

Approaches to searching

1. Define your topic

Is it too broad? Too specific? Too vague?

2. Separate your topic into concepts

One, two or more

3. Consider synonyms or alternate spellings

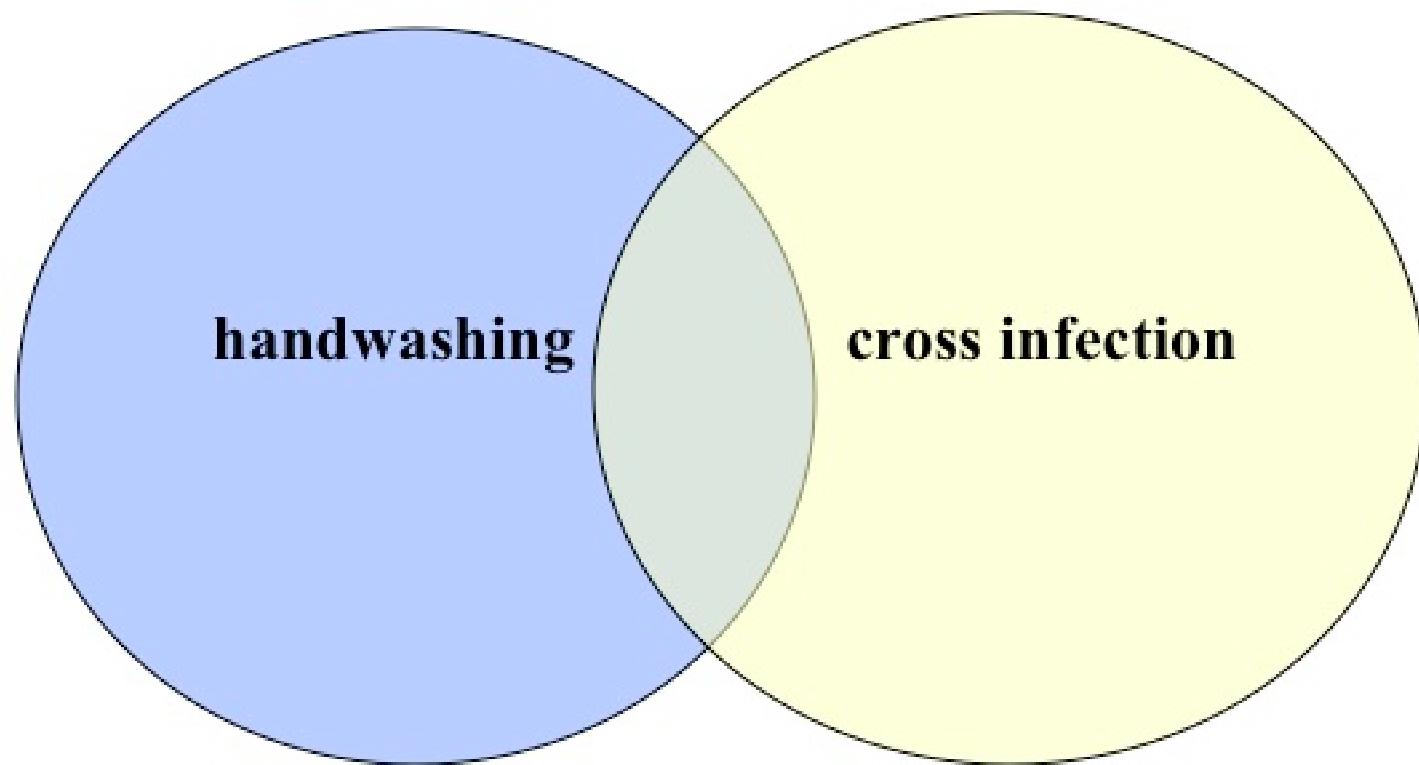
4. Try to use unique not common terms

Approaches to searching (con't)

