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## Searching databases using Ovid – Quick start guide

# Ovid®

Ovid is a specialist tool that allows you to search a variety of different databases such as AMED, EMBASE, EMCARE and Medline. This help sheet provides an overview of how to use Ovid to find research literature such as journal articles.

### STEP 1 – Register for NHS OpenAthens

OpenAthens is the password system that allows you access online resources subscribed to locally by UHCW and nationally via NICE. You can register for an OpenAthens account by visiting <https://openathens.nice.org.uk> while using an NHS PC, ideally with an NHS email address. If you are unable to do this, it will take longer for your account to be authorised.

### STEP 2 – Plan your search

Before you begin using Ovid, it's a good idea to think about the search terms you want to use. It can be helpful to frame your topic as a short sentence, or as a question, to help you break it down into its key concepts and keywords. From here, you should also consider alternative terms. Ask yourself if there are any other ways to describe the concept you are searching: try synonyms, singular and plural variations, UK/US spellings etc.

### STEP 3 – Choose a database

You'll also need to choose the most appropriate database(s) for your topic or research area. Visit the Library homepage and explore the resources down the left-hand side of the page to learn more about their subject coverage: <http://tinyurl.com/uhcwlib>

Once you've chosen where you want to search, click the appropriate link and login with your OpenAthens username and password. This guide demonstrates using Ovid to search Medline.

**Note:** Some databases like Medline are available to search in multiple tools. For the purposes of this guide, make sure you follow the link to Ovid.

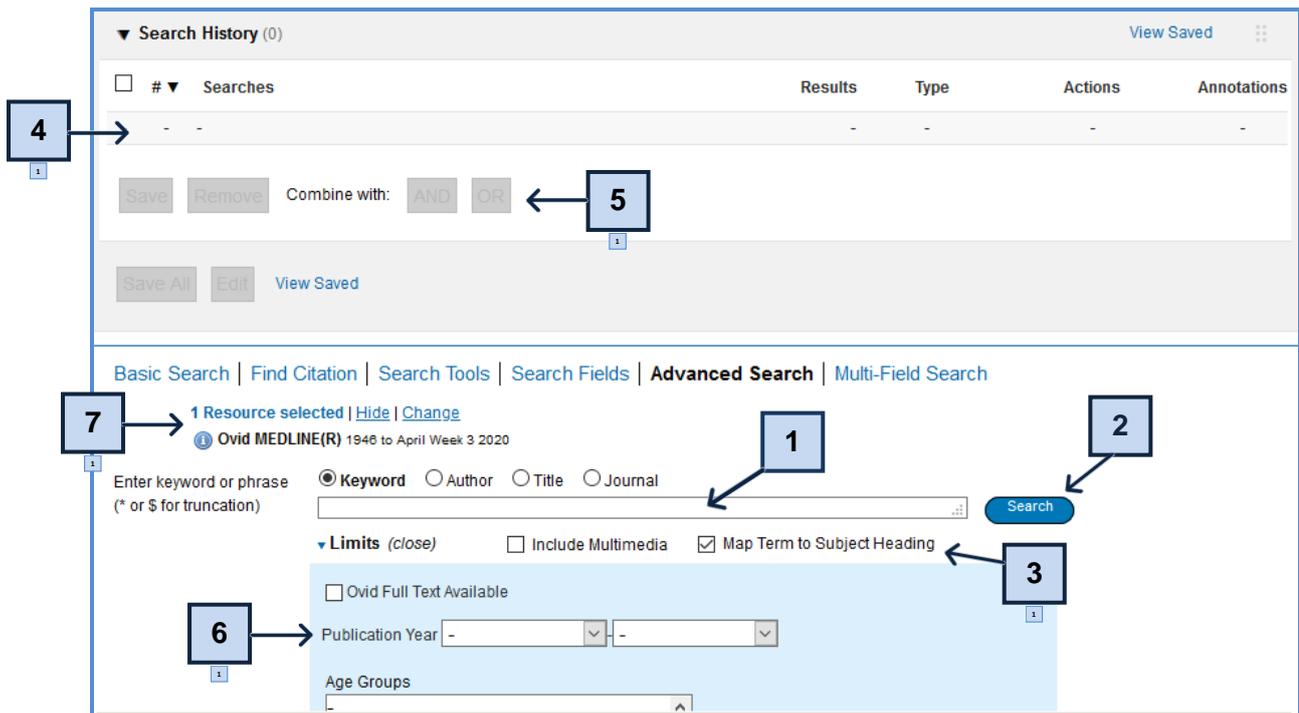
#### MEDLINE (EBSCO or Ovid)

