SAVVY SEARCHING FOR SENIOR HEALTH

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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

• 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
Good Places to Start

• MEDLINEPLUS (for laymen)

• NLMplus (medical journals)
Boolean search strategy

BOOLEAN OPERATORS:  AND  OR  NOT

• A simple search on: *handwashing* retrieves article citations containing that term.

• A simple search on: *handwashing AND cross infection* retrieves citations containing BOTH terms.

  *HANDWASHING AND CROSS INFECTION*

• **OR** retrieves citations with ALL terms present

  *CROSS INFECTION OR NOSOCOMIAL INFECTION OR HOSPITAL INFECTION*

• (OR is used to string synonyms together:  *Remember, OR retrieves MORE!* )
• **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)
ADVANCED BOOLEAN LOGIC

• **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.
Publication type: randomized controlled trial
AND
handwashing

OR
cross infection
OR
nosocomial infection
OR
hospital infection
DANGER OF “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.)
handwashing

NOT

masks
Why Medical Librarians Exist!
Starting Points

• http://www.davidrothman.net

• www.quertle.com

• http://www.ehealthcarebot.com
WARNING

“Beware of health books. You may die of a misprint.”
Mark Twain
“I already diagnosed myself on the Internet. I’m only here for a second opinion.”
Searching medical journals

- [www.nlmplus.com](http://www.nlmplus.com)
Articles in Medicalese
Medical Journals

PubMed
On Tap
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*?
Efficacy of handrubbing with alcohol based solution versus standard handwashing with antiseptic soap: randomised clinical trial


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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 healthcare workers. INTERVENTIONS: Handrubbing with alcohol based solution (n=12) or handwashing with antiseptic soap (n=11) when hand care. Imprints taken of fingertips and palm of dominant hand before and after hand hygiene procedure. Bacterial counts quantified blindly. MAIN of hand contamination. RESULTS: With handrubbing the median percentage reduction in bacterial contamination was significantly higher than with a median difference in the percentage reduction of 26% (95% confidence interval 8% to 44%). The median duration of hand hygiene was 30 sec. Routine patient care handrubbing with an alcohol based solution is significantly more efficient in reducing hand contamination than handwashes.
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
Lunch, anyone?
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?