

Search Syntax Comparison

	PubMed	EBSCO (CINAHL)	Cochrane Library	Embase.com	Ovid (PsycInfo, Medline)	Web of Science	Scopus
Adjacency/Proximity							
Within x words x=# of words in between	No adjacency/ proximity search in PubMed	Nx	NEAR/x x=6 when unspecified	NEAR/x	ADJx	NEAR/x	W/x
Within x words in exact order x=# of words in between		Wx	NEXT/x x=6 when unspecified	NEXT/x	ADJ order retained, with one space between words	none	PRE/x
Field tag searching example term: heart							
Location of field tag Before/after search query	After	Before	After	After	After	Before	Before
Default search fields When no field selected	MeSH terms, all fields	Title, abstract, subject headings	Title, abstract, keywords	Map, explode, search as free text in all fields	Depends on Ovid database	Topic	Title, abstract, keywords
In title	heart[ti]	TI heart	heart:ti	heart:ti	heart.ti.	TI=heart	TITLE(heart)
In abstract	<i>none</i>	AB heart	heart:ab	heart:ab	heart.ab.	<i>none</i>	ABS(heart)
In title and abstract	heart[tiab]	TI heart OR AB heart	heart:ti,ab	heart:ti,ab	heart.ti,ab.	<i>none</i>	TITLE-ABS(heart)
Composite field tag	Text word: heart[tw] Title, abstract, MeSH terms and Subheadings, Publication Types, Substance Names, Personal Name as Subject, Corporate Author, Secondary Source, Comment/Correction Notes, and Other Terms	All text: TX heart All searchable fields, including full text	Default search	Default search	heart.mp. Searches default fields of database	Default search	Default search
Thesaurus term	heart[mh] heart[Mesh] both give the same results	MH heart	mh heart put phrases in quotes	'heart'/de	heart/	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>
Thesaurus term explosion	Automatic to turn off explosion, select "Do not include MeSH terms found below this term in the MeSH hierarchy" OR use [Mesh:NoExp] tag	MH heart+	Automatic Use mh ^heart to turn off explosion	'heart'/exp	exp heart/	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>

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Other search tools							
Truncation x=# of characters	*	*	*	*	* *x or \$x restricts the number of characters	*	*
Is truncation permitted within a phrase search? i.e. "nerv* system" or "neonatal nurs*"	No – "neonatal nurs*" will not work BUT neonatal nurs*[tw] will force a phrase search Truncation must be at the end of the last term	Yes	Yes	Yes. All phrases in Embase.com must be searched in quotes, i.e. "Nerv* system"	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wildcard	<i>none</i>	? = one character # = 0 or one character	?	? = 1 character * = 1 or more characters \$ = 0/1 characters	# = 1 character ? = 0 or 1 character	? = one character \$ = 0 or one character	?
Boolean operators	AND, OR, NOT	AND, OR, NOT	AND, OR, NOT	AND, OR, NOT	AND, OR, NOT	AND, OR, NOT	AND, OR, AND NOT
Subject heading tools/thesauri	MeSH Database also mapped automatically [see Search Details]	CINAHL Headings	Medical Terms (MeSH)	Emtree	Depends on database. Select "Map Term to Subject Heading"	<i>none</i>	<i>none</i>
Combine search sets manually	#1 AND #2	S1 AND S2	#1 AND #2	#1 AND #2	1 AND 2	#1 AND #2	#1 AND #2
Search set combination tools	Use search history on "Advanced Search" page	Under "Search History" AND & OR only	Select "Search Manager" tab. Must be typed manually	Displayed above search results on "Results" page AND & OR only	Under "Search History" AND & OR only	Select "Advanced Search" from drop down menu AND & OR only	Under "Search history" (bottom of search page) must be typed manually
Learn more	http://bit.ly/PMedHelp	http://bit.ly/EBSCOHelp	http://bit.ly/CLRefGuide	http://bit.ly/EmbaseHelp	http://bit.ly/OvidGuide	http://bit.ly/WOSHelp	http://bit.ly/ScopusHelp