SEARCHING CINAHL

CINAHL can be found under ‘Databases by title’, on health-related subject guides or via a Library catalogue search.

Part 1: Searching terms

Search method 1: Keyword searching

Basic keyword searching provides a large number of results, but as it casts a wide net not all of the articles found may be relevant to your needs. For keyword searching in CINAHL, type your term/s into the search box and make sure that the Suggest Subject Terms box is un-ticked:

Click Search to view the results. This type of search will search all parts of the record:

Keyword searching can be undertaken from either the Basic Search screen (single search box) or Advanced Search screen (multiple search boxes).

Search method 2: Subject heading mapping

CINAHL includes an alternate search option utilising MeSH (Medical Subject Headings). MeSH is a controlled vocabulary that can assist in finding results that may otherwise be missed due to differences in terminology or spelling, variations on words, etc., and can improve relevance in search results.

CINAHL has a built-in thesaurus to match the keyword to the best-fit MeSH. To map to subject headings type each keyword or phrase into the search box, making sure that the Suggest Subject Terms box is ticked:

At the next screen, select the appropriate MeSH to use.

In this example, interprofessional relations maps to an obvious heading (Interprofessional Relations – shown over page). Where multiple headings look suitable, choose as many as are appropriate to your search.
It is recommended that you click on the **Scope** icon for each (circled above) as this explains what each term is used for in CINAHL – some terms may not be used in the same way as ‘natural’ language.

The final search option listed on this screen (shown above) is searching *interprofessional relations* as a keyword (in this case a phrase). This can be useful to also include if your chosen MeSH doesn’t exactly match what you would like to search. It can also be helpful to include the keyword search option to catch any newer articles that may not have been fully indexed by CINAHL at the time of your search.

**What does ‘Explode (+)’ mean?**

Explode (+) will include MeSH that are ranked lower on the heading hierarchy than your selected term (i.e. the more focussed terms within your term).

For example, clicking on the blue heading link for *Interprofessional Relations* from the results screen shown above, would show that this heading is underneath the larger heading of *Interpersonal Relations*. Our heading also has a more-focused heading within, *Nurse-Physician Relations* (shown right, image edited for space).

So in this case, it would definitely be worthwhile ticking the ‘Explode (+)’ box as this would allow inclusion of the more specialised heading as well, capturing as many articles on interpersonal relations as possible.

**What does ‘Major Concept’ mean?**

‘Major Concept’ allows the user to limit only to articles where the MeSH selected has been deemed an important focus for the article. Depending on what type of search you wish to conduct, this may be appropriate to use, but may remove some articles that have useful research as CINAHL has not identified them as having the search term at a high enough level of relevance.
In the search above we can also choose which of the subheadings within Interprofessional Relations we would like to focus on – these subheadings will include options such as Evaluation, Epidemiology, etc., and will change depending on the search.

If unsure which options to choose, you can include everything by keeping the Include All Subheadings box ticked (shown above). Doing this for our current search provides the following results:

Repeat the above steps for each of the individual terms you need to include in your search.

Completed sample searches are shown below:

Notice the differences in the way CINAHL lists the searches. Searches 1, 2, 3 and 5 include ‘MH’ to signify that MeSH mapping was applied to the search for relevance. Search 4 was a basic keyword search, as identified by lack of identifiers other than the search terms provided. The ‘+’ at the end of Searches 1 and 5 identifies that Explode (+) was applied to these searches to also incorporate the lower level headings under those chosen.
Part 2: Connecting your searches

Connection method 1: Using ‘OR’ to connect similar terms

In our example we have completed 5 searches for key terms. Searches 2-4 are similar topics that can be joined together to simplify our searching. To do this, tick the boxes next to the appropriate search numbers and then click the Search with OR button:

Doing this will combine the 3 individual searches into 1 ‘super’ search.

Continue to do this until your ‘like’ searches are combined as shown above. Once this is done we can connect the different elements of our search together.

Connection method 2: Using ‘AND’ to connect distinct terms (including combined searches)

Search with AND is used to connect distinct/differing terms, along with any combined searches that you may have done. Tick the boxes next to the appropriate search numbers and then click Search with AND. In this case we are linking two single searches (#1 and #5) with a combined search (#6):
This will combine the selected searches into one ‘mega’ search that considers everything in the previous searches used to create it:

![Combined Search](image)

Now that we have our starting pool of results we can apply filters to narrow in on what we need.

## Part 3: Limiting your search results

Once you are happy with your choice of search terms and have combined them to your satisfaction, the results of your final combined search can then be limited according to your inclusion/exclusion criteria.

![Edit Button](image)

Clicking on **Edit** on the line of your final combined search (in this case, **#7**) allows access to the full menu of filters / limits in CINAHL. Limits of interest may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filter</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Reviewed</td>
<td>Limits to top quality journals with a thorough review process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Published Date</td>
<td>Limits to a particular publication time period. Month can be left blank and the Year boxes filled in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Subset</td>
<td>Allows choice of particular journal areas, such as Nursing, Allied Health, etc., if required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Type</td>
<td>Allows choice of particular articles types, such as Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs), Protocols, etc., if required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Allows choice of multiple languages, as appropriate for the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Questions</td>
<td>Allows choice of research, such as Qualitative, Review, etc., as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Allows choice of subject gender. Note that transgender is currently not a selectable option so would require a keyword search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Groups</td>
<td>Allows choice of subject age ranges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: [libguides.newcastle.edu.au/EBP-for-undergrads/peer-review](http://libguides.newcastle.edu.au/EBP-for-undergrads/peer-review)*
Applying limits from this screen adds them to the line of the Search History:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S7</th>
<th>S1 AND S5 AND S6</th>
<th>Limitera - English Language; Peer Reviewed; Clinical Queries: Qualitative - Best Balance</th>
<th>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The results can then be assessed for inclusion in your assignments.

**Part 4: Saving your search history and results**

CINAHL offers a number of ways to save (or export) your search – both the searches themselves and their results. Some of these options rely on the user having an individual account with the database.

**Creating an individual account with CINAHL**

Click on the **Sign In** link at the top of the page:

Click on the **Create a new account** link to sign up. Fill out the required fields in the form and click **Save Changes** to submit. Your personal account will then be created.

**Saving your Search History**

Saving your Search History will allow you to easily access the search terms and limits you applied to your search. Once saved, CINAHL also allows you to re-run the exact search at a later date.

Tick the **individual searches** you wish to save (or use the ‘Select/deselect all’ option at the top) and click the **Save Searches/Alerts** link (shown below). Log into your personal account when prompted.
At the next screen:
- enter a title for your saved search into the Name of Search/Alert box,
- add any notes in the Description box,
- choose the Saved Search option (or Alert if desired),
- and click Save to finalise.

Your saved search will then be available to access from the Folder menu of the database under Saved Searches.

Saving, exporting, emailing or printing your Search Results

CINAHL offers a number of ways to keep the citation information for your chosen journal articles.

The first step is to add the records you wish to keep to your folder by clicking on the blue folder icon next to each title link. Once added the icon will change as shown below:

This can also be done by using the Add to folder option on the abstract page for each article.

Once you have selected all of your desired articles, click on the Folder icon at the top of the page to access them:
Your Folder will store your selected records until you remove them.

You can select individual items by ticking their boxes or use Select/deselect all.

Folder Menu Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Allows for article information to be formatted for printing (does not include the PDF of the article).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>Sends article information (including the PDF of the article when available) to your nominated address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save as File</td>
<td>Exports the article information as web page text (HTML) that can then be copied or saved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>Sends the referencing information to citation management software such as Zotero, Mendeley or EndNote.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Need further assistance?