**PUBMED SEARCH TIPS**

**ACCESSING PUBMED**

- OUHSC faculty, students, and staff can access PubMed both on and off campus by clicking on the PubMed link in the Resources section on the Bird Library’s home page (http://library.ouhsc.edu)
- Accessing PubMed through the library’s home page provides more seamless integration of the library’s subscriptions directly in the PubMed interface; look for the **HSC Full Text Options** link in each PubMed record
- Access to PubMed is also available by going directly to [http://pubmed.gov](http://pubmed.gov)

**BASIC SEARCH**

- Identify your key search concepts, enter the terms into the search box, and then press enter or click search
- To see how PubMed interpreted and processed your search, consult the **Search details** box displayed on the right hand side of the results page; click the **See more...** link for further information

**AUTHOR SEARCHING**

- Enter the author’s last name followed by initials in the search box; omit punctuation
- Click Advanced to use the search builder, and then select Author from the All Fields menu; includes an autocomplete feature
- If you only know the author’s last name, use the author search field tag [au], e.g., smith[au]

**SEARCHING BY JOURNAL NAME**

- Enter the full or abbreviated journal title in the search box
- Click Advanced to use the search builder, and then select Journal from the All Fields menu; includes an autocomplete feature

**SEARCHING FOR A SPECIFIC CITATION**

- **Citation Sensor** – type pieces of your citation in the search box, e.g., author names, journal title, publication date and/or article title to see results that contain those elements
- **Single Citation Matcher** – provides a fill in the blank format to find citations; available on the PubMed home page

**IDENTIFYING MEDICAL SUBJECT HEADINGS (MeSH)**

- Select the **MeSH Database** from the PubMed home page to find MeSH terms
- MeSH is the controlled vocabulary used to index articles for the MEDLINE database
- Each MeSH Database record typically includes the definition of the MeSH term, year of entry, information about previous indexing, related MeSH terms, synonyms, and broader/narrower terms
- Some search features are also provided in the MeSH Database record:
  - **Subheadings** – can be used to narrow the focus of your search by emphasizing a particular aspect; options will vary depending upon your selected MeSH term and multiple subheadings can be applied
  - **Restrict to MeSH Major Topic** checkbox - makes it easy to narrow your retrieval to only those documents in which your selected MeSH term is considered to be a major point in the article
  - **Do not include MeSH terms found below this term...** checkbox - makes it easy to exclude results indexed with any narrower terms included underneath your selected MeSH term
- PubMed searches can be built and executed from within the MeSH Database using the search builder
OTHER SEARCH TOOLS & SHORTCUTS

- **Filters** – can be applied to make your retrieval even more relevant to your needs
  - Filters are displayed on the left hand side of every page of results
  - Use filters to narrow your results by article types, publication dates, species, languages, ages, etc.; you may need to click on **Customize** to see all available choices within a category
  - Click on **Show Additional Filters** to see more options; keep in mind that only valid filter options for a result set will display in the sidebar

- **Field Specific Searching**
  - Use the PubMed search box to search for terms in a specific field by entering the appropriate field tag in square brackets following the term

- **Advanced Search Builder** – click on Advanced under the PubMed search box to:
  - View, download, or clear your search history
  - Access indexes, conduct field specific searches, and apply Boolean operators

KEEP IN MIND...

- Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) entered in the PubMed search box should be in UPPER CASE letters
- If no Boolean operator is entered between search terms PubMed applies the AND operator which returns results that contain all of your search terms
- The truncation symbol in PubMed is the asterisk (*), however, using truncation in PubMed to account for variations in a word stem turns off automatic term mapping
- Using double quotations around search terms also turns off automatic term mapping

TIPS FOR BROADENING OR NARROWING YOUR SEARCH (In Basic Search mode)

- **To broaden your search:**
  - Select a relevant citation and look for the **Related citations** section in the right hand side; click **“See all”**
  - Remove extraneous or specific terms from the search box
  - Try using alternative terms to describe the concepts you are searching

- **To narrow or focus your search:**
  - Replace general terms with more specific terms (e.g., search for low back pain instead of back pain)
  - Add additional terms to your search
  - Use the sidebar filters to restrict your results by publication dates, article types, etc.

ADDITIONAL TOOLS (Available from the PubMed home page)

- **Clinical Queries** – ideally suited for clinically oriented searches, this specialized portal to PubMed allows users to search by a clinical study category, find systematic reviews, and run medical genetics searches
- **Journals in NCBI Databases** – search with a full or abbreviated journal title to locate details about indexed publications
- **Topic Specific Queries** – provides easy access to specialized search queries including Comparative Effectiveness Research and Healthy People 2020
- **MyNCBI** – create a personal account to access additional functionality like saving searches and results, selecting additional filter options, displaying format preferences, setting up email alerts, etc.

HELP

- See the **Using PubMed** section available at the bottom of the PubMed home page for links to FAQs, tutorials, etc.
- Review the Bird Library’s **Searching in PubMed** LibGuide ([http://libguides.ouhsc.edu/pubmed](http://libguides.ouhsc.edu/pubmed))
- Contact an OUHSC Librarian using the Ask a Librarian link available on the library’s home page, by phone (405-271-2285), or by email ([bird-reference@ouhsc.edu](mailto:bird-reference@ouhsc.edu))