

MEDLINE and the Research Question

This glossary will assist you in using and understanding MEDLINE in order to perform quality literature searches.

Clinical question -- Example:

"In elderly type 2 diabetic patients with normal blood pressure, what is the role of ace inhibitors?"

Searching the Medical Literature  Tools & Commands

Indexing	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. Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) are then applied and added to the database for each citation.
MeSH Subject Headings	Provided by the indexers as a controlled vocabulary, the subject headings serve to assist you in accessing the medical literature. "Breast cancer," "breast carcinoma," or "breast tumor" are not subject headings but are nearly synonymous. They are all indexed under or mapped to BREAST NEOPLASMS.
Scope Notes	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.
Keywords	Terms found in the title and/or abstract. Used to increase retrieval, but not meant to replace MeSH (subject heading) searching if a MeSH term exists. Include synonyms when using keywords.
Explode	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.
Limits	Language, human or animal studies, age groups, publication years, 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 MEDLINE. If you find little or no information in MEDLINE, 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