

Transcript – Searching CINAHL

Hi and welcome to this tutorial on searching for literature using CINAHL, one of the main databases for finding nursing and allied health literature.

In this video, we'll show you how to build a comprehensive search, how to save your search, and how to send your results to reference management software such as RefWorks.

Here's our example question:

How do socioeconomic factors impact the effectiveness of smoke-free legislation on reducing smoking prevalence?

Before searching, we recommend using a table to break down your question or topic into key concepts. This question has three: socioeconomic factors, smoke-free legislation and smoking prevalence. You can also think of alternative terms. We can add in sociodemographic factors, tobacco control policy, smoking ban, smoking trends and smoking uptake.

You can also use your table to plan search techniques. We can use a technique called truncation to improve the term 'tobacco control policy'. If you replace y with an asterisk (*), CINAHL will look for both policy and policies.

You can get to CINAHL from the Database A-Z page on the library website or from your subject guide. If prompted, log in with your usual username and password.

This search will include a mixture of keywords and subject headings. Subject headings are labels used in databases to group articles into topics. Sometimes we call this free-text and thesaurus searching.

I'll also be using Boolean operators to combine my search terms. The Searching Effectively section of your subject guide has more information on this.

To use subject headings, start by ticking the box labelled 'Suggest Subject Terms'. We'll enter our first term, socioeconomic factors. As we've ticked the Subject Terms box, CINAHL will automatically search for this as a phrase. Hit Search.

CINAHL now shows a list of suggested subject headings. Some suggestions might match your terms exactly, some might be closely related, or sometimes

there may not be any suitable suggestions. If you're not sure what a subject heading covers, you can use the Scope Note option for more information.

We'll tick the box marked 'Socioeconomic Factors'. When you scroll down, you'll see the option to search for your phrase as a keyword. Always tick this option, even if you haven't found any suitable subject headings. Press Search.

Your term will now appear in your Search History. The letters MH next to socioeconomic factors shows that it is a subject heading. You can also see the number of articles you've found.

Repeat the same process for the other terms in your first concept. Remember, to search for subject headings you need to tick the Suggested Search Terms box every time you enter a new search term, choosing subject headings (where possible) and keywords.

Once you've added all the terms from your first group, we can add them together. Select your searches and click Search with OR. Again, if you'd like to know more about Boolean searching, visit your subject guide.

You now have a search finding all the keywords or subject headings in our first group.

Now follow the same steps for your next concept group, smoke-free legislation. In this case, the term smoke-free legislation doesn't have a subject heading we can use. Remember, if this is the case, it's fine to search for the keyword only.

Continue to repeat this process until you've searched all your individual terms.

Once you've completed all of your individual searches, we can add them together. Select your three main searches and click Search with AND.

You can now see our final number of results. If you need to make any changes you can delete searches or add additional ones.

Let's scroll down to see what we've found.

You can refine your results using the options on the left-hand side of the screen. Let's refine our search to articles published between 2016 and 2022.

To read the full-text of an article, you can select 'PDF Full Text' or 'check SFX for full text'. You can also click the article title for more details.

Some articles will have the option to listen to the text being read out loud. Some may also have an option to translate them.

Once you're happy with your search, you can save it to use again or receive an email whenever a new article matching your search is published. To do this, click Save Searches/Alerts. Give your search a name and press Save. You'll need to create a personal EBSCO account to do this.

You can also send or export articles to reference management software. You can choose individual articles by pressing the folder icon next to the title, or you can select a group of articles by choosing the Share option.

Once you've chosen the articles you want to export, go to the folder view either by selecting the folder option on the right-hand side of the screen or the folder icon in the top menu.

In the folder view, tick the articles you'd like to send and select Export on the right-hand side. The default option at GCU is 'Direct export to Refworks'. If you're using different referencing software, select the appropriate file format. Click Save to send your files.

For more information on search skills, including practical tips on Boolean operators, keywords and subject headings, we recommend reading Chapters 6 and 7 of the Searching Skills Toolkit.

If you'd like more help or to contact us, visit your subject guide in the Support for Students section of the Library website.