Finding Evidence Guide

How to use NHS Evidence & the Healthcare Databases Advanced Search to find relevant, up to date and reliable sources.

Need further assistance? Contact Clinical.Librarian@porthosp.nhs.uk

Contents

Why Evidence Search?

www.evidence.nhs.uk

Evidence Search is a reputable, reliable source of evidence-based practice, care guidelines and research in the healthcare world.

There are two main methods of searching using Evidence:

1. **Evidence search**: one box does all, put in your key terms and use the filters that appear afterward to narrow your search – essentially it is a search engine with results you can be confident are trustworthy.

2. **Journals and databases**: Healthcare databases such as CINAHL and MEDLINE that can be searched with more care and scrutiny.

> ****Important****
> You must have an **Athens account** before you can search the journals and databases.
> Sign up via NICE OpenAthens openathens.nice.org.uk/

How to use Evidence Search

Put in your key words and use the filters on the left to narrow your search.

This is ideal for finding Guidelines or just a quick search for the best evidence.

Databases

For a more in-depth search, use the databases.

Before you begin your search, it is important to create a search strategy – collating keywords and phrases that will help you find the evidence you need, thinking about which database to use (see appendix 1), and the time frame you want to look at.

EXAMPLE How can falls be prevented in the elderly?

Database/s	Key terms	Alternative terms	Date limit
AMED BNI CINAHL EMBASE MEDLINE (choice may depend on your profession)	Elderly Falls Prevention	Geriatric "Older person"	5 years – most recent evidence

Now you can begin your search!

Step One
From the homepage (www.evidence.nhs.uk) select **Journals and databases** from the top right hand corner:

| Evidence search | BNF | BNFC | CKS | Journals and databases |

Step Two
Click on the title for HDAS (as below)

Healthcare Databases Advanced Search (HDAS)

Search one or more bibliographic databases. This includes Medline, Embase and CINAHL. You can find journal articles, linked to full text papers where possible.

Then select login for all databases:

Log in with your OpenAthens account to access all 9 databases, with links to full text journals where available.

Search   Enter keywords to search PubMed   Search

Databases   Login for all databases

Step 3

Use your search strategy to help you decide which keywords to enter, date limits to put on and choose **one** database to search.

Each time you enter a new keyword you will need to delete the last one from the search box – if you make a mistake select the line to remove and press 'delete selected'.

Your search page should look a little like this:

When you select your keywords you can then choose to combine them with AND or OR.

AND will reduce the results by looking for the keywords together.

OR will produce more results – ideal if you want to use more than one keyword for a similar subject, see example below:

Here the OR was typed in the search box between the terms.

Putting limits on your search

To change the date, you need to use the Limits option.
Put the number of the search string you want to limit into the search box, put a tick in the limits box, choose which limit to impose, then click search.

IMPORTANT only put limits on the final result, afterwards you cannot combine any more keywords with that search.

☐ 5	CINAHL	(2 AND 3 AND 4)	Viewing (378)

☐ All Rerun Searches ⌄ Refresh Search Copy ↗ ⊘ AND ○ OR Combine Delete Selected Expo

🛈 **Search** [5|] ✕ **Search** **Thesaurus**

🛈 **Databases**
- ☐ Select All ☐ AMED ☐ BNI ☑ CINAHL
- ☐ EMBASE ☐ HBE ☐ HMIC ☐ Medline
- ☐ PsycINFO ☐ PubMed

Hover over a database for more information…

🛈 **Fields** Fields are not available for existing search rows

☑ **Limits** Article Type ▸ **Dates ⌄** Gender ▸ Age Group ▸ Language ▸ Other ▸ **Reset Limits**

Date of Publication
From [2012 ▾] To [2017 ▾]

You can also set limits for language, age group, to look for Reviews or Randomised Control Trials etc. plus many others.

Here the results reduce from 378 to 95 with a five year date limit.

☐ 2	CINAHL	(falls).ti,ab	View Results (16,246)
☐ 3	CINAHL	(prevent).ti,ab	View Results (43,547)
☐ 4	CINAHL	(elderly OR geriatric OR aged OR "older person" OR "older people").ti,ab	View Results (125,517)
☐ 5	CINAHL	(2 AND 3 AND 4)	View Results (378)
☐ 6	CINAHL	5 [DT 2012-2017]	Viewing (95)

Back to contents

Viewing articles

To see the articles the search has found, scroll down to the results list.

You can read the abstract from HDAS by selecting **Show abstracts**.