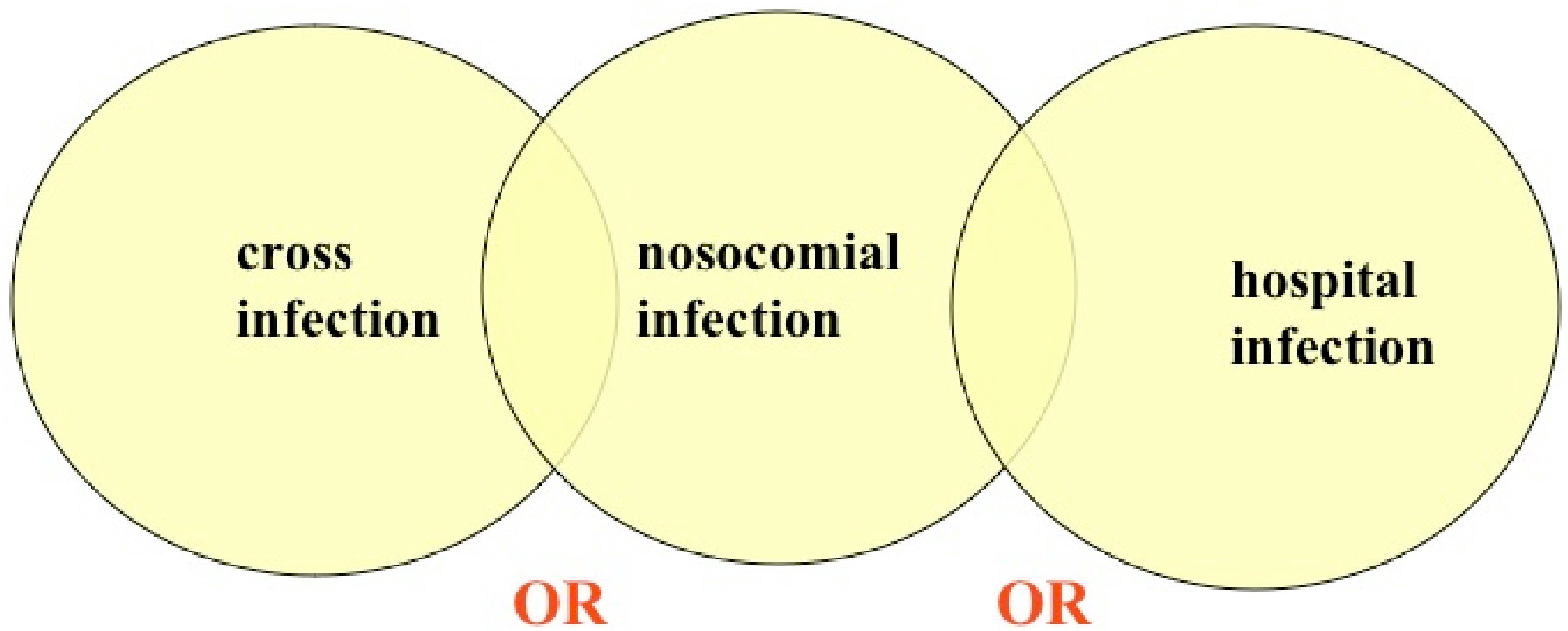
- Single words may be too broad
- Use quotation marks for multiple word terms
- Boolean operators AND OR NOT usually are upper case
- Be cautious when using NOT

Boolean search strategy

- [Boolean](#) logic uses the operators AND, OR, and NOT to connect search terms when using catalogs, databases, or web searching.
- A simple search on: *handwashing* retrieves article citations containing that term.
- A simple search on: *handwashing***AND***cross infection* retrieves citations containing BOTH terms.
-
- **BOOLEAN OPERATOR**
SEARCH STATEMENTRETRIEVES AND
- handwashing
- **AND**
- cross infection
- Retrieves citations with *BOTH* terms present
-
- **OR** cross infection
- **OR**
nosocomial infection
- **OR**
hospital infection
-
- Retrieves citations with *EITHER/ANY* of the terms present
-
- (OR is used to string synonyms together: **remember, OR retrieves MORE!**)



