



# SAVVY SEARCHING FOR SENIOR HEALTH

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# What has your experience been?

- How many of you try to find health information on the internet?
- How do you go about it?
- Do you feel that you've found helpful results?

# Main sources of health information

Source: *The Gerontologist* 49(5):667 2009

Sources used most often	Non-internet group (%)	Internet group (%)
Doctors, other health care providers	75	67
Pharmacists	20	19
Newspapers	32	15
Popular magazines	28	7
Medical journals	12	4
Popular books	20	11
Medical books	16	4
Internet	0	58
Television	24	11
Radio	12	15
Friends or family	36	15

# Internet Sources of Information

- 77% Google, Yahoo, Bing
- 13% Health websites like WebMD
- 2% Wikipedia
- 1% Facebook

# Online Self Diagnosis

- 41% of online diagnosers say a medical professional confirmed their diagnosis. An additional 2% say a medical professional partially confirmed it.
- 35% say they did not visit a clinician to get a professional opinion.
- 18% say they consulted a medical professional and the clinician either did not agree or offered a different opinion about the condition.
- 1% say their conversation with a clinician was inconclusive.
- Women are more likely than men to go online to figure out a possible diagnosis



I thought it was just a cut. But, after reading on the internet, I am now 100% positive it is cancer.



# Feelings about internet health information

	USERS IN AGREEMENT %
COMMUNICATION WITH DOCTOR IMPROVED WHEN I DISCUSSED WHAT I FOUND	82
INFORMATION FOUND HELPED ME BECOME MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE	96
INFORMATION FOUND HELPED ME DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS WITH MY DOCTOR	93
INFORMATION FOUND HELPED ME MAKE DECISIONS WITH MY DOCTOR	82
INFORMATION FOUND SAVED TIME DURING MY APPOINTMENT	74
INFORMATION FOUND IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF MY VISIT	85
INFORMATION FOUND INCREASES MY ABILITY TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF MYSELF	96

# Health Literacy Defined

“The degree to which individuals have the capacity to *obtain, process, and understand* basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”

Healthy People, 2010



# Internet Use and Aging

- Vision and hearing changes:
  - 2 out of 3 adults with vision problems are over 63 years old
  - Hearing loss affects 1 out of 3 adults
- Cognitive changes:
  - Reduced processing speed
  - More easily distracted
  - Difficulty remembering new information



# Additional challenging factors

- Multiple medical conditions
- Many, many medications
- Talking to doctors
- Internet comfort levels



# Talking to Doctors

- Before 1973, doctors told patients what they wanted patients to know and do
- 1973 Patients Bill of Rights: “The patient has the right and is encouraged to obtain. . . *relevant, current, and understandable* information about his diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis”



**“I’m sorry Doctor,  
but again I must disagree.”**

# How to evaluate a health website

*“Be careful about reading health books.  
You may die of a misprint”*

Mark Twain

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/webeval/webeval.html>

# Questions to ask

## PROVIDER

- Who is in charge of the website?
- Why are they providing the website?
- Can you contact them?

## FUNDING

- Where does the money come from?
- Does the website have advertisements?

# Quality

- Where does the information on the site come from?
- How is the content selected and is it reviewed by experts?
- Does the site avoid unbelievable or emotional claims?
- How current is the information? Look for a date.

# Privacy

- Does the site ask for personal information information?
- Does it tell you how the information will be used?
- Are you comfortable with how it will be used?



# Symbol of accreditation

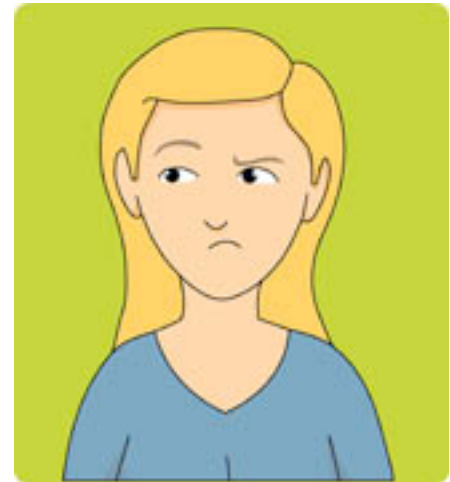
Health on the Net Foundation

[www.hon.ch/pat.html](http://www.hon.ch/pat.html)



# How accessible is the information?

- Findability
- Readability
- Usability



I would like a closed reduction and k wire fixation under nerve block and light GA.

I hate internet.



# Where Should You Look?



# Calling Dr. Google or Maybe Not!



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

# Where Do You Start?

- 77 % Google, Yahoo or Bing
- 13 % Health Websites like WebMD
- 2 % Wikipedia
- 1 % Facebook

# Is *Google* a good starting point?

- You may retrieve too many items
- Difficult to be precise and accurate
- Either too many or too few items
- Is the website reliable?

# What makes a “good” health website?

- Font size
- Glare-free background color
  - Clear organization
    - White space
  - Short sentences
    - Jargon-free
- Meaningful images



# MedlinePlus

<http://medlineplus.gov>

- Links to reliable, understandable health websites
- Easy to read articles
- Slideshows that have sound and contrast
- Medical dictionary, large illustrations
- Links to directories of providers, organizations

# Top health websites

- ✓ <http://medlineplus.gov/>
- ✓ <http://www.healthfinder.gov>
- ✓ <http://mayoclinic.com>
- ✓ <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/hp.asp>

# FIND A DOCTOR

- <http://healthgrades.com>

# Patient forums

<http://exchanges.webmd.com/default.htm?>

[http://ehealthforum.com/health/health\\_forums.html](http://ehealthforum.com/health/health_forums.html)

## GOOGLE GROUPS

[Health - Medicine](#) (4419)

[Health - Conditions and Diseases](#) (3299)

[Health - Fitness](#) (3259)

[Health - Alternative](#) (2939)

[Health - Mental Health](#) (2643)

# Participatory medicine

Patient's stories, questions, and comments provide:

- information

- support and reassurance

- practical advice

Forty-one percent of patients read comments of other patients

# Websites for seniors

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation>

<http://aarp.org/health/>

<http://www.medicare.gov>

# 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

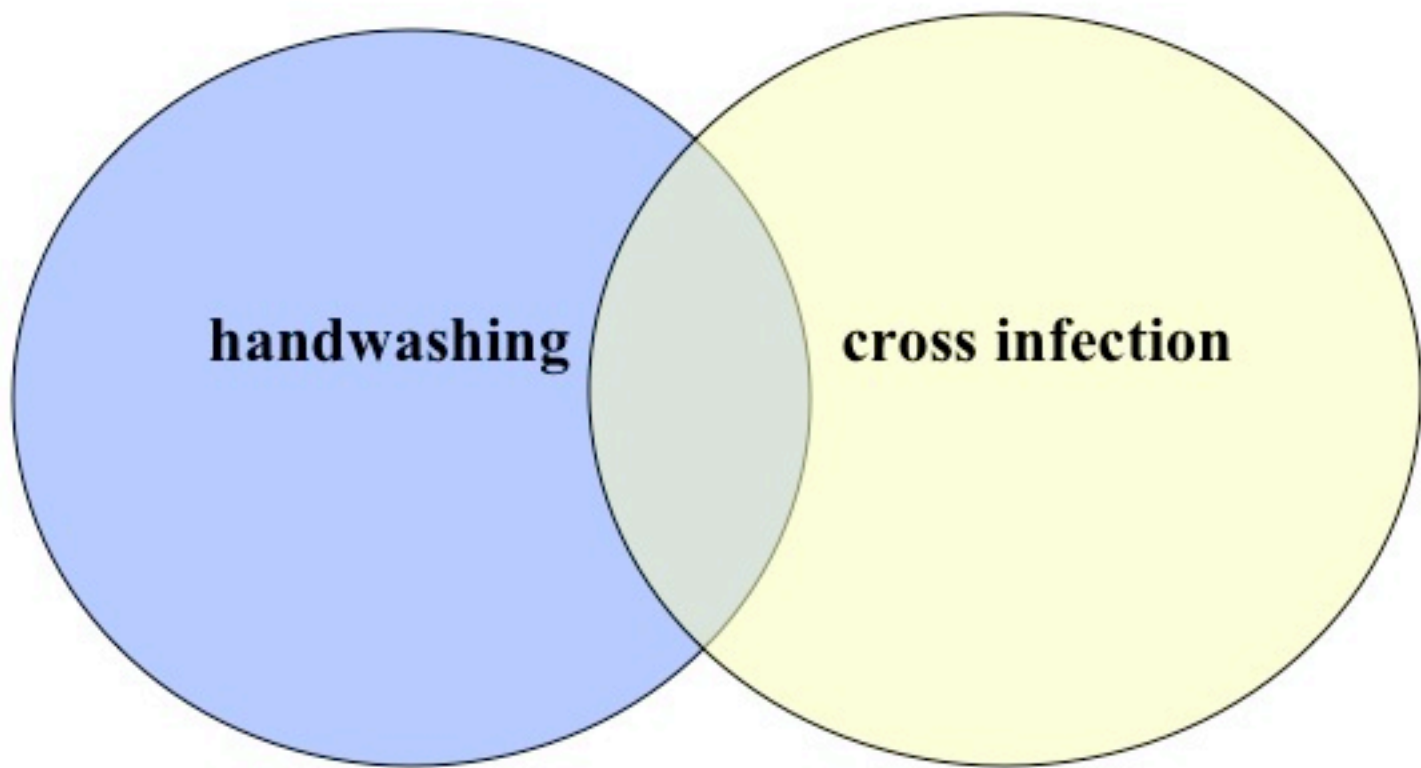
