MeSH Database

Articles are indexed using a powerful vocabulary called Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). The MeSH Database provides the option of identifying appropriate MeSH terms for searches.

The MeSH Database is available from the drop-down search menu, the PubMed homepage and from the Advanced page under “More Resources.” Use the MeSH database to search for a particular term or concept. If multiple items are retrieved, click on the desired term to view and select subheadings and other options. Then click on the Add to Search Builder button on the right side of the screen. When finished adding search terms, click Search PubMed to complete the search.

Clinical Queries

PubMed Clinical Queries makes it easier to find articles that report applied clinical research and are accessed from the PubMed homepage, and the Advanced Search “More Resources” tab. Enter a search term and click the Search button. Click “See all” at the bottom of the page to return to PubMed.

Clinical Study Categories displays results by clinical study category (including diagnosis, etiology, therapy, and prognosis) and scope. Use the drop-down menu to change the category or scope.

Systematic Reviews displays citations identified as systematic reviews, meta-analyses, reviews of clinical trials, evidence-based medicine, consensus development conferences, and guidelines.

Medical Genetics displays citations focused on diagnosis, management, genetic counseling, and related topics. “All” or a specific topic may be selected from the drop-down menu.

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PubMed Searching

To search PubMed, type a word or phrase into the query box (e.g., a subject, author and/or journal). Then click on the Search button or press the Enter key. Combine search terms with connector words: “AND,” “OR,” or “NOT” using upper case letters.

PubMed offers alternative searching options; for example, the auto suggest drop-down menu appears when entering words and a Titles with your search terms box may be available after a search.

PubMed displays a list of Results in Summary format after clicking on the Search button. To retrieve more information about the citation(s), use the Display Settings menu to change the format, how the results are sorted and how many citations are displayed.

Filters are available in the left navigation bar and may be used to limit searches. Click on a term to activate or deactivate the filter. Multiple choices may be made within a section.

Use Choose additional filters and more to reveal additional filter options including: Species (Humans or Animals), Article types, Languages, Subjects, Ages, Sex, and Journal categories. Check desired selections then click the Show button.

A check indicates an active filter. The Filters activated message appears above the search results list and these limits remain in effect until removed or cleared.

Search details, located in the right navigation column, provides information on how PubMed ran a search. PubMed looks first for the entire word or phrase as a MeSH term, then for journal titles, then authors (Automatic Term Mapping). PubMed also searches “All Fields” for the term. Search details shows how PubMed maps terms to MeSH headings and subheadings. Changes to the search may be made in the Details box; click Search to run the updated search strategy.

Advanced

The Advanced link provides two options to refine a search: Builder and History. The Advanced search box does not retain previously run searches.

With PubMed Advanced Search Builder, create a search using Boolean operators. Using the All Fields selection will run search terms through the Automatic Term Mapping process. Apply a specific field to the term by using the drop-down menu. The Show index list displays the search field index and the number of citations for each term. Multiple terms selected from the Index are “OR”ed together.

History tracks and numbers search statements. Clicking on the numbered link provides a menu which offers the option of combining search statements into a new search with the AND, OR, or NOT connectors. The search may also be run, deleted, examined in Details, or saved in My NCBI.

The More Resources tab at the top of the page offers additional searching quick links to the MeSH and Journals in NCBI databases, the Single Citation Matcher, and links to the pre-constructed searches of Clinical and Topic-Specific Queries.

Related Citations

A helpful PubMed feature is the ability to find citations that are similar to those of interest. To retrieve related articles, click on the Related citations link under the PMID of citations in the Summary format or select Related citations in PubMed in the right navigation column when examining a single citation in the Abstract format.

Clipboard

The Clipboard feature stores selected citations from one or more searches for eight hours. Select citations by clicking the check box next to them; from the Send to menu, select Clipboard; then click the Add to Clipboard button. Click on the Clipboard link to view citations. Permanently store citations in PubMed My NCBI Collections, also accessed from the Send to menu.

Sensors

Sensors display results in a shaded area above the regular PubMed search results.

- Citation Sensor: matches search terms with citation elements (e.g. blood choi 2019)
- Gene Sensor: identifies gene symbols and links to additional gene information (e.g. CFTR)
- Sequence Sensor: detects accession numbers of nucleotides or proteins (e.g. X62176)
- Structure Sensor: identifies items (proteins, etc.) in the Structure database (e.g. 1R10)