

Literature Search Planning

Use this form to help identify and clarify key concepts and the scope of your topic. Turn over for guidance on each section.

1. Search Topic:			
2. Consider how the following four categories apply to your topic:			
Patient/Problem	Intervention	Comparison	Outcome/Effects
AND	AND	AND	
OR	OR	OR	OR
Add synonyms, alternate spellings and acronyms			
3. Apply limits			
Age range of patients?		Date of research?	
Gender?		Language?	
Study type?		Others?	

How to use the form

1. Your search topic – briefly describe the key aspects of your topic
2. Consider how the following categories apply to your topic:

Patient/Population and/or Problem - the characteristics that define your patient, e.g. target clinical condition

Intervention - what you want to do with the patient/population/problem e.g. form of treatment, diagnostic test, type of service delivery.

Comparison (if applicable) – alternative(s) to main intervention, e.g. placebo, or a standard therapy

Outcomes or effects - any outcomes or effects relating to the intervention e.g. prevention, side effects, morbidity, quality of life, cost-effectiveness.

The Patient, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome (PICO) formula can be useful for planning a search, but it does not necessarily suit every question. In such cases, identify the individual keywords or phrases that define your search and place them in the boxes on the form, ignoring the PICO delineations.

Use the next part of the form to consider alternative keywords that could be used, taking into account:

- differences in terminology
 - (Medline and Embase both index journals from around 70 different countries)
 - old terms or new term
 - medical terms or lay terms
 - brand name or generic name
- acronyms (CVA or cerebrovascular accident?)
- abbreviations (ten metre, 10 metre or 10m?)

3. Restrict the search by?

Information that will help to limit/focus your results:

- Is the patient's age, gender or ethnicity relevant to your topic?
- How far back do you want to search, how relevant will 10 or 20 year old research be?
- Can you read papers written in other languages? Can you have them translated?
- What kind of evidence do you want? RCTs? Review articles? Case studies?

Be aware that these kinds of limits can bias your search. Limiting to English language papers for instance, will exclude good quality research written in German, Japanese etc.

Example Search:

<p>Search Topic: <i>Which methods of physiotherapy will help to recover function in an 85-year old stroke patient?</i></p>			
<p>3. Consider how the following four categories apply to your topic:</p>			
Patient/Problem	Intervention	Comparison	Outcome/Effects
Stroke	Physiotherapy	Not applicable	Recover function
AND	AND	AND	
OR	OR	OR	OR
<p>Add synonyms, alternate spellings and acronyms</p>			
Cerebrovascular accident OR CVA	Physical therapy		Functional recovery OR Recovery of function
<p>3. Apply limits</p>			
<p>Age range of patients? <i>Over 80</i> Gender? Study type?</p>		<p>Date of research? <i>Last 10 years</i> Language? <i>English only</i> Others?</p>	

Adapted from the Literature Search Protocols: Recommendations for Researchers produced by the Thames Valley Health Libraries Network, 2005

Literature Search check list

We have gathered together the main resources that you will need on subject pages – see the Quick Links options on the Health Library home page at www.keele.ac.uk/healthlibrary

Here you will find subject pages for:

- Healthcare Resources (NHS)
- Nursing Databases (Keele)
- Midwifery Databases (Keele)
- Medical Databases (Keele)

You should also check out the Internet resources we have listed on our Literature Searching page at

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/healthlibrary/find/subjectlinks/literaturesearchingsites/>

Finally we have listed a range of Internet sources for a variety of subjects on our subject links pages at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/healthlibrary/find/subjectlinks/>

It is important that you consider carefully the type of resource that you need to use in order to identify the information that is going to be most relevant to your search topic.

Quick Links
Catalogue
Renew My Books
New Books
Athens
Request an article
Journals
Healthcare Resources (NHS)
Nursing Databases (Keele)
Midwifery Databases (Keele)
Medical Databases (Keele)
Literature Searching Sites
Book Training Online