# Approaches to searching

- 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

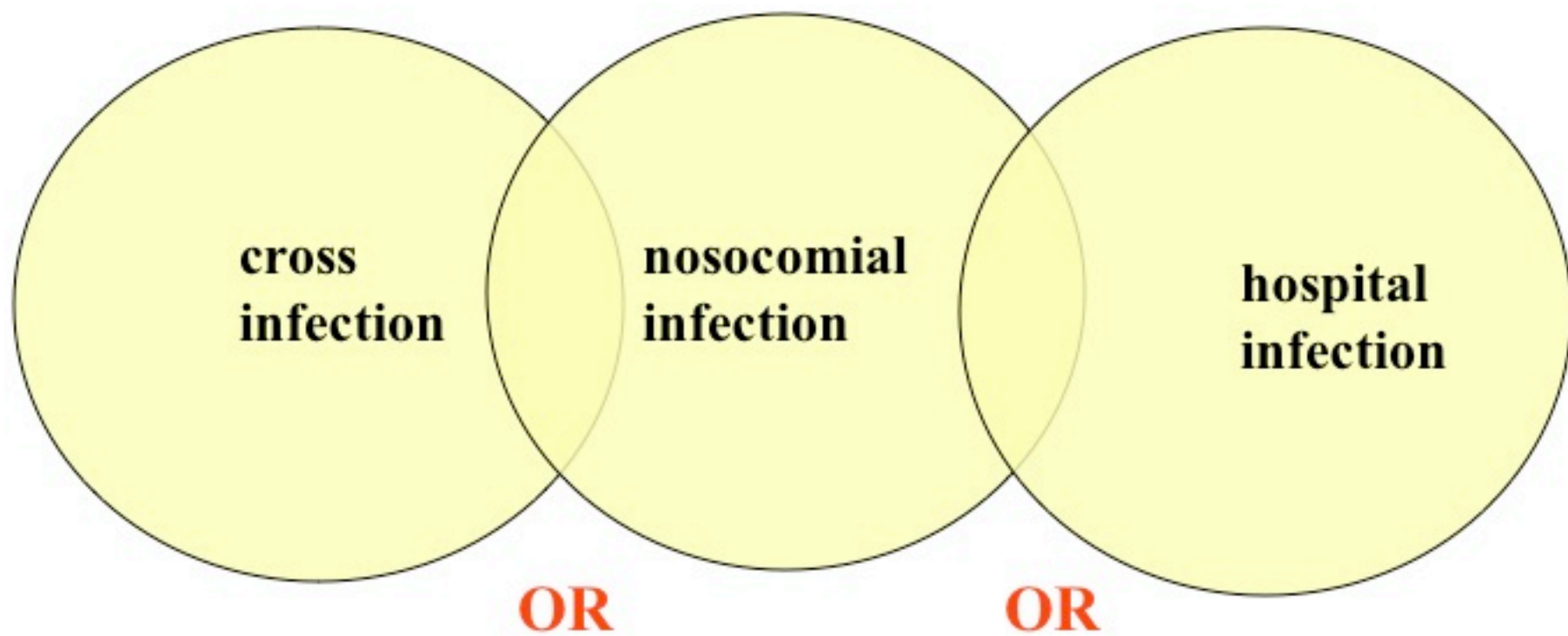


# Boolean search strategy

- [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 STATEMENT RETRIEVES 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!**)