EBSCO's MEDLINE Complete includes thousands of full text PDFs. [Click here to log in with your UHCW Athens username & password.](#)

OVID's MEDLINE also offers some special links if you are just wanting to search the daily update file or the Epub-ahead-of-print sections. These are useful for more detailed evidence-based searching. Click a list item for UHCW Athens login:

- Full Ovid MEDLINE 1946-
- Ovid MEDLINE daily update
- Ovid MEDLINE Epub Ahead of Print, In-Process & Other Non-Indexed Citations, Ovid MEDLINE Daily, Ovid MEDLINE

## STEP 4 – The Search Screen



- 1) **Search box** – enter your search terms here.
- 2) **Search** – click this button to run a keyword search.
- 3) **Map term to subject heading** – make sure this box is ticked before clicking Search in order to find Subject Headings.
- 4) **Search history** – each of your separate search lines will appear here.
- 5) **Search operators** – use these operators to combine your individual search lines.
- 6) **Limits** – use these options to narrow your search where necessary, then click Search.
- 7) **Databases** – check here to see which database you are searching and click 'Change' to try another.

## STEP 5 – Subject Headings

Subject Headings are specific terms assigned to articles to describe the content of that article. It can be helpful to see if there are any subject headings related to your topic as they help cater for things like spelling variations. To search for a subject heading, make sure the 'Map term to subject heading' box is ticked before you click the search button:

Map Term to Subject Heading

Ovid will compare your term to the list of subject headings that have been used in the database you are searching. You might find an exact match or be presented with a list of close matches. If you aren't sure which one to choose, try clicking on the 'Scope' note on the right-hand side for more detail on how that heading has been used:

Select	Subject Heading	Explode	Focus	Scope
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">"Feeding and Eating Disorders"</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	eating disorder.mp. search as Keyword			

Once you've chosen a subject heading, you'll also be offered a selection of subheadings to search:

Subheadings for: **Feeding and Eating Disorders**

Combine with:

**Include All Subheadings (15091)**

-- or choose one or more of these subheadings --

<input type="checkbox"/> /bl - Blood (163)	<input type="checkbox"/> /hi - History (46)
<input type="checkbox"/> /cf - Cerebrospinal Fluid (3)	<input type="checkbox"/> /im - Immunology (16)
<input type="checkbox"/> /cs - Chemical Synthesis (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> /me - Metabolism (225)

Ideally, at the beginning of your search you should include all subheadings to ensure you don't miss out on any relevant results. Click 'Continue' to add your subject heading to your search history.

**Remember:** The use of Subject Headings is tightly controlled, so there may not necessarily be one for your topic area. In this case, you will need to explore different keywords to describe your topic.

## STEP 6 – Keywords

As mentioned in Step 2, keyword searches need to cater for spelling variations, word endings and synonyms. Capturing all these variations can feel time-consuming, so you might want to try these techniques to make your search more efficient:



### Truncation

Try using the \* symbol in your keyword search to capture plurals and different word endings. e.g. **reduc\*** will find *reduce, reduces, reduced, reduction etc.*



### Wildcard

Try using the ? symbol in your keyword search to substitute a character or none. e.g. **behavio?r** will find *behaviour and behaviour.*



### Proximity Searching

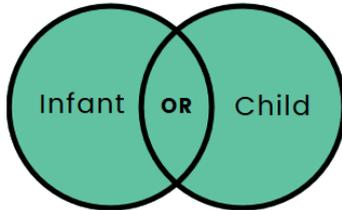
Use the ADJ operator between two keywords to find articles where your keywords appear next to each other, in any order. Add a number to make the search more flexible:

e.g. **lung ADJ3 cancer** will find results where **lung** and **cancer** appear within 3 words of one another.