When you find an article you want the full text of, there are three possible choices:

1. A blue link to the full text of the article online will appear below the abstract:

○ Available in full text at Preventive Medicine from Elsevier

2. A blue link telling you the article is available in print.

3. There are no full text copies! But don't panic, contact the library and we can get one for you via our Interlibrary Loan service.

Librarian Tip:

If the article cannot be accessed via HDAS, try putting the title into a search engine.

Sometimes you can get the full text via a site called **Research Gate**, a community of researchers and scholars who encourage open access to their research.

This is copyright compliant, however only use if the PDF has been uploaded and available straight away, the Interlibrary Loan service is likely to be quicker than requesting an article from the authors.

Are you a student?

Always check the access your University has to a journal, just in case you can source it more quickly than our Interlibrary loan service.
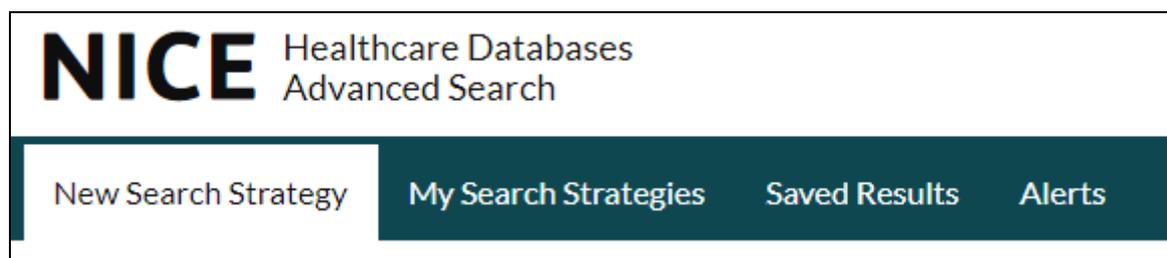
Saving your search

As with all things computer related – it is vital you save your work as soon as possible.

On HDAS it couldn't be simpler. As soon as you put in your first keyword you are able to save your search strategy – from then on it automatically saves your search!

Look for the box as below, enter whatever name you like and click **Save Strategy**

Current search strategy: | Elderly Fall Prevention | **Save Strategy**

The search will save in **My Search Strategies** at the top of the screen:

NICE Healthcare Databases Advanced Search

| New Search Strategy | My Search Strategies | Saved Results | Alerts |

Saving articles

Want to save some abstracts to read later?

To decide which ones are most relevant, click **Show abstracts** from the top of the results.

Show Abstracts Titles Only **Expand Full-Text**

1 2 3 4 Next ❯

You can then select which articles to keep per page.
IMPORTANT remember to save before moving on to the next page!!!

☐ All on this page **Add 3 to Saved** Hide Abstracts Titles Only **Expand Full-Text** View: 10 25

1 2 3 4 Next ❯

☑ 1. Changes in physical activity, sedentary time, and risk of falling: The Women's Health Initiative

Exporting results

When you have saved all the articles you want, you can export them into a PDF file. Select **Saved Results** then Export Options.

It will automatically select Include History and Medium, best for abstracts, and you can change this or just simply click PDF and Save File.

Running search in another database

If you want to try your keywords in another database simply select the search you want put through another database, you **cannot** rerun a search that has limits on it, you will get a 'syntax error' if you do.

Select the combined search by ticking the numbered box, choose **Rerun Searches** from the choices that will appear, choose a database and **Rerun Selected:**

Searching within one journal

Would you like to find articles from one particular journal?

First, run a search for the journal title using quotation marks (phrasing) as below:

Then, run your keyword searches. Combine them with the Journal and the results will only be from that particular publication:

	Database(s)	Search Term	
□ 1	CINAHL	("Journal of Perioperative Practice").jn	View Results (2,016)
□ 2	CINAHL	(surg*).ti	View Results (61,484)
□ 3	CINAHL	(communic*).ti,ab	View Results (58,159)
□ 4	CINAHL	(2 AND 3)	View Results (675)
□ 5	CINAHL	(1 AND 4)	Viewing (1)

Librarian Tip

To expand your search results, use truncation to look for alternative endings of words, for example communic* will look for communicate, communicated and communication.

Medline, BNI and PsycInfo will only truncate words **up to** five letters after the *, for example communic* would find communic*ative – but not communic*ativeness as there are too many letters after the *.

Using the Journal A-Z

If you know a journal title or complete reference of an article, you can go to the journal homepage direct via the Journal A-Z to check our full text access.