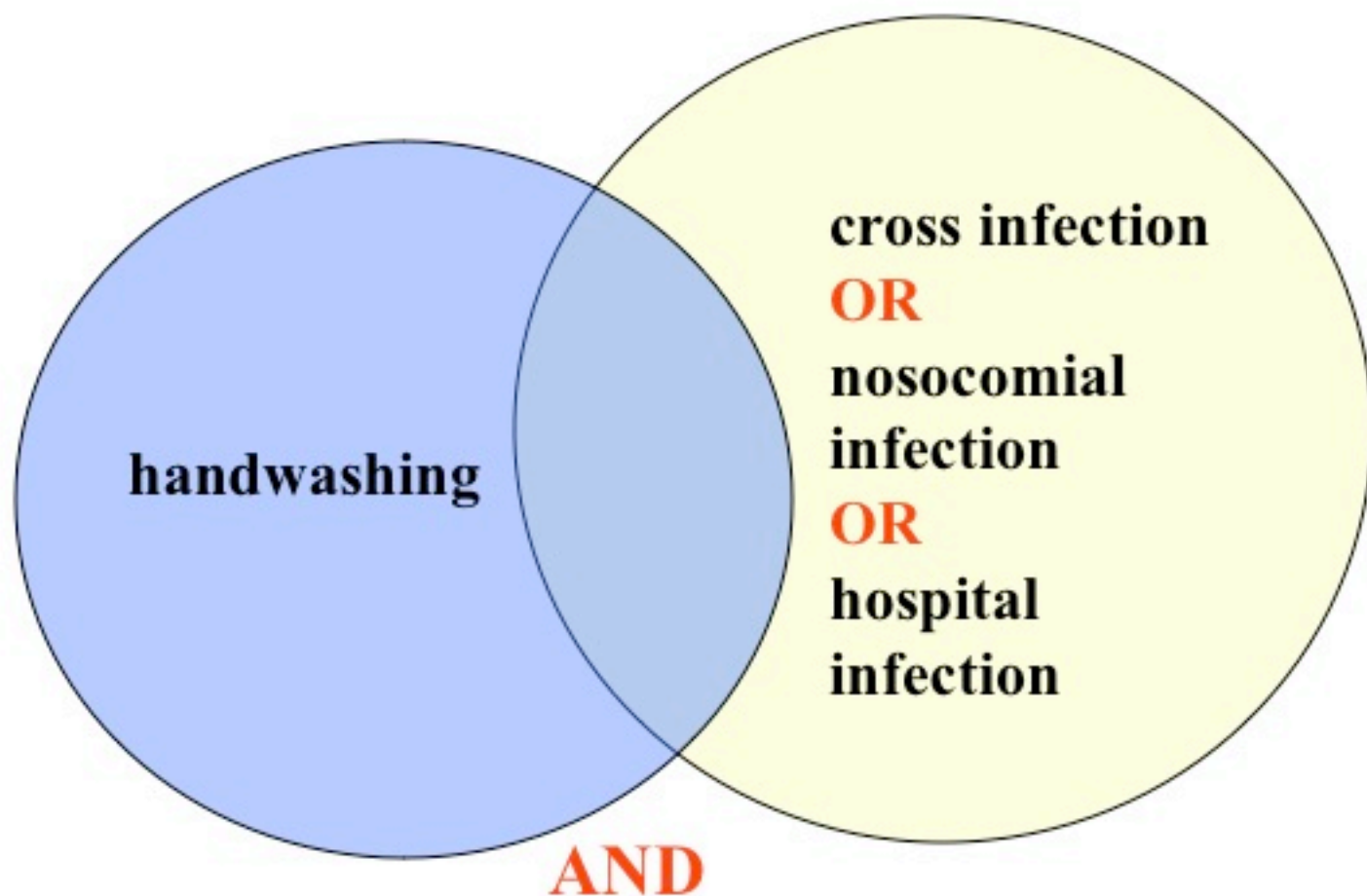
**AND**



- **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)