AND

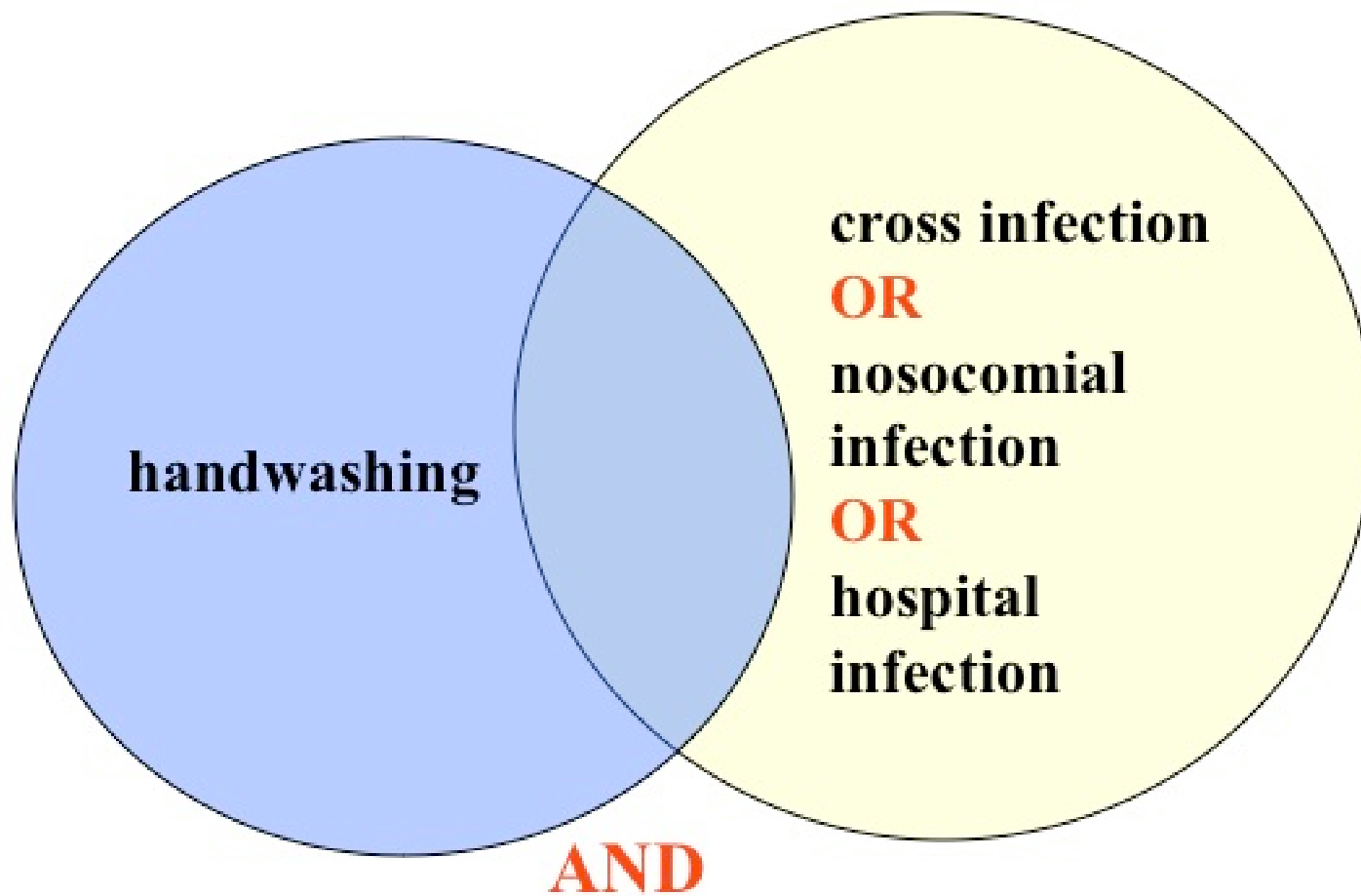


- **AND, OR**
handwashing

AND

- (cross infection
OR
nosocomial infection
OR
hospital infection)