Journals and articles

You can find journal articles by:

- browsing or searching within a particular journal
- searching in a bibliographic database (which has articles from a wide range of journals).

Journals A-Z

Browse or search for a particular journal, and then search for relevant articles within that journal.

If you login with your NHS OpenAthens account you'll see all the journals available to you.

Healthcare Databases Advanced Search (HDAS)

Search one or more bibliographic databases. This includes Medline, Embase and CINAHL. You can find journal articles, linked to full text papers where possible.

Search for the journal you want, click on the blue link it provides to the database which will take you to the homepage of the journal. You can then use your reference to find the article you need:

○ Exact title   ○ Start of title   ⊙ All words in title   ○ ISSN

| obstetrics | ✕ | Search |

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

IMPORTANT If the journal does not come up, first double check you are logged in with your Athens account (top right of screen).
If it still does not appear, contact the library who will be able to sort an interlibrary loan.

Back to contents

Appendix 1

Which database/s should I use?

The 8 bibliographic databases

AMED: complementary or alternative medicine. Includes Physiotherapy Index and Occupational Therapy Journals. **What should I use it for?** Complementary therapy and alternative medicine, occupational therapy and some physiotherapy queries. Finds references in chiropractic and osteotherapy journals which are not indexed by more traditional medical databases.	**British Nursing Index**: comprises over 250 of the most popular and important English Language (mainly UK) journal sources in the nursing, midwifery and community health care fields. **What should I use it for?** Any queries relating to community care or UK nursing management topics.
CINAHL: covers all aspects of nursing and allied health disciplines. **What should I use it for?** Good for technical aspects of nursing, e.g. renal or cardiovascular nursing, general nursing topics and allied health disciplines.	**EMBASE**: Provides information on drugs and pharmacology and all other aspects of human medicine and related disciplines. **What should I use it for?** All pharmacology topics and good for laboratory tests and procedures. Also for any biomedical subject where you need to perform a comprehensive search as it includes more European research than MEDLINE.
EMCARE: covers all aspects of nursing and allied health disciplines. **What should I use it for?** Good for nursing/AHP experience and general topics within this area.	**HMIC:** The Health Management Information Consortium database is a compilation of data from the Department of Health's Library and Information Services and King's Fund Information and Library Service. **What should I use it for?** UK health and social care policy, latest NHS initiatives, partnership working and workforce development issues.
MEDLINE: is a vast source of medical information covering the whole field of medicine including dentistry, veterinary medicine and medical psychology. **What should I use it for?** A good first choice for almost any health topic. All clinical subjects are covered and some management and administration.	**PSYCINFO**: This provides extensive international coverage of the literature on psychology and allied fields. **What should I use it for?** Queries on psychology and psychological aspects of clinical care; useful for coping, adaptation and attitudes to health or illness.

Appendix 2

Useful search tips - the jargon explained

Phrasing ""
Quotation marks are used to keep certain words together in a search, for example "diabetic foot ulcer" will search for those words as a phrase rather than individually, which helps to narrow your search.

Boolean
A system of searching that uses AND OR and NOT.
AND will connect terms: "wound AND self-management"
OR will look for either or of two terms: "wound OR ulcer AND self-management"
NOT will exclude anything you don't want to find: "wound OR ulcer AND self-management NOT elderly"
HDAS does not have an obvious NOT function, however you can type it in-between search strings.

Truncation
Using a * or $ to identify all possible endings of a word e.g. "nurs*" will bring back results of nurse, nurses, nursing etc.

Wildcards
Using **?** in the middle of a word is a useful tool when you do not know the spelling or are happy with Americanised and UK versions of the same word e.g. "col?r" will return colour AND color.

Appendix 3
Assessing information

When you have found useful journal articles, or any type of information that helps you with your search topic or clinical query, you must assess the quality of the information. This is an essential part of evidence based practice.

Points to consider

When   **w**as the information published?
How old is it?
Is the information still current?
Has more recent research been published?

Who   **w**rote it?
Are they an expert in their field?

Why   **h**as the research been conducted?
Did the authors have any pre-conceived ideas?
Were they being paid by someone e.g. drugs company?
Is the research question appropriate?

How   **h**as the research been conducted?
Are the methods used appropriate?
Has the research been conducted ethically?

What   **d**oes the research actually tell us?
What are the results?
What are the authors' conclusions?
Are the results valid and reliable?

IMPORTANT even if a journal article has been published in a peer reviewed journal, you will still need to assess whether it is reliable and relevant.