



## CINAHL and the Research Question

As a nurse or allied health professional, you are faced with the challenge of effectively searching the medical literature in support of patient care and other research needs. This glossary will assist you in using and understanding CINAHL in order to perform quality literature searches.

Clinical question -- Example:

“Is kangaroo care a beneficial intervention with mothers having breast feeding difficulties?”

Searching the Medical Literature  Tools & Commands

<b>CINAHL</b>	The Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health (CINAHL) database provides authoritative coverage of the literature related to nursing and allied health. Virtually all English-language publications are indexed along with the publications of the American Nurses Association and the National League for Nursing. Primary journals are indexed from the following allied health fields: cardiopulmonary technology, physical therapy, emergency service, physician assistant, health education, radiologic technology, medical/laboratory, technology therapy, medical assistant, social service/health care, medical records, surgical technology and occupational therapy. There are more than 7000 records with full text now included and 1200 records with images. The database also provides access to healthcare books, nursing dissertations, selected conference proceedings, standards of professional practice, educational software and audiovisual materials.
<b>Indexing</b>	Before a citation enters the database the article is analyzed by professional indexers who identify various criteria contained in the article and determine the subject content and emphasis of the article.
<b>Subject Headings</b>	Provided by the indexers as a controlled vocabulary, the subject headings serve to assist you in accessing the medical literature. "Breast cancer," "breast carcinoma," and "breast tumor" are not subject headings but are nearly synonymous. They are all indexed under or <b>mapped</b> to BREAST NEOPLASMS. There is a 70% overlap between CINAHL and MEDLINE's Medical Subject Headings (MeSH).
<b>Scope Notes</b>	In order to verify the interpretation of a term, when it came into use, determine previous indexing, and other cross-references, you must consult the Scope Notes.
<b>Keywords</b>	Terms found in the title and/or abstract. Used to increase retrieval, but not meant to replace subject heading searching if an appropriate subject heading exists. Include synonyms when using keywords.
<b>Explode</b>	To increase retrieval or to make retrieval more comprehensive. Explode allows for the inclusion of all narrower terms. By "exploding" one or more branches of terms and entire class of drugs or more specific related concepts are included.
<b>Limits</b>	Male, female, research and review articles are just a few of the categorical limits that may be applied to a search. To review all of the limits, select the Limit option.

**Librarian Searchers:** There are databases in addition to CINAHL. If you find little or no information in CINAHL, consult a Public Services Librarian, located on the basement level of the Library, call 263-8483, or request information through email at [searchwk@library.med.nyu.edu](mailto:searchwk@library.med.nyu.edu).