CINAHL

CINAHL offers complete coverage of English-language nursing journals and publications from the National League for Nursing and the American Nurses’ Association. The database covers nursing, biomedicine, health sciences librarianship, consumer health and 17 allied health disciplines, and contains over 1,200 nursing journals and publications dating back to 1982.

It has over 250,000 records and abstracts for over 250 journals, including over 450 author-supplied abstracts. In addition to journals it includes books and book chapters, dissertations, selected conference proceedings, standards of practice, pamphlets, educational software packages and audiovisual material.

The aim of this workbook is to help you to find references in CINAHL. After working through this sheet you should be able to:

- Sign on to CINAHL
- Search by subject heading and keyword
- Combine and limit searches
- Focus searches
- Select, print and email references
- Find full-text journal articles

Always read these notes and the screen carefully as you work through the exercises.

Comments and queries: If you have any queries following the workshop, or any suggestions for how it could be improved please contact the Medical Sciences Liaison Team, ext. 87550 or e-mail medliaison@ncl.ac.uk.
Exercise 1  Accessing CINAHL

1.1 To login to CINAHL
Go to the University Library homepage at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/
In the LibrarySearch box, type CINAHL
Click on Online Access
Go to Resource available at: under View Online
Click on CINAHL (EBSCO)

Exercise 2  Searching CINAHL

Let’s look at a question:
What information has been published about dementia?

2.1 Search
Click in the search box to begin.
Type the word dementia then click on Search (you can choose it from a drop down menu if offered)
CINAHL matches (or maps) this term to its list of subject headings.
Click on Dementia
CINAHL now shows you the tree structure of the subject index, with broader and narrower terms. We want articles on all aspects of dementia so we want to include all the narrower terms in our search. CINAHL calls this exploding.

2.2 Exploding a search term
Ensure that there is a tick in the box next to dementia and also a tick in the box to the right, under the Explode heading.
Now click on Search database to the right.
You are returned to the original search screen and the results of your search appear listed for you.
‘Make a note of the number of results.’
2.3 Looking at the results of your search
We will look at the first few references.
Click on the title of the first result in your list.
The references give you all the information you may need about the result – title, authors, affiliation, and bibliographic information so that you can retrieve it.
Click on Result List to return to the search page.

Exercise 3  Focusing your search term
Let’s find articles in which your topic is a key element.
Subject headings can be major or minor - Focus restricts your search to articles where your search terms are 'major'.
What information has been published on dementia?
We have already searched for dementia and our result list was very long. This is because the results also contain the subject heading dementia, regardless of whether it is the major topic of the article or not. We can use the focus function to just search for items which have our chosen term as a major topic.

3.1 Search for the term
Click in the search box to begin. Click Clear to clear the contents.
Type the word dementia then click on Search.
CINAHL matches (maps) this term to its list of subject headings.
Click on Dementia
Explode the term as you did before, but this time, also put a tick in the Major concept column.
Click on Search database.
Note the number of results and compare it to your first, unfocused, search for dementia. There should be a lot fewer. This function helps you to refine your search.

Exercise 4  Combining Searches
Let’s look at the question:
What evidence is there that toys can be useful for dementia sufferers?
There are several elements to this question and it is good practice to break it down into those elements before you begin your search. The following example shows you how you might want to do that:

Subject 1 is *Dementia*
Subject 2 is *Toys*

We have already searched for dementia, so now we will carry out a search for the toys concept of our question.

Click *Clear* to clear the search box and type in *toys* and click *Search*.

CINAHL uses a controlled vocabulary to add articles to the database – each article is given a series of subject headings which tell us what the article is about. These headings come from a long, hierarchical list -a thesaurus. CINAHL tells us if the term we are using is not in the thesaurus and guides us to use the correct or preferred term.

In this case, it is telling us to use Play and Playthings instead – so we will!

Click on *Play and Playthings* to select it. We can see that we need to explode the term to include *Games* in our search. Put a tick in the box to the left of *Play and Playthings* and tick the *Explode* box. Click on *Search database* to complete the search.

*Combining the search:*
We need to combine these terms to find articles where both terms are present.
Above your search results, click on *Search history*.
We can now see the searches we have already completed. We want to combine these with *AND*.
Tick in the boxes to the left of the focused dementia search and the play and playthings search.
Click on *Search with AND*.
Have a look at the results – do they seem relevant to our search?
Exercise 5  Limiting your search

Sometimes you may want to limit your search to include publication date, document type or publication language.

Let’s limit the range of the previous search to articles published since 2014 in English. If we only wanted to see results published in the last 5 years (for instance) we can limit our search accordingly.

To the left of your results is a column called Refine Results. About halfway down is a sliding scale where you can adjust the publication date however, if you click on Show more… under this, you will be shown a menu with many more refining options. Do this now.

In the Published date box, enter 2014 as your first date and 2019 as your end date. Scroll down to the Language section and select English.

Scroll to the top and select Search.

Your results set is now showing items published since 2014 and in English.

Exercise 6  Search by keyword

Sometimes subject searching does not work satisfactorily as CINAHL cannot ‘map’ your search to something useful. This is when a Keyword search should be used.

Let’s look at what has been published recently about cats.

6.1 Keyword Search

Click Clear to clear the search box. In the top left hand corner of the screen, take the tick out of the Suggest subject terms box.

Enter the term cat (not CATS) and Search.

CINAHL is unable to map this to a useful Subject Heading so it looks for this term in the titles and abstracts of the references contained on the database. This is called a keyword search.

You will see the results of your search. Make a note of the number of your results.
6.2 Truncating a keyword

In the search box enter the term cat* and search for this as a keyword. This search will find articles containing the terms cat, cats, catty etc.

Again, CINAHL is unable to map this to a useful Subject Heading, and tries to suggest alternatives. Scroll down to the end of the list of the subjects and you will see cat* Search as keyword. Put a tick in the box to the left to select it, and click on Search Database.

How has this affected the results of your search?

This is called truncation, and the asterisk (*) is the truncation operator in CINAHL.

Exercise 7 Selecting and emailing/printing records

CINAHL allows you to select references you are interested in and email them to yourself.

Display the references from your last search. View your results

7.1 Mark records

Click on the blue folder to the right of several results to select them. They will change to yellow folders. Do this for about four results.

On the right, you will see a box named Folder has items. Click on Go to Folder view.

You will see you have the option to print, email or export them to yourself on the right. You will need to select the ones you require by clicking in the boxes to the left of the results or Select all at the top of the list.

Click on Back to return to the main search page.
Exercise 8    Locating documents

You will need to find out whether the reference you require is held in Newcastle University Library in print and/or via electronic journal subscriptions.

8.1 Electronic journal collection

The following reference should appear in the search results of your previous search for cat*:


Click on the Find at Newcastle link for this reference.

You will see from the next page that this article is available in full text via KB+ JISC Collections Elsevier ScienceDirect Freedom Collection 2017-2021. Click on this link.

You will now be taken to the publisher's website and, by clicking on the PDF link, to the full text article.

8.2 Saving full text articles

If you want to save the full text of an article you must do so when you have the full text document open on screen.

We will save the reference you are currently looking at.

Save the pdf as you would any other type of file:

In Google Chrome, there is a Download button at the top-right corner of the screen.
In Internet Explorer, click on the Save Icon on the top-left.

Close the pdf and other screens until you are back at the CINAHL window.
Close CINAHL by clicking the Exit link in the top right hand corner, or try a search of your own.

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