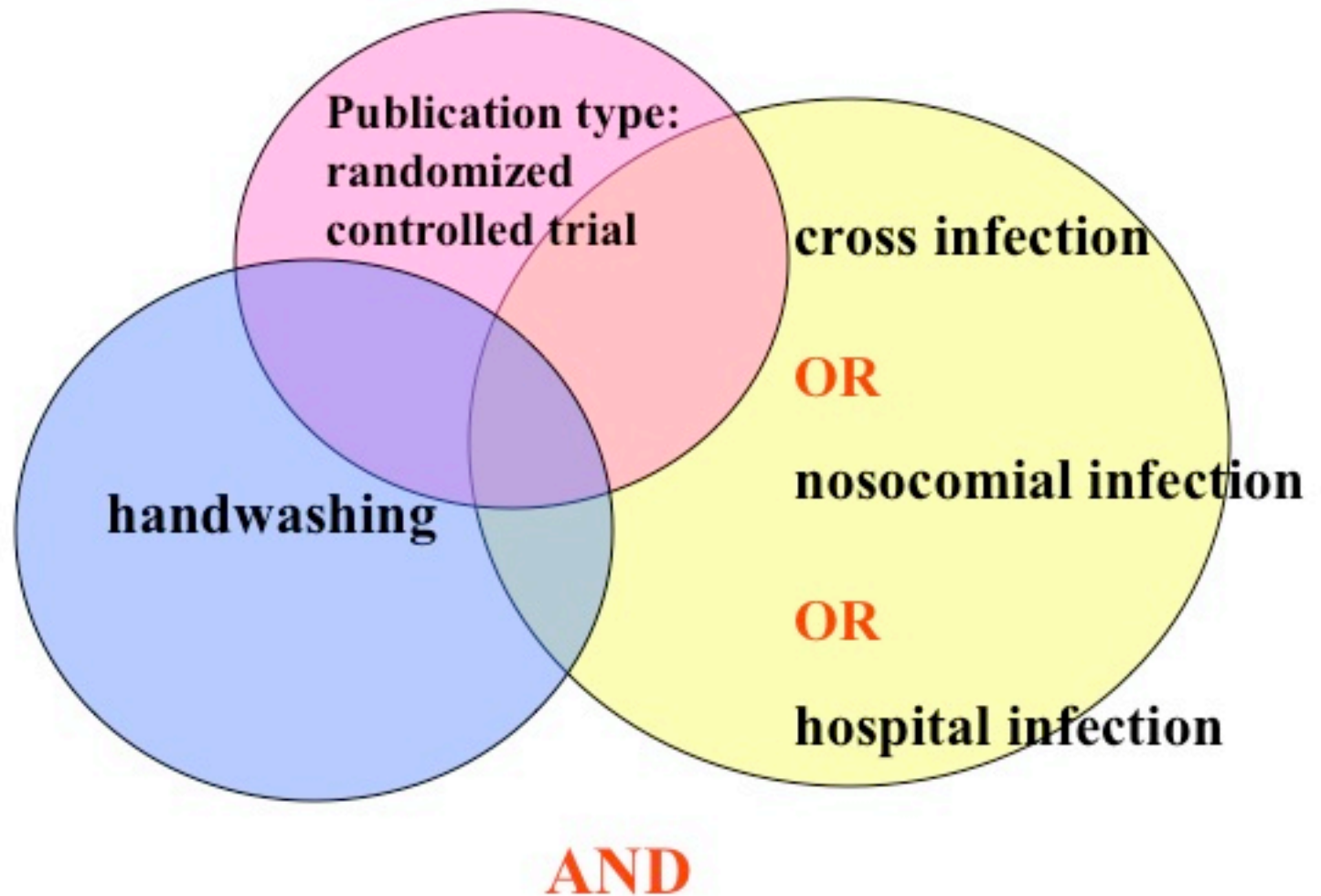
- **AND, OR**  
handwashing

**AND**

- (cross infection  
**OR**  
nosocomial infection  
**OR**  
hospital infection)

