

PubMed Practice Exercise No. 2: Identifying Keywords

Sample Question

How effective is Vitamin C in treating respiratory tract infections?

Practice Exercise Instructions

Now that you have identified relevant controlled vocabulary terms, you must think of other terms that will aid in discovering relevant literature. These terms can include synonyms, antonyms, variations in spelling, and similar or related terms. Write them below. Keep similar words together, in concepts.

Keyword Terms for _____:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Keyword Terms for _____:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



THINK!

Use the boxes above to formulate concepts. Think about where you want to see overlap in the literature, and what would be relevant to you.

PubMed Practice Exercise No. 3: Creating an Effective Search

Sample Question

How effective is Vitamin C in treating respiratory tract infections?

Practice Exercise Instructions

Take the terms that you have identified so far, **both controlled vocabulary (MeSH) terms and keyword terms**, and place them into an effective search. How will your concepts translate? Think about AND, OR, and NOT, which are always capitalized when searching in

AND: Use between terms when you want to see **BOTH TERMS**

OR: Use between terms when you could see **EITHER TERM**

NOT: Use to make broad exclusions of a specific term

1

_____ OR _____ OR
_____ OR _____ OR

2

_____ OR _____ OR
_____ OR _____ OR

Instructions for Putting the Search Concepts Together

In the PubMed Platform

You can build each concept separately, first selecting the controlled vocabulary term in the MeSH database and then adding keywords in the PubMed Search Builder.

Build as many concepts as you'd like for your own topics.

PubMed Advanced

Use the Advanced Search feature to view your search history and combine search terms and concepts.

Document Your Search

Copy and paste your final search into a document or spreadsheet so that it is reproducible and transparent. Note the date run and any filters you applied.

PubMed Practice Exercise No. 1: Finding Controlled Vocabulary

Sample Question

How effective is Vitamin C in treating respiratory tract infections?

Practice Exercise Instructions

Use the sample question to identify appropriate controlled vocabulary terms in PubMed's Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) database: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/>.

PICO Question Framework

P – people who are ill with a respiratory tract infection

I – administration of Vitamin C as an intervention

C – other interventions

O – improvement of symptoms, shorter duration of illness, adverse effects...

For more question frameworks, see <https://browse.welch.jhmi.edu/searching/formulating-research-question>.

Access the MeSH database from the PubMed home page under "Explore." Enter words relevant to the sample question to identify relevant MeSH terms. Write them below.

Relevant MeSH Terms: