

Royal Papworth Hospital Library Services

A step-by-step guide to conducting a basic literature search using a healthcare database



Search **Search** **Thesaurus**

Databases

<input type="checkbox"/> Select All	<input type="checkbox"/> AMED	<input type="checkbox"/> BNI	<input type="checkbox"/> CINAHL
<input type="checkbox"/> EMBASE	<input type="checkbox"/> HBE	<input type="checkbox"/> HMIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Medline
<input type="checkbox"/> PsycINFO	<input type="checkbox"/> PubMed		

Hover over a database for more information...

Identify your key terms

Before you log in, it is important to think about the different aspects of your topic.

TIP: Databases do not work well with sentences. You will need to identify and search separately for the **keywords/phrases** in your topic.

Having identified your keywords/phrases, consider synonyms, US spellings or alternative terminology e.g. medical vs general terms.

Example topic:

Is the flu vaccine effective in reducing sick leave?

		Keywords/phrases	
		Flu vaccine	Sick leave
Synonyms /Alternative terminology		Influenza vaccine	Time off work
		Influenza immunisation	Absenteeism
		Influenza immunization	

After planning your search, access the databases at:

<http://hdas.nice.org.uk>



Search the Databases



Find a Journal



Find a Book

Select your database

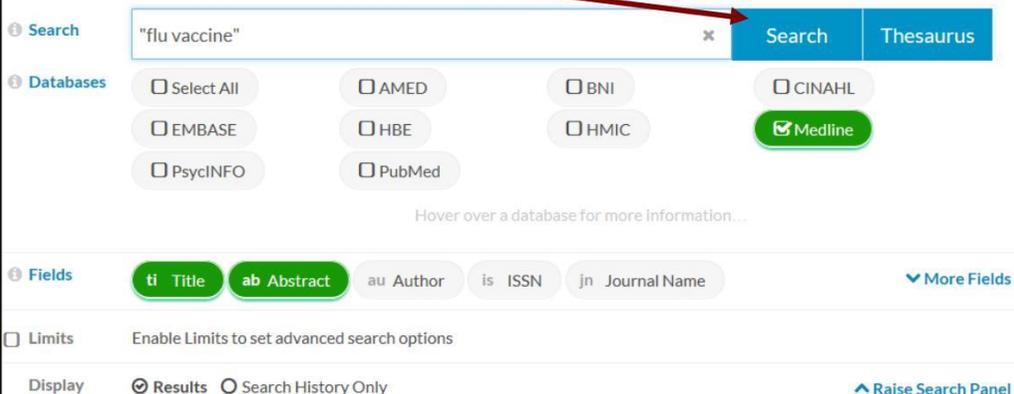
Log in with your NHS Athens username and password. You are now in the NICE Healthcare Databases Advanced Search.

Select the relevant database for your topic.



Search your keywords

Search each of your keywords/phrases individually: type them into the search box, make sure **'Title and Abstract'** are selected and click on **'Search'**.



TIP: Put "quotation marks" around any phrases. This tells the database to search for the exact phrase rather than the words individually.

Having searched separately for your keywords/phrases relating to the first aspect of your topic (in this example: flu vaccine), you will now need to combine these search lines to produce a single set of results for this part of the search.

Tick the boxes next to each search line, select **OR** and click **'Combine'**.

	Database(s)	Search Term		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	Medline	("flu vaccine").ti,ab	View Results (492)	Edit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	Medline	("influenza vaccine").ti,ab	View Results (7,623)	Edit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	Medline	("influenza immunisation").ti,ab	View Results (142)	Edit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	Medline	("influenza immunization").ti,ab	Viewing (935)	Edit

All [Rerun Searches](#) [Copy](#) AND OR [Combine](#) [Delete Selected](#) [Export Options](#)

You should now follow the same search process with the other aspects of your search topic.

In this example, the next aspect of the search is sick leave. Having searched for your keywords/phrases individually and combined with **OR** as above, the search history should now look like this:

	Database(s)	Search Term		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Medline	("flu vaccine").ti,ab	View Results (492)	Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Medline	("influenza vaccine").ti,ab	View Results (7,623)	Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Medline	("influenza immunisation").ti,ab	View Results (142)	Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Medline	("influenza immunization").ti,ab	View Results (935)	Edit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5	Medline	(1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4)	View Results (8,719)	Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Medline	("sick leave").ti,ab	View Results (3,894)	Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Medline	("time off work").ti,ab	View Results (701)	Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Medline	(absenteeism).ti,ab	View Results (4,437)	Edit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9	Medline	(6 OR 7 OR 8)	Viewing (8,757)	Edit