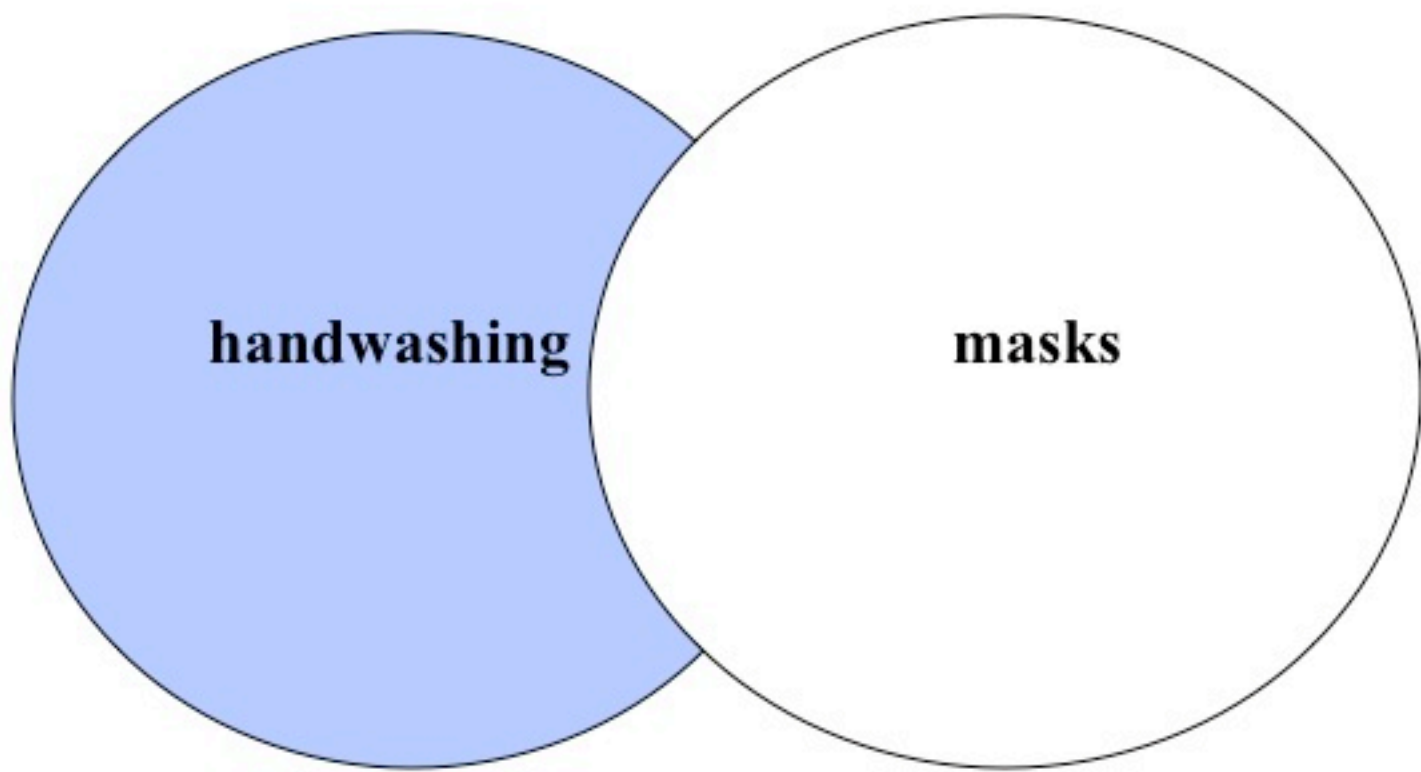
- **AND**

- 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.)





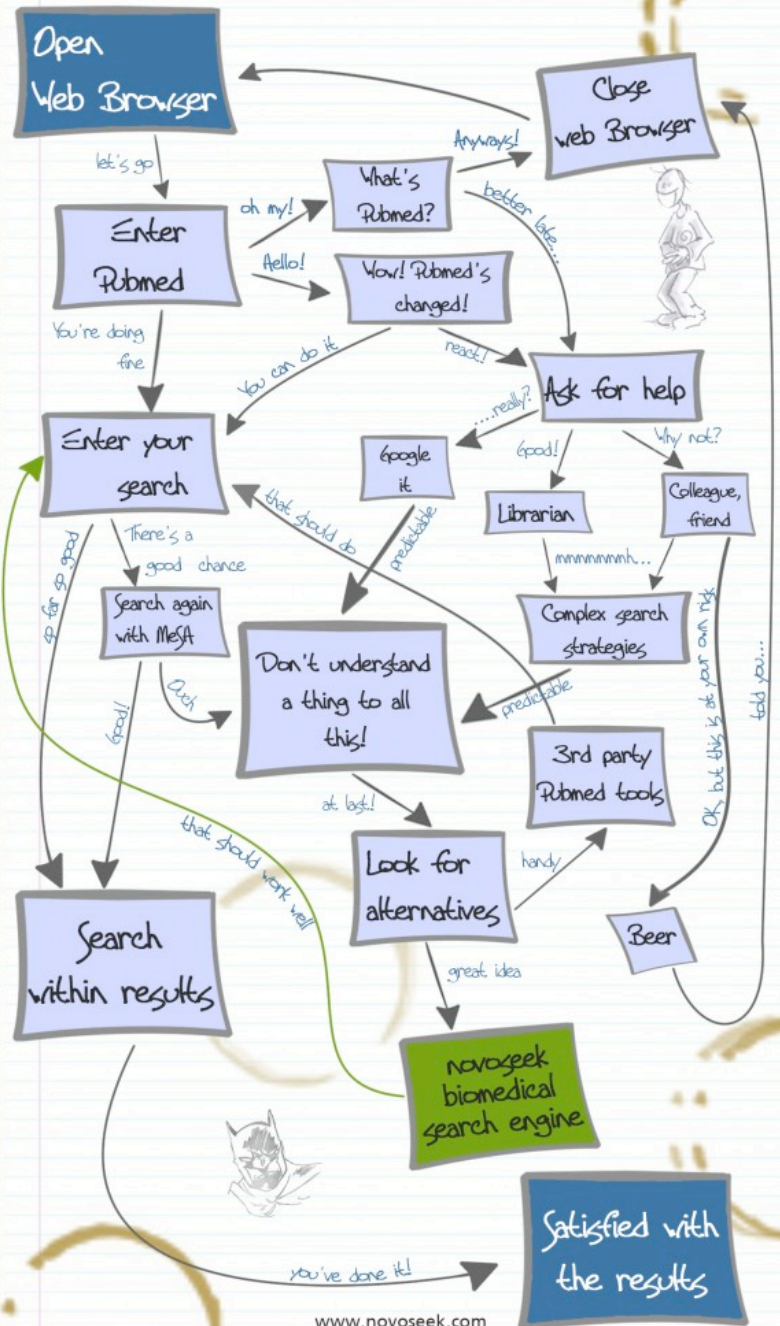
**NOT**

# Searching medical journals

- PUBMED

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

What's your path to successful searches in Pubmed?





