PubMed

PubMed is a free, web version of Medline, the (American) National Library of Medicine's premier database. It covers the fields of medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the health care system, and the preclinical sciences. Coverage is worldwide, but most records are from English-language sources or have English abstracts. PubMed is updated five days a week.

2 Ways to Search PubMed:

1) Using **Keywords** - Type a few words from your topic into the search box. E.g. A person looking for **cognitive behaviour therapy** for **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder** might type their search as shown below:
There are 679 results. Some of them look relevant, but others less so.

To see how PubMed interprets a search query, check the “Search details” window. PubMed looks for many variations of the terms that were typed in, and in all parts of the record (title of the article, abstract, journal title, author address, etc.). Because it looks for these terms in so many different places, you can end up with a lot of results that are not very relevant.
Doing a Keyword search, however, does allow you to find the very newest articles in PubMed -- there is a lag between when an article appears in PubMed and when it receives MeSH terms.

2) Using Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)

You can also search by using Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), which are standard terms used to describe various concepts within PubMed. Every time that a new article is published in one of the 5,600 different journals indexed by PubMed, someone at the National Library of Medicine a) reads the article, b) identifies the main concepts it discusses, c) looks at the list of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) to decide which of them best describe those main concepts, and d) labels the articles with those MeSH terms.

This means that if you search using the MeSH terms, you won’t have to worry which terms the author used; you should be retrieving everything in the database on that topic, because everything in PubMed on that topic should be labelled with the same MeSH term. MeSH searching also retrieves fewer irrelevant articles than does keyword searching, because instead of looking in the journal title, author’s address, etc., it searches only the subject heading part of the record.

To do a MeSH search for cognitive behaviour therapy for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, you will want to search the two concepts (ADHD, cognitive behavior therapy) separately and then combine them.

1. Select the MeSH database using the pull-down menu above the search box.

2. Type in a major concept from your topic (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and click ‘Search’.
3. The MeSH Database will either take you directly to a term, or provide you with a list of terms that it has determined are most relevant to the term you typed in. If you are not taken directly to the term, click on the listed term that most closely reflects your topic. You should then see a display similar to the one below.

4. From here, you are able to choose a particular aspect of the topic. Think of linking these subheadings to the MeSH term with of. For example, therapy of attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity. In this case, you are interested in cognitive behaviour therapy for attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, so you can choose the subheading “therapy.”
5. Once you have made your selection(s), click on the “Send to” button and choose “Send to Search Box with AND.”

6. Click on “Search PubMed” to carry out the search.

7. To search for the second concept, repeat Steps 1-6 with your second concept (cognitive behavior therapy).
8. To combine your two concepts, click on **Advanced Search** to see your search history.

9. Clear the search box. Click on the blue #2 to bring up the menu to combine these searches. Select ‘AND’ from the drop-down menu. This puts search #2 in the search box. Repeat with search #4. By combining searches #2 (articles about ADHD) and #4 (articles about cognitive therapy), you ensure that the articles are about both topics.
10. To run the search, click ‘Search’.

11. Your results will show up on a new page.

12. If you want to narrow your search - you can limit by age, publication date, language, study design, etc. – press on Advanced search.
13. Scroll down the screen to the Limits section. Make your selections and press ‘Search’.

Sometimes, you will not find an appropriate MeSH term for your topic. Should this happen, follow the steps in doing a Keyword search as noted above.
Getting the Article:

When you find an article that you want to read, you can check to see if it is available at the University of Saskatchewan library.

1. Click on the title of the article you are interested in.
2. In some cases there is a button for the full-text article. However, it is preferable to use the yellow “Find It!” button.

3. If the article is available in full-text, you will see a vendor and “Go” button beneath “Available online”. In most cases, pressing the Go button will take you directly to the journal article. In some cases, it will take you to the journal home page where you will need to find the volume, issue and page numbers of your article.
4. If the article is available in print at the library, you will see “Available in the library” and the location of the journal. In this example the journal article is available in the Health Sciences library. This means that you would need to go to the Health Sciences Library to find the print journal on the shelf. In the HSL, journals are shelved (on the second floor) alphabetically by the title of the journal, in this case under “c” for the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. In some other libraries the journals are shelved by call number.

If you would like help searching PubMed, drop into the Health Sciences Library between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday, or phone 966-5991 to make an appointment with a librarian.