Searching for Scholarly Articles

CINAHLL AND MEDLINE AND COCHRANE
OH MY !!
Scholarly conversation happens in person, at conferences and in the journals where scholars publish their research and ideas.

We can eavesdrop on the scholarly conversation in the journals and find out what is being said by the experts on nearly any topic.

Our scholarly journals are indexed and organized in electronic databases.
What is a database, anyway?

- If you are not familiar with databases you can think of them as a package of journals in an electronic format. The package often contains journals with similar topics.

- There is a listing of what is in the package and you can search through that listing (index) through an interface. (That’s what you see when you click on the link to a database.)

- Some packages (databases) have the full text of the articles and some have a link to the full text in another package (database).
Two essential ingredients

- Two main things determine the information you find in the databases:
  - #1. The **words** you use. In your background searching you have gathered broad and narrow terms related to your topic as well as related terms. A variety of search terms will give you more control over your searches.
  - #2. **Where** you look. Think about where the scholars are talking. What disciplines are interested in this topic? Where are they published? The library sorts the indexes (databases) for you by subject.
### Keywords
- Keywords are the words you think of to describe your topic. They are also the words you have collected in your background searching.
- And keywords are the words you will use to search the databases for scholarly articles.

### Subject Terms
- Subject terms are the words that the Indexers use to organize topics in an index/database. The Medical Subject Headings are called “MeSH”
- Using MeSH terms assures that you find all indexed material on a given topic.
- CINAHL uses a selection of the MeSH terms and calls them CINAHL headings.
Where you look - How to Get to the Databases

- From the library home page you can click on “Article Databases by Subject” and find the Nursing and Health Science link for a list of relevant databases
- OR you can click on the “Databases A-Z” if you know just which database you want to access.

FIND ARTICLES

Looking for articles and other scholarly materials? Try a database.

- Databases A-Z
- Article Databases by Subject

Not sure where to start? Subject & Class Guides can point you in the right direction.
Where you look – for Nurses

The three most important databases for nursing are:

- **CINAHL** = The Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature indexes articles from journals related to nursing and the allied health disciplines. Includes scholarly and popular journals, books, dissertations, and pamphlets.

- **The Cochrane Library** = Index of high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It includes reliable evidence from Cochrane and other systematic reviews, clinical trials, and more. *Dates of coverage*: Coverage varies.

- **Medline/Pubmed** = Indexes the international biomedical literature, including the allied health fields and the biological and physical sciences, humanities and information science as they relate to medicine and health care.
CINAHL

- CINAHL stands for Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health and has a concentration on nursing information.
- It has an interface by EBSCO. You can put your single search terms or short phrases in the search boxes and connect them with the built in **Boolean operators**.
- When you open CINAHL you will be on the advanced search page. It is the simplest to use.
CINAHL Limiters

Under the search boxes are a number of ways you can limit your search. Scroll down and look at the Limiters available in CINAHL.

**DO NOT limit to Full Text only.**
- That would mean you would only get what is in this one package... and not get citations with a link to Full Text in another database.
Another chance to limit results

- You can also limit your retrievals on the results page in the left menu bar.
- You can look at the full record of an article by clicking on the title of the article from the result list.
- You will notice a link to the full text (and the “FindIt @WSU” link, if needed) in this results list.
The Cochrane Library is a very specialized database that contains The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. These are highly respected studies for evidence-based practice because they combine the results from several relevant studies into one report.

You can search Cochrane from the single box on their homepage and narrow your search by clicking on the Search Limits tab. One feature of the Search Limits is that you can select only the Cochrane Systematic Reviews to show up in your results.
Cochrane results

The results list will be coded according to content.

If you want a systematic review, look for results that are coded as a review.
After you select a review notice that you can download the PDF by clicking on the icon in the upper left hand corner of the page...

or you can use the menu to the right to navigate to specific parts of the document.

Start with the Abstract or Summary of findings for a beginning overview.

Note: Outdated reviews are removed until they can be updated but are still listed in the results.
PubMed is a free resource developed and maintained by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) at the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

PubMed provides free access to Medline, NLM's database of citations and abstracts in the fields of medicine, nursing, and other health fields.

The WSU Medline/PubMed database searches the Medline database of citations.

There are links to full-text articles from various resources and other articles are accessed through the “FindIt@WSU” link.
The PubMed search feature is different than the two others we have looked at. They have a single search box on the home page where you construct a search statement with Boolean Operators.

Or you can use the advanced search where the Boolean Operators are built in and the search fields are in a drop down menu.
Once you have done your basic search you can narrow your search on the results page from a facetted search bar on the left.

DO NOT limit to full text or you will not get the citations for articles we have in other databases or that you can get through Interlibrary Loan.
Once you have selected an article by clicking on the title in the result list, be sure to look at the information to the right of your article.

You will see a link to the full text if it is available through PubMed and the FindIt@WSU link if it is not.

Also be sure to look at the “Related Citations” for more articles on your topic.
Help!!!! Using the Databases

- All three of the medical databases offer tutorials:
  - **CINAHL** Basic and Advanced Searching. You will get a message warning you that it might not be a safe file. **It is safe.** It takes a little while to download.
  - (And, remember when watching the tutorial, WSU automatically opens CINAHL to the advanced search.)
  - **PubMed** has great tutorials. You can watch a complete training or select from a menu of 2-3 minute topical tutorials.
  - **Cochrane Library** has a selection of tutorials to orient users to the search features of systematic reviews. Note the two brief videos near the bottom of the page.
Each of the three medical databases that were reviewed here can be searched with the Medical Subject headings to locate all of the information indexed on a given topic.

Each database has a tutorial on how to search with the MeSH terms.

For the most complete searches search with the MeSH terms and keywords. That way you will not miss anything.

**CAUTION:** Pubmed has articles available that have not yet been indexed or assigned MeSH subject terms. They are listed as “in process” in the results list. You will not see these items in a MeSH search so you need to use terms as keywords in the regular or advanced search box.
Tips and Help

Keep a research journal

- Write down each search—where you looked, what words you used and how much you found.
- Keep a list of citations—you will want them later for your reference list.
- Keep adding to your list of search terms
- Look at the reference lists of the articles you find— they will lead you to more articles on your topic.
- Ask for help.
- When you are finished assess how it went and what you can do better for the next project.