Using OvidSP databases

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1. Which databases are available through OvidSP?

The OvidSP interface provides access to the following databases and to a range of e-journals and e- books. The examples in this guide are based on **MEDLINE** but each Ovid database has similar functionality.

- **AMED**: allied health and complementary medicine
- **EMBASE**: biomedical, with a European focus and strength in drugs & toxicology literature
- **GEOBASE**: development studies, earth sciences, ecology, geomechanics, human geography, oceanography
- **GeoRef**: North American geology
- **Global Health Archive:** international public health
- **HaPI**: health and psychosocial measurement instruments
- **HMIC**: health management
- **ICONDA**: planning and construction
- **International Pharmaceutical Abstracts**: pharmaceutical science and health related literature

- **MIDIRS: Maternity & Infant Care**: pregnancy, birth, postnatal care, and neonatal care, first year of life
- **MEDLINE**: the largest biomedical bibliographic database
- **PsycBOOKS**: full text of scholarly book titles published by the American Psychological Association (APA)
- **PsycEXTRA**: grey literature in psychological sciences.
- **PsycINFO**: psychological, social, behavioural, and health sciences
- **PsycTESTS**: unpublished tests, developed by researchers but not made commercially available
- **Social Policy and Practice**: evidence-based social science research
- **Transplant Library:** randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews about solid organ transplantation

2. Accessing OvidSP

Link to the Ovid database of your choice from the UCL Library Services databases list: www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/databases. UCL staff and students can access OvidSP databases from any computer but off-site access requires a UCL user ID.

3. Which type of search to use

Choose from the options above the search box to select different types of search, including:

- *Advanced Search* – this is the default option and allows you to develop a systematic search strategy, taking advantage of a structured thesaurus of subject headings. *Advanced Search* is described in more detail below.
- *Basic Search* – this is not recommended for systematic searching (you may miss some relevant items) but is very useful for quick searches. To use *Basic Search*, simply type a word or phrase and click the *Search* button. Tick the *Include Related Terms* box if you want to automatically include similar terms in your search.
- *Multi-Field Search* – this option allows you to find words or phrases in a particular field (e.g. the *Author* or the *Title* field) as well as combining concepts together to build a more complex search. *Multi-Field Search* is described in more detail below.

> **Search example:** to search for results about:
> *The adverse effects of phenytoin in the treatment of epilepsy*
> the target concepts could be:
> ***epilepsy**, **phenytoin, adverse effects***

How to build a Multi-Field Search

Click the Multi-Field Search tab and type the target concepts into the form (you can choose to type in words or phrases). Choose which fields to target using the drop-down menus on the right. Choose combination options (AND, OR) using the drop-down menus on the left (find out more about combination options on page 4).

How to build an Advanced Search

When you first open an OvidSP database the *Advanced Search* screen is displayed as the default. This allows you to carry out a thorough subject search and to develop a systematic search strategy.

When using Advanced Search, we recommend that you search for each of your target concepts one at a time. For comprehensive results, consider including subject headings from the **thesaurus** as well as doing a **textword** search for each of your concepts, before combining them together as shown below.

> **Tip:** *Access the **thesaurus** by ticking the box.*
>
> ☑ Map Term to Subject Heading
>
> *Each article covering the same topic will be tagged with the same subject heading so using a subject heading helps when there are many ways to describe the same concept. They also help if the same word is used to mean different things.*
>
> **Tip:** *also use a **textword search** to collect results that were missed by the indexer; to include new items that have not yet been indexed; and, to explore topics that do not have a dedicated thesaurus term.*

How to do a thesaurus search

- Type the first concept – ***epilepsy*** – into the search box and make sure that the *Map Term to Subject Heading* box is ticked (in most databases this will be ticked by default).
- Click *Search* and the thesaurus feature will try to identify subject headings related to your concept and display them as a list:


- Click on a subject heading to view more information about it and to find out how it relates to other subject headings – some databases display your target subject in a 'tree' structure (showing broader and narrower terms), others display them alphabetically.
- ***Explode*:** tick this box to search for the selected subject heading plus any narrower terms – e.g. if you explode *Epilepsy* in Medline you also find records with the related subject headings *Epilepsies, Myoclonic*; *Epilepsies, Partial*, etc.
- ***Focus:*** tick this box to limit your results to only those records where your chosen subject heading is the main topic. This can be useful for finding a few key papers on a subject, but is not recommended if you want to do a comprehensive search.

