

EBSCO MEDLINE QUICK HELP for the EXPERIENCED SEARCHER

LIMITERS – From the EBSCO MEDLINE expert search screen, searchers can check as many limiters as they desire within a category. Make multiple selections by holding down the **Ctrl** key and selecting choices with the cursor. Available limiters include age groups, publication types, language, human, male/female, review.

TRUNCATION

Use the asterisk (*) to truncate words in order to broaden search results.

Example: child*
retrieves the words childhood, children, childless, etc.

WILDCARD

Use the symbol ? as a wildcard. The symbol ? replaces a single character.

Examples: re?d
retrieves read, reed, reid, etc.

colo?r
retrieves color, colour

FIELD CODES – Citations in MEDLINE are indexed comprehensively. Field codes identify each part of a bibliographic citation. Some searchers may want to limit their searches to search for words within a particular field. Click on FIELD CODES to identify the two-letter abbreviation used for a specific field. The fields most often used in medicine include:

AU Author's Name to search for citation by author's name

Follow AU with author's surname followed by initials.

Example: AU Mankin HJ

If author only uses one initial

Example: AU Smith J

If author's middle initial is not known

Example: AU Mankin H?
The ? is known as the wildcard.

This will retrieve all authors that use two initials such as Mankin HJ, Mankin HT, etc.

Time Saver: When author's initials are not known, try combining the author's name with author's institution. AD is the field for author address/affiliation.

Example: AU Mankin and AD Massachusetts

AD Address of first author, used to search for organizations, hospitals, medical schools etc.

Follow AD with institution name, city, etc.

Example: AD Harvard Medical
AD Massachusetts General

LA Language of the original article

Follow LA with first three letters of language wanted.

Examples: LA ENG will retrieve citations in the original language of English
 LA POR will retrieve citations in the original language of Portuguese
 LA NOR will retrieve citations in the original language of Norwegian
 LA CHI will retrieve citations in the original language of Chinese

CY Country in which the article was published.

Follow CY with country name.

Example: CY France will retrieve articles published in France.

RN CAS Registry number or EC Number, a unique number assigned to compounds. Follow the RN field with a number.

Examples: RN 7440-70-2
 RN EC 1.3.99.1

Note: truncation can be used if entire number is not known.

Example: RN EC 1.3.9*

MeSH – Medical Subject Headings are used to index journal articles for MEDLINE, and provide uniformity and consistency to the indexed biomedical literature. Indexers assign the most specific subject headings, which can be further described/qualified by attaching subheadings. Judicious use of medical subject headings can retrieve better results than keyword searching alone.

EXPLODE – The explode function allows searchers to search a broad category of related subordinate subject headings. Subject headings which can be “exploded” are identified in MeSH with a + sign next to its hierarchical tree number. By checking the “explode” box the system will “or” together all of the terms subordinate and listed “under” the term in the tree structure

COMMAND SEARCHING

Subheadings MH subject heading/subheading 2 letter code/subheading 2 letter code

Example: MH common cold/dt/pc

Retrieves all citations with the subject heading of common cold qualified by the subheading of drug therapy (dt) or prevention & control (pc).

Note: two-letter codes for specific subheadings are available in MeSH “Qualify Headings.”

Free Floating Subheading - Subheadings can be searched independently of a subject heading. First, identify the two-letter subheading code abbreviation from MeSH.

Example: Searcher is looking for article citations related to dental legislation and adverse effects related to dental products/procedures. Select MeSH heading term legislation, dental. Adverse effects (ae) cannot be attached legislation, dental as a subheading so adverse effects must be free floated.

Example: MH Legislation, Dental and MW ae

Retrieves all citations with the subject heading of legislation, dental and that also mentions adverse effects of some kind. (Note: include a comma if the subject heading includes a comma)

Exploding MH subject heading +

Example: MH brain diseases+

Retrieves all citations for brain diseases as well as all the citations of the subordinate terms.