Viewing your results

- Click the number of results in the '**View Results'** column to display a list of references on your topic(s), in chronological order.
- If you prefer to see your results in a different order use the sort by box, located above your list of results, to change your options. Note that sorting is only possible with result sets of fewer than 500 hits.

Unsorted ▼
Unsorted
Publication Date
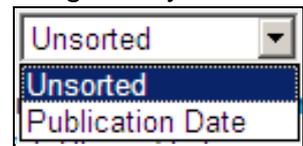
- You can also change the number of items to view per page (default 10) Items per page: 10 ▼

- Click the title of a reference to see further details, including a summary or abstract where available. Alternatively, you can display all abstracts by selecting the '**Display Abstracts'** checkbox above your results.
- Links to the full text or local print holdings are provided if available.
- Clicking the **Full text** link provided will take you to the publisher's website where you can print or save the full text article **free of charge**.
- You may have to prompt the download on the publisher's web page by following an **Athens** or **Login via Athens** link.
- To return to your list of results close the publisher's screen by clicking **x** at the top right corner of the page.
- Select relevant references by clicking in the box next to the title, and move through the pages of results by clicking the next page number. Select a full page by clicking the '**Select all on this page'** option at the bottom of the page under '**Change selections'**.

☑ 87. Internet-based CBT for depression with and without telephone tracking in a national helpline: Randomised controlled trial.
Author(s) Farrer, Louise, Christensen, Helen, Griffiths, Kathleen M, Mackinnon, Andrew
Citation: PLoS ONE, November 2011, vol./is. 6/11, 1932-6203 (Nov 30, 2011)
Publication Date: November 2011
Source: PsycINFO
Available *in fulltext* at **National Library of Medicine**

1.8. Managing selected results

Manage your search results using the panel provided on each page, below results.

1.8.1. De-duplication

When searching across multiple databases, you may have duplicates in your results. For result sets of fewer than 500 records, you can remove duplicates by using the **Remove Duplicates** button on top of the Search History panel.

- Select the checkbox next to the search you wish to de-duplicate and click on Remove Duplicates.
- In the dialog box which appears, click OK.

- A new row is added to your search history, allowing you to view the original combined set, the unique records and the duplicates.

Note that de-duplication should be your final search step, as you cannot continue to work with a de-duplicated set.   Also when saving your search history, the de-duplicated set and the search sets after it will not be saved.

1.8.2. Using the Clipboard to save results temporarily

The Clipboard enables you to select individual results from different results sets and databases, and store them temporarily before saving or emailing or printing them.

- The clipboard icon appears in the **'Results selected'** box at the bottom of the result screen:

- Select results to save temporarily and click **Copy to Clipboard**.
- A message appears telling you how many results you have added to the clipboard. If any of your selection were already on the clipboard, they are not added again.
- Click OK

- You can view your clipboard, remove results from it, choose to output the whole clipboard or select individual results to output.
- Click **'View clipboard'** to view its content.
- When you are viewing the clipboard the information panel at the bottom of the results page looks like this:

- Note that the clipboard content will be cleared when you logout.

1.8.3. Display and Output Formats

Choose how you want your results to be displayed from the **'Results selected'** box shown on page 8:

- Short: Citation only
- Medium: Citation plus abstract
- Long: Citation plus abstract plus subject headings
- Choose your output format from the available options. Default is PDF.

Actions

- To display and print or save selected results, click **'Save Results'**.
- To email selected results, click **'Email Results'**.
- To return to the search screen, click **'Search'** from the links at the top of the page.

1.9. Saving your search strategy

- You can save all the search steps in your search strategy, or only a selection of them.
- Make sure that you leave all required parts of the search i.e. do not omit Search number 1 if you later combined **1 AND 2**.

- In this example, steps 1-3 have been selected from a search and can be saved by clicking **'Save selected lines'**.