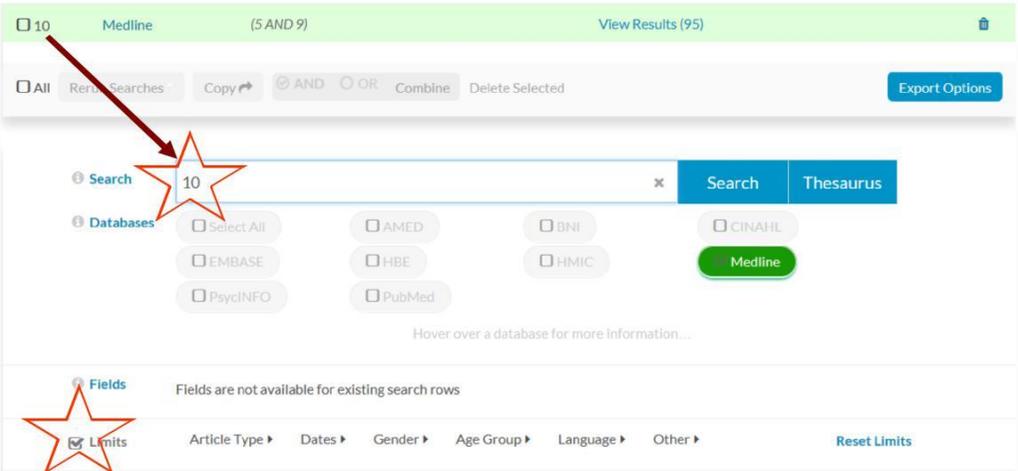
All [Rerun Searches](#) [Copy](#) AND OR [Combine](#) [Delete Selected](#) [Export Options](#)

The next step is to combine the different aspects (shown in green) of your topic using **AND**.

TIP: We search with **AND** to combine different parts of the search. We only use **OR** to combine keywords/phrases that are similar.

Apply limits to your search

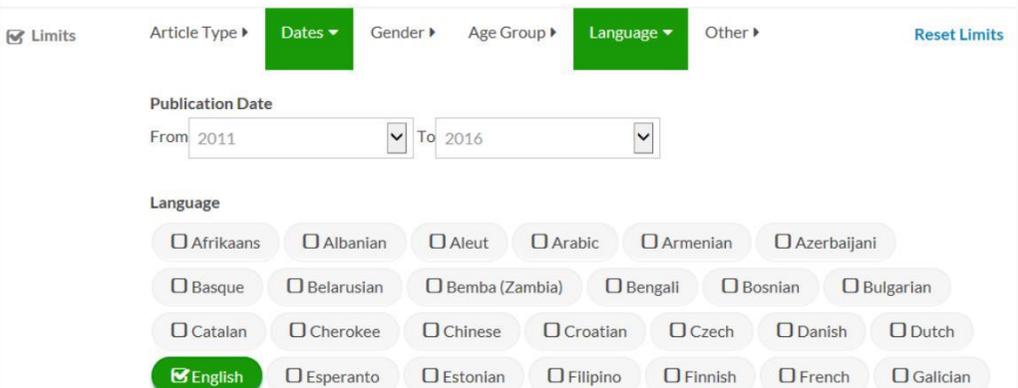
This produces a final search line combining the different aspects of the search topic. However, you may also wish to 'limit' the results, for example by date range or language.



The screenshot shows a search interface. At the top, there is a green bar with '10 Medline (5 AND 9)' and 'View Results (95)'. Below this, there is a search bar with '10' entered. A red star is drawn around the number '10' in the search bar, with a red arrow pointing to it from the top left. Below the search bar, there are several database selection buttons: 'Select All', 'AMED', 'BNI', 'CINAHL', 'EMBASE', 'HBE', 'HMIC', 'PsycINFO', and 'PubMed'. The 'Medline' button is highlighted in green. Below the database selection, there is a 'Fields' section with a message 'Fields are not available for existing search rows'. Below that, there is a 'Limits' section with a red star drawn around the 'Limits' checkbox. The 'Limits' section has several filter options: 'Article Type', 'Dates', 'Gender', 'Age Group', 'Language', and 'Other'. The 'Dates' and 'Language' filters are highlighted in green. A 'Reset Limits' button is visible on the right.

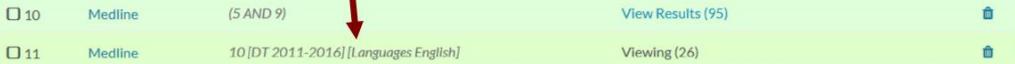
In the search box, enter the line number (in this example 10) that you want to apply limits to and tick the 'Limits' box.