> **Tip:** *databases use different subject headings, so it is best to search each database separately.*
>
> **Tip:** *in some databases* subject headings *are called* descriptors, MeSH terms *or* index terms *instead, but they all do the same job..*

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- *Scope:* click the ⓘ icon to see a definition and other additional information (including any older terms used to describe your topic). Always check the scope note carefully to make sure the subject heading you have found is the correct one. Sometimes you might not find the right one the first time so think of another way to describe your concept if you get an unexpected result – e.g. the subject heading *mole* in Medline refers to small furry animals; you need the subject *nevus* for the skin malformation.
- Select one or more subject headings from the list and combine them using **AND** or **OR** from the drop-down menu at the top.
- **Tip:** *the final entry in the list offers the chance to do a simple textword search, instead of, or in combination with, the subject headings. As this entry is not a subject heading, it has no Explode, Focus or Scope options.*
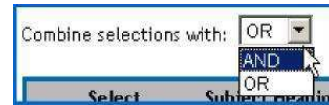
Using subheadings

Select a single subject heading and click *Continue* to view a list of possible *subheadings* relating to your chosen subject heading (note: for some subjects there are no subheadings).

Use subheadings to search for a particular aspect of your chosen subject - e.g. for **phenytoin** you might choose the subheading **Adverse Effects**.

Select the subheading(s) by ticking or, to include them all (which is recommended for a more comprehensive search), tick the *Include All Subheadings* box.
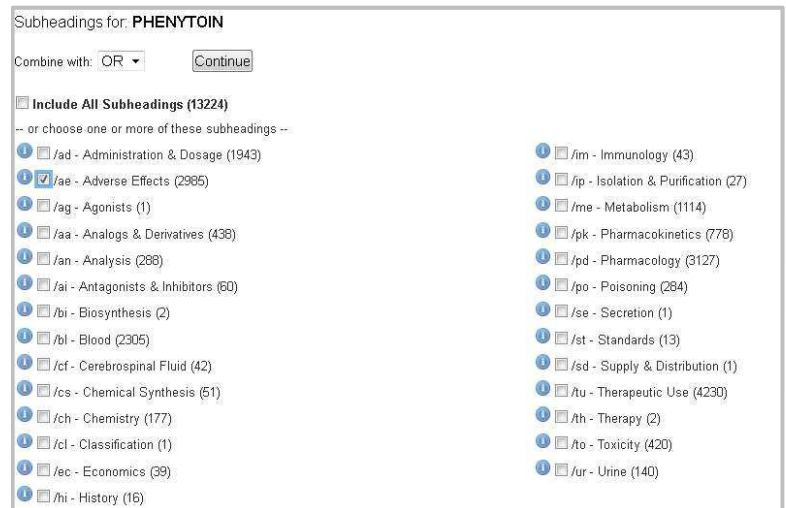
How to do a textword search

To carry out a comprehensive search you should search for textwords as well as searching for subject headings. To do this, enter a word or phrase into the search box and make sure the *Map term to subject heading* box is **NOT** ticked.
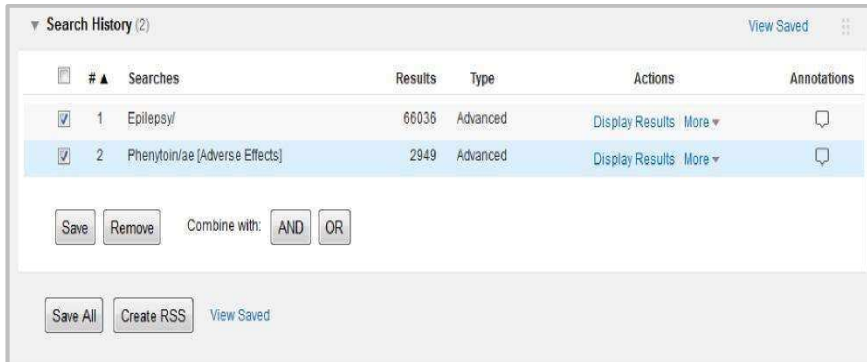
The following tips can help with textword searching:

- **Phrase searching** – Ovid automatically searches for multiple words as a phrase – e.g. type **social anxiety** to search for the exact phrase "social anxiety" (where the two words appear next to each other and in the order that you typed them). To search for multiple words but not as a phrase, you should type **AND** in between the words – e.g. type **social AND anxiety** to search for both words but not necessarily next to each other.

> **Tip:** *to search for a phrase which includes the words **and** or **or** you must enclose the phrase in quotation marks. E.g. Type **vomiting and diarrhoea** to search for both words, not necessarily together; but type "**vomiting and diarrhoea**" to search for "vomiting and diarrhoea" as a phrase.*

- **Select a field** – you can search for a word in a particular field. View a list of the available fields and their search codes in the **Search Fields** tab – e.g. to search for a word in the author field in Medline, type **smith.au.** If you do not specify a field, most OvidSP databases will default to a search in the title, abstract and keywords fields (indicated by the search code *.mp.* or *multiple posting*).
- **Truncation** and **wildcards**
  - **$** or * represent any number of characters at the end of a word – **therap$** finds *therapy*, *therapies*, *therapist*, etc.
  - **#** represents just **1** character in the middle or at the end of a word – **wom#n** finds *woman* or *women*
  - **?** represent **0** or **1** character in the middle or at the end of a word - **colo?r** finds *color* or *colour*
- **Proximity** searching
  - **ADJn** finds two words within **n** words of each other and in any order – **cancer ADJ3 colon** would find these two words where they are within three words of each other, such as *colon cancer* or *cancer of the colon*.

4. Search History and combining searches

Click **Search History** in the top left-hand corner to view your searches and the number of results for each one.

# ▲	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
☑ 1	Epilepsy/	66036	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	💬
☑ 2	Phenytoin/ae [Adverse Effects]	2949	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	💬

Save   Remove   Combine with: AND   OR

Save All   Create RSS   View Saved

To **combine searches**, use the box(es) alongside each search line and click *AND* or *OR*. Your combined search forms a new line in the History. You can also remove searches by ticking the box(es) and clicking the *Remove* button at the bottom of the history panel.

5. Applying Limits

Limits offer the option to refine your search according to criteria that are difficult to search using text words – e.g. the type of article, publication date, age group, language of publication, etc.

Click the **Limits** link underneath the search box in Advanced Search to view a selection of the most popular limits. Select one (or more) of them and type into the search box the number of the search line you wish to limit. Click **Search** and your limited search will appear as an additional line in your search history.

If you need more extensive limit options, click **Additional limits**. To use them, click the radio button alongside the search you wish to limit and make selections from the menus, then click the **Limit A Search** button.

6. Viewing results

Results are displayed below your search history. To view results from any previous search, click *Display Results* alongside the relevant search line.

At the top of the results list you can change the number of *results per page* and the *format* (10 per page and citation style are the defaults).

To view all of the abstracts, click the icon on the display toolbar with three lines. **Tip:** *To view the abstract for a single record, simply click the drop-down* Abstract *link.*

The left-hand menu displays information about your search and some options for **sorting** the list of results as well as **filters** using criteria such as year or publication type; click on the arrows to expand the options for each criteria.

Click **Find Similar** alongside any record to carry out a new search for records covering similar topics. Click **Find Citing Articles** alongside any record to retrieve a list of papers that have cited it. This is another way to broaden a search for relevant articles. **Tip:** *this feature does not find all the citations received by a record, only those that have been captured within the various OvidSP databases. Citations might be included to which UCL does not have access.*

7. Linking to the full text of articles

Click the findit @UCL button to link to full text where it is available within the UCL collections. A window will appear and will indicate.

- *Full text <u>is</u> available* – read the details about coverage and publisher and click the *Go* button.
- *<u>No</u> full text available* – alternative options are shown, e.g. to check **UCL Explore** or another library catalogue to locate the journal in printed form.

8. Printing, emailing and exporting your results

- Tick the boxes next to the records you wish to capture from all pages.
- Select from the options at the top of the list of results
  Print – choose which fields to print, which citation style, and optionally your search history
  Email – similar options as those for printing (plus the option to send the list to yourself as an email attachment)
  Export – export formats include Word, PDF, text file, EndNote (a bibliographic management tool).

9. Saving results, searches and creating alerts

To retain selected results for the duration of your session, tick the box(es) alongside each one and click 🐾 Keep Selected to save them as a line in your Search History.

To save results permanently, first click *My Account* at the top of the screen and then *Create Account*. When you have created an account and logged in, you can access extra features.

- 📇 Add to My Projects - to save a collection of items within Ovid for viewing again later, click *My Projects* alongside an individual item or tick boxes alongside multiple items and click *Add to My Projects* to add them all at once. You can add the items to an existing project or create a new one.

- 📝 – Annotate to make notes about a particular item click *Annotate*. It is a good idea to add the records to a Project first, so that it is easier to find them, along with your annotations, later.

> 2. **Sodium Channel Blockers in the Treatment of Epilepsy. [Review]**
> Brodie MJ.
> *CNS Drugs. 31(7):527-534, 2017 Jul.*
> [Journal Article. Review]
> UI: 28523600
> **Authors Full Name**
> Brodie, Martin J.
>
> ▶ Abstract   📇 + My Projects   📇 + Annotate

Click **My Workspace** to view and manage your **Projects**. As well as article results you can save sections of text and images from Ovid full text articles. For further details visit the **My Projects** section in the online **Help** at the top right of the screen.

Save a search strategy – you can save a strategy into *My Workspace* to run it again at a later date, or to set up an AutoAlert (to receive an email when new articles matching your search criteria are added to the database). When you have completed a search:

- Click *Save* at the bottom of the Search History.
- Choose a name for your search or alert and add comments if you wish.
- From the menu, choose to save the search as *permanent*, *temporary* (removed from the server after 24 hours), *Autoalert* or to *MyProjects* and click Save. **Tip:** *if you choose an Autoalert, you will need to enter an email address and choose from a range of delivery options.*

To *retrieve* a saved search log into your account, click *My Workspace* and then *My searches and alerts* (or click *View Saved* in the top right of the Search History page). To *re-run* a search, select it and click the *Run* button. To *edit* a saved search click the *Edit* icon and use the on-screen icons to re-write, add, or delete search lines. Be careful not to delete a search line if it has been used in a combination line; if you do, the combination line will also be deleted.

10. Changing databases

If you are doing a comprehensive search, you may wish to repeat your search in another Ovid database. To change to another database, click **Change** on the main search page, above the search box and then choose either:

- **OK** – to start a brand new search in the new database.
  Tip: *this clears everything from your previous search, so remember to capture what you need first.*
- **Run search** – to repeat the same search in the new database
  Tip: *remember that subject headings from one database might not work correctly in the second database.*

It is possible to select and search more than one database at the same time. However, doing this will disable the thesaurus feature and so it is not advised for comprehensive or systematic searching.

11. How search elements are displayed in the Search History

An exploded subject heading is indicated by *exp* in front of the heading.

Subheadings are shown after the oblique stroke as abbreviations; the meanings are in square brackets.

The adjacency operator used in this example is *adj5*

Thesaurus terms are indicated by an oblique stroke at the end.

Truncation is indicated by an asterisk. The fields searched are shown by the code .mp. (multiple posting) with more details in the square brackets

When you combine searches, only the line numbers are shown in the search history.

Limits are shown in parentheses.

11. Further information and support

The online help manual is available from the **Help** link at the top right of the Ovid screen. There is also a link to support and training online at the top right of the screen. Please contact your local UCL library for further support.