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.](#)

Infection Control Unit, Hôpital Henri Mondor, Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, Créteil, France. [emmanuelle.girou@hmn.ap-hop-paris.fr](mailto:emmanuelle.girou@hmn.ap-hop-paris.fr)

**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 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. **CONCLUSIONS:** 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

# 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*?

# 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?

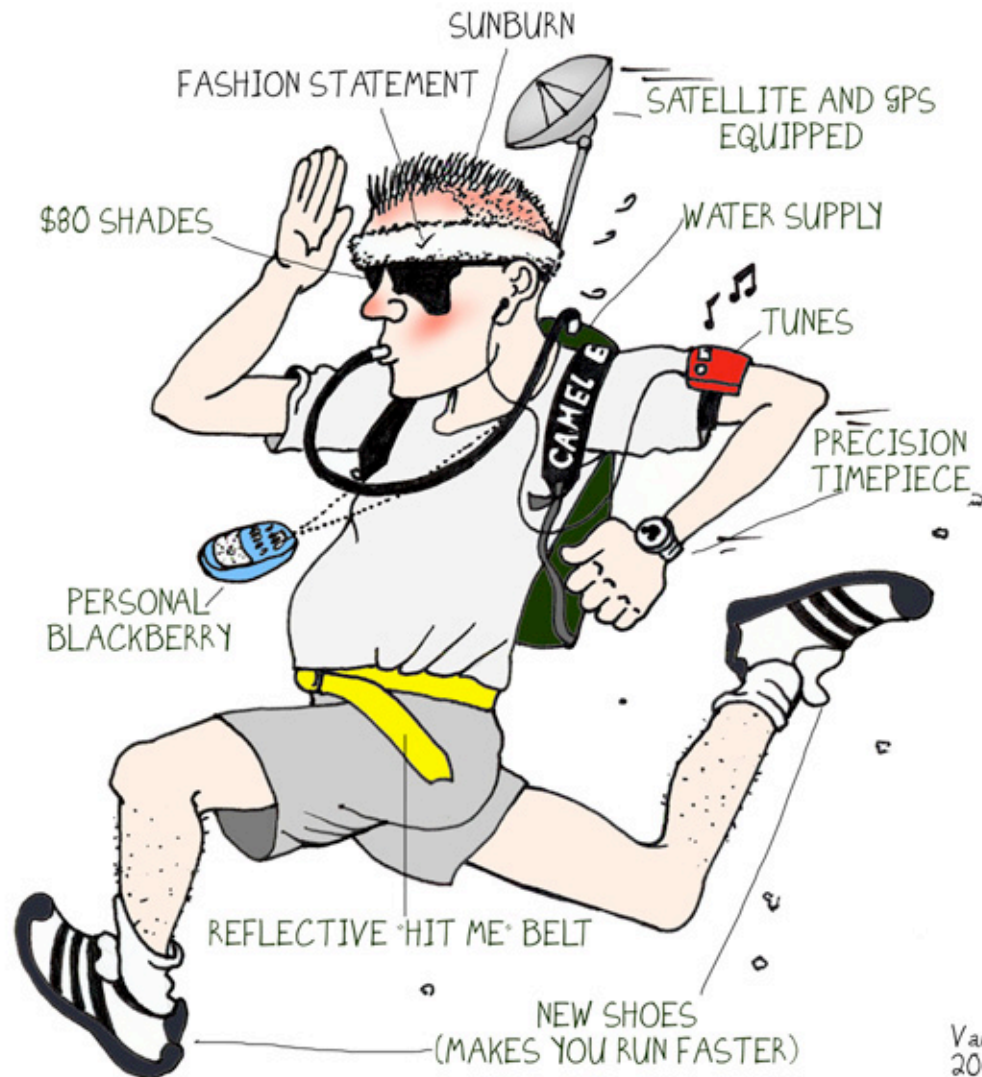




So now, take care of yourself



# Get Fit Dude



Vance  
2003