- Search sets may be combined. This search locates citations with the word *handwashing* AND (ANY one of the terms combined with OR)



- **AND, OR**
handwashing

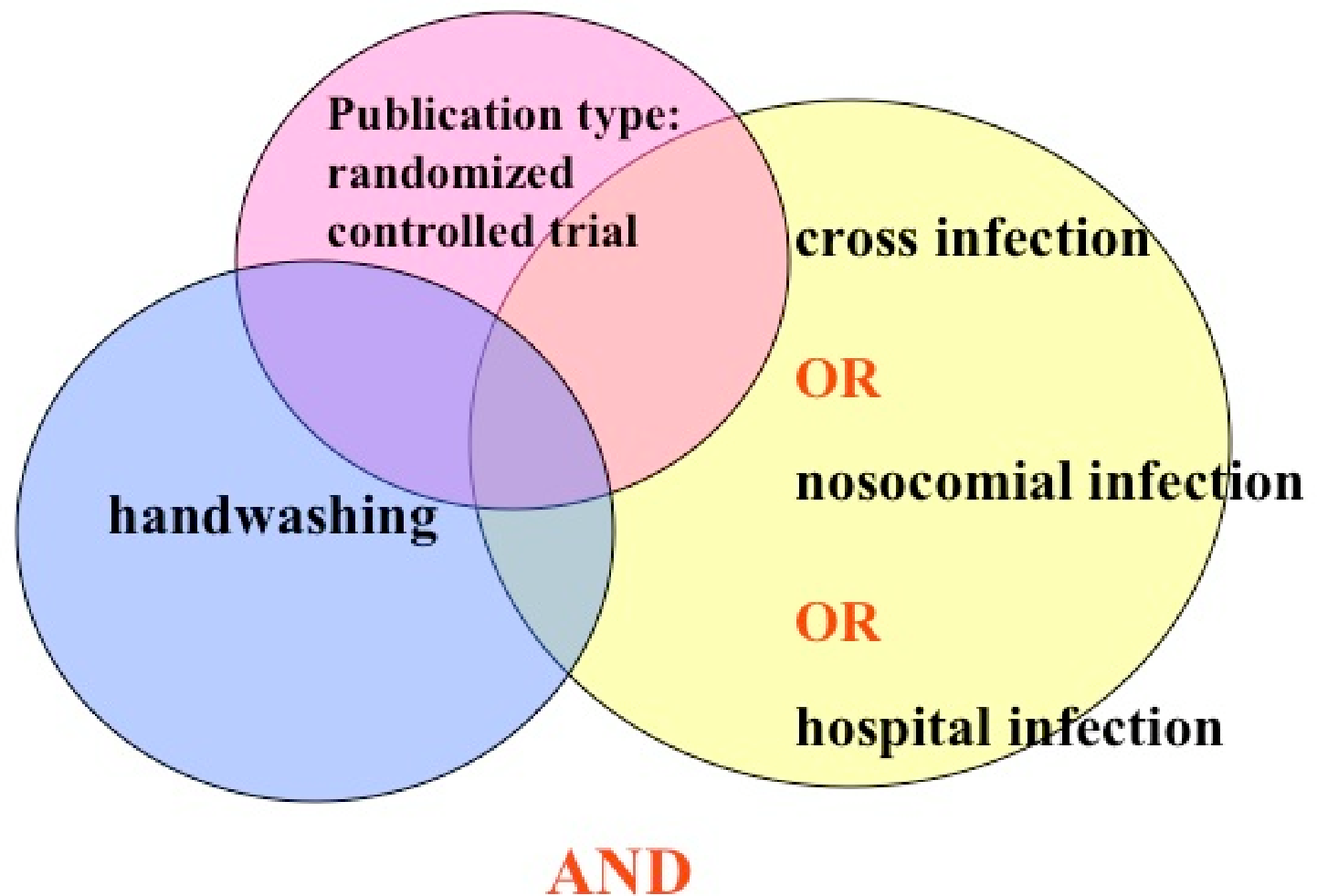
AND

- (cross infection
OR
nosocomial infection
OR
hospital infection)

