# PubMed Tutorial Script

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Welcome to the Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health Library PubMed Tutorial.

PubMed is a freely available interface to searching Medline, one of the most popular databases for journal articles in the health sciences. There are a variety of other possible interfaces for searching Medline, such as OvidSP or EBSCOhost. There is no need to search more than one version.

PubMed contains records of journal articles from before 1950 up to the present day.

The database is updated almost daily and contains over 30,000,000 records, including over five and a half thousand international journal titles.

PubMed is freely available to anyone, anywhere in the world, from www.pubmed.gov. You can link from PubMed records to free full text journal articles, or to subscription journal articles if your institution pays for access.

If you are a member of staff or student at UCL, it is best to access PubMed via the library so that you will be able to see which articles are paid for by UCL. You can then access these articles with a UCL computer username and password. There will be more about accessing full-text articles later in the tutorial.

To conduct a simple search in PubMed, you need to choose some keywords to use. It is usually a good idea to start with a couple of terms and then refine your search depending on the number of results that you get. In this tutorial we are going to try and find some articles on the use of lasers in scar reduction in adolescents. We will start by using the two key terms lasers and scars.

## Simple Search

Start by typing the two keywords into the PubMed search box and then click on Search.

When you do a search, PubMed does some work behind the scenes to improve the results that you get. You can check PubMed’s search and make sure you are happy with it.

To do that, click on **Advanced** beneath the search box. Scroll down to the **History and Search Details** box. Then, in the **Details** column, click on the arrow to the left of the relevant search terms.

You can now see the search that PubMed has done. You will see that a couple of the keywords have the words MeSH Term next to them in square brackets.

A MeSH term is used to tag all the papers on a particular topic in PubMed. So, for example, the MeSH term for scars is cicatrix. If you search using this MeSH term, you will find papers that mention cicatrix, but also papers that mention synonyms, singular and plural forms of words, or variant English and American spellings. In this example, a search for the MeSH term cicatrix will find papers that mention cicatrix, cicatrization, scarring, scar, or scars. You will also find papers that mention more specific terms, such as keloid, or hypertropic cicatrix.

It is a good idea to check which MeSH terms PubMed is using to conduct your search because, if it has found the wrong MeSH term, you might get some unusual or unexpected results!

If you look at the search details, you can also see that PubMed uses the operators AND and OR, in capital letters, to combine your keywords.

Unrelated concepts that you want to bring together are combined with AND, for example lasers and scars. Both of these terms must appear in the papers that are retrieved.

Synonyms or similar terms are combined with OR, for example scar or cicatrix. Either of these terms could appear in the papers we retrieve.

Click on the number of results to return to your search.

## Apply Filters

We are now going to use filters to focus the search by finding only articles published in the last 10 years that contain information relevant to adolescents.

PubMed filters are to the left of the search results. We would like to limit the date range to articles published within the last 10 years.

Drag the slider to select a range of 10 years. Alternatively, you can scroll down the filters menu and select **10 years** under the **Publication Date** heading.

We would also like to limit our search results to articles that talk about adolescents. To see the Age Group filters, click on **Additional Filters**.

Click on AGE in the left hand menu and tick the checkbox next to **Adolescent: 13-18 years**. Click on show and this option will appear to the left of your search results.

**Adolescent: 13-18 years** now appears in the filters menu under the **AGE** heading. Click on it to limit your search results.

You can see the filters you have selected, other than the date slider, at the top of the list of results. Now that these filters have been set they will apply to all the subsequent searching you do in PubMed. If you want to remove these filters and start a new search, click on **Clear all**.

## Use the Search History to combine searches

We are now going to use PubMed’s Advanced screen to combine 2 or more separate searches.

Suppose that you would now like to include articles on using radiotherapy for treatment of scars as part of your search. You can conduct a new search for this aspect of the topic by typing in the keywords radiotherapy and scars.

Unless you have removed your filters, the results should automatically be restricted to papers including adolescents and published within the last 10 years.

This search can now be combined with the previous search for lasers and scars to find any articles that mention either lasers and scars, or radiotherapy and scars.

To combine searches in PubMed, click on **Advanced** beneath the search box. Then scroll down to the **History and Search Details** box.

To combine the two searches, in the **Actions** column, click on the three horizontal dots next to the lasers and scars search. Select Add query to paste the search terms into the **Query box** above. Then click on the three horizontal dots next to the radiotherapy and scars search and select **Add with OR**. The search is also pasted into the **Query box** and the two searches are linked with the operator OR.

Then click on **Search** to get the list of results.

Please contact the GOS ICH Library for further support with searching PubMed.

# Find Full Text Results

PubMed is freely available, but if you are a member of UCL staff or a UCL student and you wish to access full-text articles, it is best to log in through the Library’s website so that you can see links to all the journals that are available to you through UCL.