This will show the limits available in your chosen database. Use the headings to select the required limits and click on 'Search'. In this example, the search has been limited by date (2011-2016) and language (English).



The screenshot shows the 'Limits' section of the search interface. The 'Limits' checkbox is checked. The 'Dates' and 'Language' filters are highlighted in green. The 'Dates' filter shows 'Publication Date' with 'From' set to '2011' and 'To' set to '2016'. The 'Language' filter shows a list of languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Aleut, Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Basque, Belarusian, Bemba (Zambia), Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Cherokee, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English (highlighted in green), Esperanto, Estonian, Filipino, Finnish, French, and Galician. A 'Reset Limits' button is visible on the right.

This produces a final line in your search strategy, with the limits applied to your search.



<input type="checkbox"/>	10	Medline	(5 AND 9)	View Results (95)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	11	Medline	10 [DT 2011-2016] [Languages English]	Viewing (26)	

All Rerun Searches Copy AND OR Combine Delete Selected [Export Options](#)

Once you are happy with your search, you should save your search strategy. This allows you to revisit your search at a later date, and makes it easier to save your results.

Give your search a name in the box above the search history and click on **'Save Strategy'**.

Current search strategy:

	Database(s)	Search Term			
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Medline	("flu vaccine").ti,ab	View Results (492)	Edit

Scroll down the page to view your results, or click on **'View Results'** in your final search line if they have not automatically appeared. You can change how the results are sorted, how many to view per page and show/hide abstracts.



All on this page Save Selected Show Abstracts Titles Only View: 10 25 50 100 Sort: Unsorted

1 2 Next

1. Impact of the 2009 influenza A (H1N1) pandemic on Canadian health care workers: a survey on vaccination, illness, absenteeism, and personal protective equipment.

Author(s) Mitchell, Robyn; Ogunremi, Toju; Astrakianakis, George; Bryce, Elizabeth; Gervais, Robert et al.
Source American journal of infection control; Sep 2012; vol. 40 (no. 7); p. 611-616
Publication Date Sep 2012
DOI 10.1016/j.ajic.2012.01.011
ISSN 1527-3296
Database Medline
Show Abstract
Available in full text from Elsevier

2. Healthcare worker influenza immunization vaccine or mask policy: strategies for cost effective implementation and subsequent reductions in staff absenteeism due to illness.

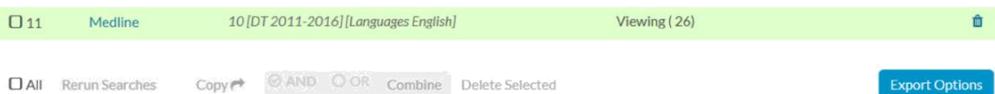
Author(s) Van Buynnder, P G; Konrad, S; Kersteins, F; Preston, E; Brown, P D et al.
Source Vaccine; Mar 2015; vol. 33 (no. 13); p. 1625-1628

As well as saving the search strategy, you can also save selected results.

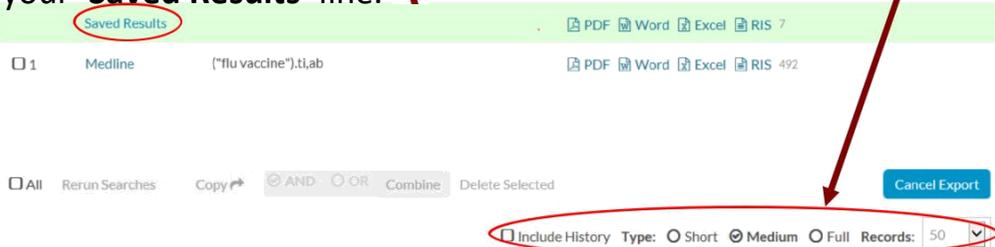
As you review your results, tick those you wish to save and click on **'Add to Saved'** at the bottom of each page before moving to the next page. **If you move to the next page without saving you will lose your previous selections.**



To export your results, scroll up to your search history and select **'Export Options'**.



This will display the format options next to each search line and display options at the bottom (e.g. short to show citation only, medium to include abstracts). Select your desired display options **first** and then click on your preferred output format for your **'Saved Results'** line.



TIP: Not all articles will be immediately available to you. Contact the library to request any articles you require that do not have a full text option or if you have any problems accessing them. We can usually obtain articles for you through our interlibrary loan service, which is free of charge.

Library Services Enquiry Desk

Usually staffed Monday - Friday: 9:00 – 16:00

Contact

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Papword Road
Cambridge Biomedical Campus
CB2 0AY

Tel: 01223 639689

papworth.library@nhs.net

<https://royalpapworth.nhs.uk/research-and-development/library-services>



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