# Medline

## Background & coverage
Produced by the US National Library of Medicine. Indexes 5200 biomedical journals. Covers clinical medicine, dentistry, nursing, health services, nutrition, and more. It is updated 5 days a week with 2000 – 4000 entries being added a day. Medline is the primary component of PubMed.

## Best Clinical Use
Medline is most useful when you are looking for foreground information; that is when you have a specific, focused question. It’s also useful when there is no guideline for you to refer to or when your question isn’t answered by a point of care tool, and for questions around new therapies and rare diseases. In these situations, when the term you are searching for may be new to the literature, you may need to search for it as a keyword.

## Positives
- Is thesaurus driven: It uses MeSH headings
- Has extremely broad coverage
- Very up to date
- Useful tool for researchers and niche information, biomedical science information

## Negatives
- No appraisal of information or information on levels of evidence
- More useful for people who already have a high level of knowledge
- Very large numbers of results are retrieved for common topics
- Does not provide detailed practical information needed at point of care

## Search Tips and Tools:

### MeSH subject headings
Use advanced OVID search and have the ‘map terms to subject headings’ box ticked.

After entering a search term, Medline will offer a list of MeSH terms it thinks match your term. Select the terms you are interested in.

**Focus** – narrows your search and makes your result more specific.

**Explode** – broadens your search and makes results less specific.

In the Complete Record view of click on subject terms to find other citations on the same subject.

### Truncation & wildcards
- $ or * finds suffix variations of any length, e.g. disease$ finds diseases, diseased etc.
- $number limits the number of suffix characters added to a search term, e.g. dog$1 dog and dogs but not dogma.
- # within a word to finds plural forms, e.g. wom#n finds woman and women.
- ? within or at the end of a word substitutes for one or no characters. Useful for finding variant spellings of a word, e.g. colo?r finds color and colour.

### Additional limits & clinical filters
Use **Additional Limits** to limit the last search set you have on the main search page.

### Retrieved too much, narrow your search by:
- AND in another concept
- Limit by Age, Sex, Human
- Limit to publication type: RCT; Review; etc
- Subheadings: diagnosis; therapy
- Use a more specific search term
- Focus MeSH terms
- Limit to Subsets e.g. core clinical journals

### Retrieved too little, broaden your search by:
- Use OR with synonymous concepts
- Remove all limits
- Choose All Subheadings
- Use a broader term
- Explode MeSH terms
- Truncate text words
- Use the ‘see related’ feature
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of question</th>
<th>Best type of study</th>
<th>Useful search terms</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Therapy          | 1. RCT  
2. Cohort  
3. Case control  
4. Case series | • Randomised controlled trial [pt]  
• Controlled clinical trial [pt]  
• Therapy [sh]  
• Double blind method [MeSH]  
• Placebo* [tw]  
• Treatment Outcome [MeSH] | [pt] Publication Type  
[MeSH] MeSH subject heading  
[sh] MeSH sub-heading  
[ti] Title  
[tw] Text Word  
* Denotes truncation |
| Diagnosis        | Prospective, blind to a gold standard | • Sensitivity and specificity [MeSH]  
• Diagnosis  
• False Negative Reactions [MeSH]  
• Predictive Value of Tests [MeSH]  
• Comparative study [MeSH] | [MeSH] MeSH subject heading |
| Prognosis        | 1. Cohort Study  
2. Case control  
3. Case series | • Prognosis [MeSH]  
• Cohort Studies [MeSH]  
• Survival Analysis [MeSH]  
• Morbidity [MeSH] | [MeSH] MeSH subject heading |
| Aetiology        | 1. RCT  
2. Cohort study  
3. Case control  
4. Case series | • Randomised Controlled Trial [pt]  
• EXP Risk [MeSH]  
• Causality [MeSH]  
• Etiology [sh]  
• Longitudinal Studies [MeSH]  
• Odds [tw] AND Ratio* [tw] | [MeSH] MeSH subject heading |
| Questions of harm| 1. RCT  
2. Cohort study  
3. Case control  
4. Case series | • EXP Risk [MeSH]  
• Toxicity [sh]  
• Consensus Development Conference [pt]  
• Consensus Development Conference, NIH [pt] | [pt] Publication Type  
[MeSH] MeSH subject heading  
[sh] MeSH sub-heading  
[ti] Title  
[tw] Text Word  
* Denotes truncation |

*The best single-term strategy is Randomised Controlled Trial [pt]*

*The best single-term search is Sensitivity and Specificity [MeSH]*

*The best single-term search is Randomised Controlled Trial [pt]