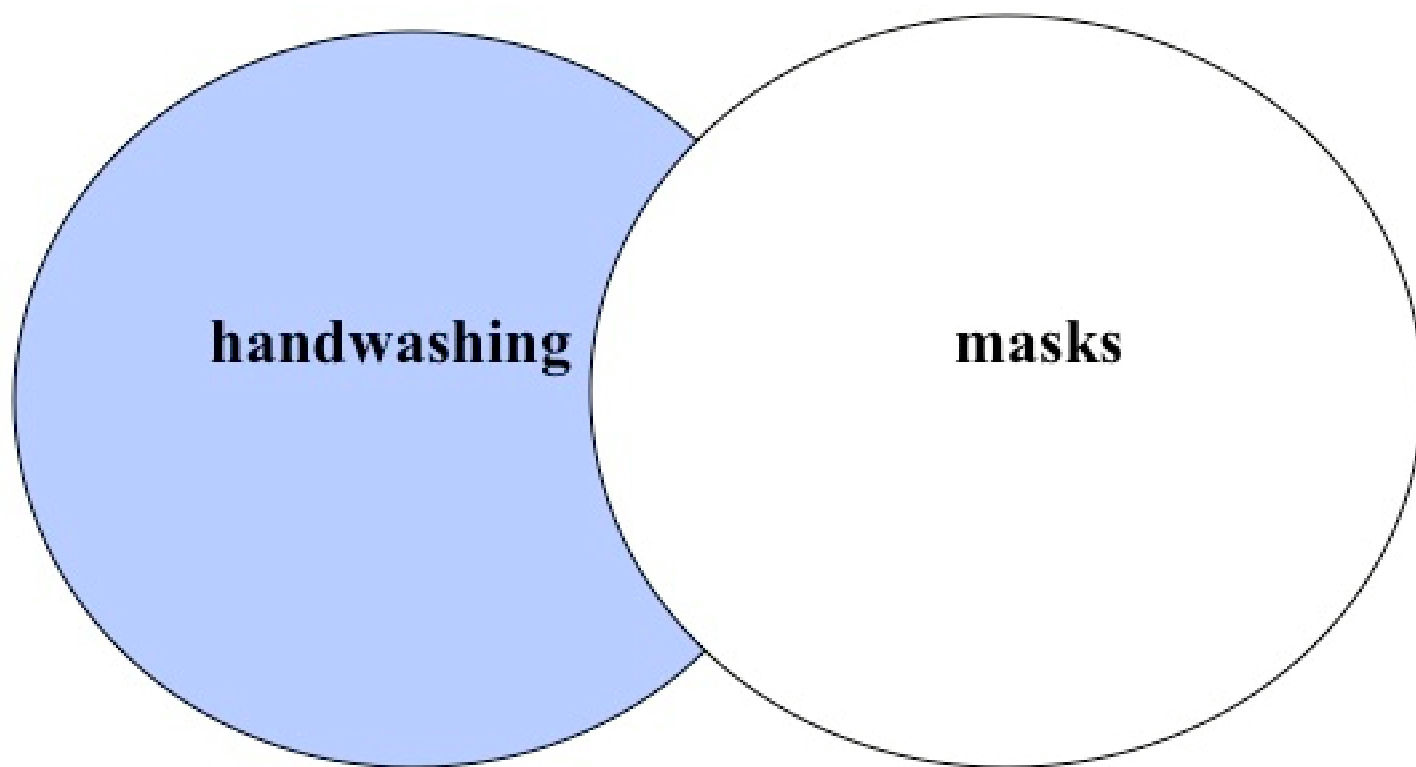
- **AND**

- Publication type: randomized controlled trial

- Retrieves citations with the word *handwashing* AND (ANY one of the terms combined with OR) AND limited to articles with the Publication type: randomized controlled trial. This is one example of using database Limits.



