Introduction to using the CINAHL database: step by step guide
Contents

Introduction to using the CINAHL database 3
Searching: choosing keywords 3
Search tips 4
Combining searches with ‘AND’ 4
Search results 5
Refine your results 5
Viewing results 6
Viewing full text 6
Saving results 7
Help 8
Introduction to using the CINAHL database

CINAHL is the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature. It contains references to journal articles from hundreds of nursing journals from the UK, USA and other countries, and links to thousands of full text journal articles. Not everything is available in full text online.

It is available to RCN members from the Royal College of Nursing library and heritage services web pages: www.rcn.org.uk/library

Searching: choosing keywords

Search using keywords rather than typing in a sentence.

It is worth spending a few moments thinking about the words that are most important and relevant to your search topic. For instance, if you want to find information about ‘the effect of nutrition on wound healing’ the highlighted words are your keywords.

• Type your first keyword in the box eg nutrition.
• Click on Search.
• The number of results found by your search is displayed.
• Repeat this process to search for any further keywords eg wound healing.
Search tips

The truncation symbol is an asterisk. It allows you to broaden your search by picking up all of the possible endings for a word. To truncate a word put an asterisk after the stem of the word. For example, to search for ‘nutrition’ or ‘nutritional’ type in nutrition*

It is also possible to search CINAHL using subject terms. To find out more about this view the EBSCO tutorial ‘Using CINAHL/MeSH Headings’ which available as a You Tube video at http://tinyurl.com/75sjsov or an Adobe flash video at http://tinyurl.com/2uyydc6

Combining searches with ‘AND’

Searches can be combined using the word AND, helping you to find more specific references. An AND search will narrow your search. It will find references containing both the terms you have selected.

For example, to find references containing both the terms nutrition and wound healing:

• select the tick boxes next to the searches you want to combine
• select the Search with AND button
• the number of results found by the combined search is displayed, using this command will reduce the number of references found.
Search results

Your search history is displayed below the search box.

- Each search is numbered.
- The column **Search Terms** shows the search terms you have entered.
- The column **Actions** shows the number of results found for each search.
- Click on **View Results** to view the results of a search.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search ID#</th>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>Search Options</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>S1 AND S2</td>
<td>Limiters - English Language</td>
<td>View Results (677)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>wound healing</td>
<td>Limiters - English Language</td>
<td>View Results (13,666)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>nutrition*</td>
<td>Limiters - English Language</td>
<td>View Results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Refine your results

You can refine your search results to find articles available online in **full text**. You can also refine results by publication date.

- View the results of your search.
- Use **Refine your results** in the left hand column.
• To limit to articles available in full text in CINAHL select **Full Text**.
• To limit to research articles select **Research Article**.
• To limit by publication year use the **Publication Date** slider.
• Select **Update**. Your most recent search results will be refined using the options selected.

You can refine your results further by selecting **Show More**. Options available include the geographic subset 'UK & Ireland' which limits to journals published in these countries. Please be aware that limiting research articles to those published in the UK & Ireland will not necessarily identify research conducted in these countries.

**Viewing results**

A maximum of ten records are displayed on a page. If there are more than ten records go to the next page to view the next ten.

Records in CINAHL include the following information: title, author, and journal details. Many records also include an abstract (summary). To see this, move your mouse over the ‘Abstract Preview’ button.

If an article is in full text on CINAHL there will be a link to ‘PDF Full Text’ or ‘HTML Full Text’.

**Viewing full text**

When you open an article you can print, save, or email a copy to yourself.
Saving results

You can print, save, email or export results from CINAHL using the Folder. This enables you to keep a list of references. You can also use it to keep a record of your search history.

- Select **Add to Folder** for each reference you wish to keep.

- Go to the **Folder**. There is a link to this at the top of every page.

- From the folder you can **print**, **email**, **save** or **export** the references and your search history.

- If you choose to email you can also send full text articles to yourself providing they are available on CINAHL.
• If you are using reference management software select ‘Export’ to export the references in a compatible format.

Help

For further help select the ‘Help’ button within CINAHL. There is a link at the top of every page.

If you do experience any difficulties, one of our team of information professionals will be happy to help.

Contact us

If you experience any difficulties, one of our team of information professionals will be happy to help.

Telephone: 0345 337 3368
Email: rcn.library@rcn.org.uk
Webchat: www.rcn.org.uk/virtual_enquiry

Screenshots from CINAHL are used with permission of EBSCO Information Services

Date published: July 2013