Once you have conducted a search, you will need to view the abstract of each search result in order to see the full-text links.

* Click on the title of a search result to view the abstract for a single record.
* Or, alternatively, change the display settings to view abstracts for all the results in the list.

To do that:

* Click on the **Settings** cog wheel, above your search results and to the right of the screen.
* Select **Abstract** as the **Format**.

You will also see that you have options to change the number of results displayed on one screen, or change the way that your results are sorted.

You will see the publishers’ full text links beneath each abstract. If you have logged in through the Library, you will also see UCL’s **findit@UCL** links. Click on **findit@UCL** to be taken to UCL’s library catalogue, Explore. If the catalogue record shows says **Fulltext available**, you will see a link to the publisher’s website in the white box headed **View It**. If the article is not freely available, UCL staff and students will be able to log in with a UCL computer account.

If the full text is not available, you will see the message **No full text available** in the **View It** box.

GOSH staff may also be able to access full-text articles by clicking on the publishers’ links and logging in with an NHS Athens username and password. The GOS ICH library can provide information about how to set up an NHS Athens account. A list of all the journals that can be accessed with an NHS Athens password is available on the NICE website at https://journals.nice.org.uk.

GOSH staff can also access any of the full text journal articles funded by UCL by visiting the GOS ICH library, where articles can be saved onto a non-encrypted USB stick.

If an article is not available online, UCL may own a print copy of the journal and you may be able to read or photocopy the print article in one of UCL’s libraries. (You can watch our UCL Explore tutorial **Find a journal** for more information.) Alternatively, you may be able to request the article as an inter-library loan. (You can watch our UCL Explore tutorial **Request an Inter-library Loan** for more information about this service.)

Please contact the GOS ICH Library for further support with accessing full text articles.

# Save or Output the Results of Your Search

You can save your PubMed search results either within PubMed, by creating a PubMed account, or by exporting them.

To save your results, select the results you wish to save. (If you don’t select any results you will be given the option to save either all the results, or all the results on the page instead.)

To save results externally, you can either click on **Save** or **Email** above the list of search results.

Click on **Save** and then use the format menu to choose the output format.

* To create a text file of your results, select either **Summary** or **Abstract**, depending on how much detail you need.
* Select **RIS** to save the results in a format that can be exported to reference management software such as EndNote or Mendeley.
* Select **PMID** to generate a list of the PubMed ID numbers of your selected references.
* Or select **CSV** to export results to Microsoft Excel.

To save your results within PubMed, click on the button with three horizontal dots. You can choose:

* **Clipboard** to save your results temporarily as you search. Items will remain on the Clipboard for up to 8 hours.
* **My Bibliography** to create a list of your own publications within PubMed.
* Or **Collections** to save your results permanently within PubMed so that you can come back and access them again at a later date.

If you choose either **My Bibliography** or **Collections**, you will be asked to log in. If you do not already have a PubMed account, click on the **Sign up** link beneath the log in options and click on **Create new NCBI Account**. (Alternatively you can click on **Google Account** and log in using your Google account if you already have one set up.)

If you have selected **Collections**, you will be given the option to either **Create a new collection** or **Add to an existing collection**. If you select **Create new collection**, give you collection a name and click on **Add**.

To view your saved collection, click on your account name, or the account logo, in the top right corner of the PubMed screen, and then select **Dashboard**.

In the **Collections** box, click on the title of your collection to view the saved results again in PubMed.

Please contact the GOS ICH Library for further support with managing your PubMed results.

# Save your search strategy

Your search strategy is the combination of search terms and filters that you have used to conduct your search.

To save a search strategy in PubMed, first of all run the search – either by typing into the search box, or by rerunning a search from the **Advanced** screen.

To rerun a search, click on **Advanced**, then click on the number of search results to the right of the relevant search.

A **Create alert** link appears beneath the search box. Click on it and log in.

If you do not already have a PubMed account, click on the **Sign up** link beneath the log in options and click on **Create new NCBI Account**. (Alternatively you can click on **Google Account** and log in using your Google account if you already have one set up.)

Give the search a name.

On this screen you can set up an alert, which means that PubMed will automatically rerun your search periodically and e-mail you with any new search results. If you would like to set up an alert select from the given options and then click on **Save**.

If you do not wish to set up an alert, but just save your search permanently within PubMed so that you can access it at a later date, select **No** and click on **Save** at the bottom of the form.

To view your saved search, click on your account name, or the account logo, in the top right corner of the PubMed screen, and then select **Dashboard**. In the **Saved Searches** box, click on the title of your search to rerun the search in PubMed.

Please contact the GOS ICH Library for further support with managing your saved PubMed searches.