- To save the whole search strategy, click **Save All.**
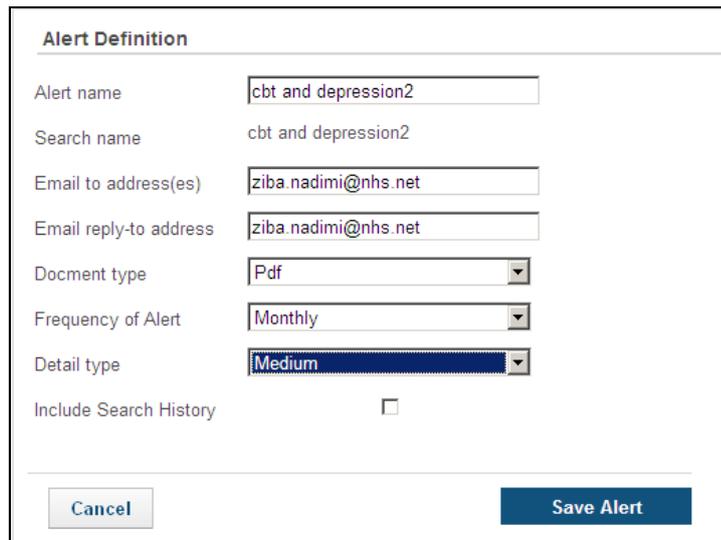- On the following screen give your search a meaningful name and click **Save.**

- To retrieve and re-run a saved search, select **'Saved searches'** from the login bar. Select the search you wish to re-run and Click **Run Search.**

1.10. Creating Alerts

- To create an Alert, follow the same steps as described above, but when you save your search, click **'Save & Create Alert'** instead.
- Choose a **'Document type'**, **'Frequency of Alert'** and **'Detail type'** from the drop down menus.
- Click **'Save Alert'** to save your alert.
- You can modify or delete saved alerts by clicking on **'Alerts'** in the login bar.
- You can create an Alert from a previously saved search by selecting the search in **'Saved searches'** and using **'Create Alert'**.

2. More Search Tips

2.1. Common syntax

There is a common way of searching across all Healthcare databases (including PubMed via Search 2.0) using the same wildcards and operators. Here is a brief overview.

Wildcards	Symbol
Normal wildcard/ Unlimited truncation: Can represent 0 or many characters after the word stem	* e.g. pregnan*
Limited truncation: number (n) specifies the maximum characters after word stem	*n e.g. depress*4
Operators	
Words in any position in any order	**Default** no operator needed - AND is assumed
Words in any position in any order	AND
Any one or more of the combined words	OR
Word or expression preceding the operator but not the one following it	NOT
Words within the specified number of words (n) of each other, in any order where n>1	ADJn e.g. ADJ3

2.2. Glossary

Syntax	Certain common search functions used by all healthcare databases
Record / reference / citation / bibliographic details	Healthcare databases only contain a brief overview of each journal article. Usually enough information to trace the original source. A Journal article would normally include details of Journal name, publication year, volume, page numbers, authors.
Truncation	A way to search for alternative endings of words. You need to think of the root of your word and apply the wildcard *. This can sometimes get unhelpful results e.g. nurs* will find nurse, nurses, nursing, nurse-led but also nursery.

3. Troubleshooting
This section suggest some solutions if you don't find what you are looking for. More help is provided by selecting Help in the green header bar on the screen.

Searching for literature can occasionally lead to unsatisfactory results. There are generally two types of problem that may be encountered:

- Too many irrelevant articles in the search result
- Too few relevant articles generated by the search

Ideally when carrying out a literature search the results should find all of the articles which are relevant to the question, while excluding any article which is not relevant.

3.1. Too Many Irrelevant Articles
If the search results contain a large amount of irrelevant articles try:
- Using the NOT command to exclude a concept which is not wanted. Use only if results have a strong bias towards a topic that you do not want at all as you may remove some useful information
- Searching for phrases using " ", e.g. if you search for **Mental Health** without quotation marks, the results generated include irrelevant hits where the words mental and health appear in any order, anywhere in the title or abstract
- Thinking of more precise keywords that can be used/added to the search
- Limiting the date of publication range
- Searching by **Title** or **Title and abstract**, rather than **Any field**
- Using the **Combine Search** option to fine tune your search

3.2. Not Enough Useful Articles
If the search results do not contain enough useful articles try:
- Alternative spelling – use the American and European spellings of a word e.g. **gynaecology OR gynecology**.
- Different synonyms – try using alternative words or phrases to describe your search topic/concept, e.g. try 'bandage' as an alternative to 'dressing' as a search term.
- Searching an alternative database. e.g. switch from Medline to Embase
- Widening your search – your search may be restricted by too many different concepts. Try removing one of the search terms or limits.
- Using the OR command, e.g. 'wound care' OR 'wound management'
- Truncation – Use the * command to give suffix variations, e.g. 'bandag*' will find bandage, bandages, and bandaging.
- Searching in **Any field** or in T**itle and abstract** rather than just in **Title**
- More details about systematic and complex searches are covered in **'Using Healthcare Databases: Advanced Guide'**.

Note: If you are searching for results in a new area of research there may be few published articles.