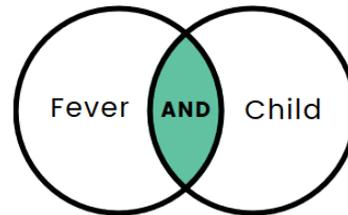
In Ovid, you need to enter your search terms one by one. Your results will appear in the search history above the search box. Avoid typing whole sentences, or words such as 'in' or 'of' as Ovid will search for them as an exact phrase.

## STEP 7 – Combining searches

Having searched for your keywords and subject headings separately, you now need to combine them in order to get a final set of papers that cover all the topics you are interested in.



Use the OR operator to combine terms that are related to one another.  
OR **widens** your search.



Use the AND operator to combine different concepts.  
AND **narrows** your search.

Look at this example search below. Here, the user wants to answer the question:

***“Is CBT effective at improving the self-esteem of young people with eating disorders?”***

It is by no means exhaustive but gives you an idea of how your search might look like as you build it within Ovid. The user has searched for both keywords and Subject Headings for each concept and tried applying truncation and wildcards where appropriate. They have also used OR to combine each concept as they go, before using AND at the end of the search.

<input type="checkbox"/>	# ▲	Searches	Its	Type	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	"Feeding and Eating Disorders"/	15102	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Anorexia Nervosa/	12875	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Bulimia Nervosa/		Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	(anorexi* or bullimi*).ab.ti.	29380	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	1 or 2 or 3 or 4		Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy/		Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	"cognitive behavio?ral therap*".ab.ti.	10176	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	6 or 7		Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	self-esteem.ab.ti.	17505	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	body image.ab.ti.	8809	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	11	9 or 10	25311	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	12	Adolescent/	2010324	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	13	(adolescent* or teenage*).ab.ti.	224399	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	14	12 or 13	2036880	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	15	5 and 8 and 11 and 14	45	Advanced	<a href="#">Display Results</a>   <a href="#">More ▼</a>

## STEP 8 – Limiting your results

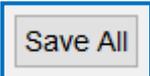
Depending on the nature of your search, you might want to apply limits to your search to remove irrelevant articles. Different databases offer different ways of restricting your search, but common limits include language, publication date or publication type. In Ovid, a selection of limits is available in the blue box beneath the search bar: choose those that are relevant then click 'Search'. You should apply limits at the end of your search.

## STEP 9 – Review your results

Searching is rarely completely accurate on your first try. You may need to try different combinations of search terms, both keyword and subject headings, to improve the relevancy of your results. If you are getting too many results, you might want to try refining your keywords and adding additional limits. If you are retrieving too few, adding in alternative terms can help. It's also worth checking you have correctly applied both your AND/OR operators. If your papers aren't relevant enough, you should review your search history to see if any of the terms are throwing the search off. If you are getting zero results on any of your search lines, double-check your spelling. You may have already found useful papers elsewhere – perhaps from a Google search. Examine the keywords and subject headings in these papers and build them into your search if you've not used them already.

## STEP 10 – Save your search

If you haven't already done so, create a personal Ovid account. This will allow you to save your search strategies so that they can be run again later or saved as an alert so that you can receive email updates when new papers are published.

 Click the 'Save all' button underneath your search history and login when prompted with your Ovid account details. Give your search a name and a date to make it easy to identify. You can run, edit and delete searches by clicking **'My Workspace'** and then **'My Searches & Alerts'**.

These options only save your search history. If you want to capture all your results, you can save, email or export them using the options above the results list.



Select the individual papers you want to save using the tick boxes to the left of the articles or select the 'All' box to save them all.

### Further Help and Support

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/OvidOnlineTraining> for video tutorials from the publisher or email [beth.jackson@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:beth.jackson@uhcw.nhs.uk) and book a 1-2-1 session with your Knowledge Skills Librarian.