- **NOT**handwashing
- **NOT**
- masks
- Retrieves citations with the term *handwashing*, but omits records with the term *masks*
- (Caution: the NOT operator should be used sparingly and carefully as it may omit citations relevant to a search.
- *For example*, an article about handwashing that includes the word *masks* might be relevant to a search on handwashing.)



NOT

Starting Points

- <http://davidrothman.net/consumer-health-and-patient-education-information>
- <http://www.ehealthcarebot.com>

Searching medical journals

- PUBMED

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

- NOVOSEEK

<http://www.novoseek.com>

Search strategy tips for PubMed

1.Keep it simple

2.Identify main concepts

- a. Single term or “multiple terms”
- b. Boolean logic: AND, OR, NOT

3.What are “*MESH*” headings?

4.Should you use only MESH headings or consider adding *text words*?

BMJ. 2002 Aug 17;325(7360):362.



Full Text

FREE

FREE full text article

BMJ

in PubMed Central

NYU

Comment in:

- [BMJ. 2003 Jan 4;326\(7379\):50.](#)
- [BMJ. 2003 Jan 4;326\(7379\):50.](#)
- [Evid Based Nurs. 2003 Apr;6\(2\):54-5.](#)

Efficacy of handrubbing with alcohol based solution versus standard handwashing with antiseptic soap: randomised clinical trial

[Girou E.](#), [Loyeau S.](#), [Legrand P.](#), [Oppein F.](#), [Brun-Buisson C.](#)

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OBJECTIVE: To compare the efficacy of handrubbing with an alcohol based solution versus conventional handwashing with antiseptic soap in red patient care. **DESIGN:** Randomised controlled trial during daily nursing sessions of 2 to 3 hours. **SETTING:** Three intensive care units in a French hospital. **INTERVENTIONS:** Handrubbing with alcohol based solution (n=12) or handwashing with antiseptic soap (n=11) when hand hygiene procedure. Imprints taken of fingertips and palm of dominant hand before and after hand hygiene procedure. Bacterial counts quantified blindly. **MAIN RESULTS:** With handrubbing the median percentage reduction in bacterial contamination was significantly higher than with handwashing (median difference in the percentage reduction of 26% (95% confidence interval 8% to 44%). The median duration of hand hygiene was 30 seconds. **CONCLUSION:** In routine patient care handrubbing with an alcohol based solution is significantly more efficient in reducing hand contamination than handwashing with antiseptic soap.

Publication Types:

- [Clinical Trial](#)
- [Multicenter Study](#)
- [Randomized Controlled Trial](#)
- [Research Support, Non-U.S. Gov't](#)

MeSH Terms:

- [Alcohols/administration & dosage*](#)
- [Anti-Infective Agents, Local/administration & dosage*](#)
- [Attitude of Health Personnel](#)
- [Bacteria/isolation & purification*](#)
- [Colony Count, Microbial](#)
- [Cross Infection/prevention & control](#)
- [Disinfectants](#)
- [Hand/microbiology*](#)
- [Handwashing/methods](#)
- [Handwashing/standards*](#)
- [Humans](#)
- [Hygiene/standards](#)
- [Intensive Care Units](#)
- [Nursing Staff](#)
- [Prospective Studies](#)
- [Soaps*/chemistry](#)

Here is a sample Medline record that meets all the criteria:

Handwashing **AND**
(cross infection **OR** nosocomial
infection **OR** hospital infection)

AND
publication type: randomized
controlled trial

Novoseek may be easier than PubMed

Novoseek processes documents to allow more precise retrieval:

- Uses subcategories on the left to narrow results
- Suggests symptoms and treatments for a disease
- No need to worry about controlled vocabulary/subject headings

How to obtain a journal article

- Your local public library
 - Print copy of journal
 - Databases with full text
- In PubMed, use the “free text” filter
- PubMed Central
- GMU databases or Fenwick Library

Test Yourself

1. What are the symptoms of stroke?
2. What herb may treat BPH?
3. What are the risk factors for thyroid cancer?
4. What is the generic equivalent for Cardizem?
5. What is involved in hip replacement?