Medline, CINAHL, Psychology & Behavioural Sciences Collection

EBSCO host

Abridged Version

Accessing Databases

Go to the **Library website**

library.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk

Click on **Resources**

Followed by **Databases**

Select the **database** to wish to access. Choose from:

- Medline
- CINAHL
- Psychology & Behavioural Sciences Collection

You will be prompted to sign in using your **NHS Athens account.** If you don't have an account, you can register here **openathens.nice.org.uk**

Creating a Personal EBSCO Account

To enable full functionality (save searches and results) and allow access to your Folder (previous searches etc.), click the **Sign In** link on the top bar. You will automatically be signed in through Athens authentication.

Sign In | 📁 Folder | Preferences | Languages ▾ | Help | Exit
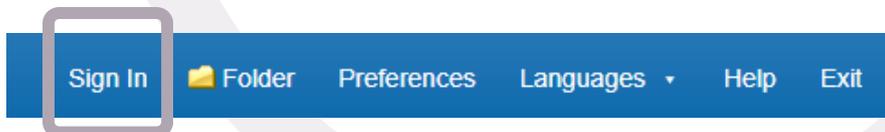
Planning Your Search

It is useful to think about **exactly** what you're looking for before you begin inputting your terms. This will ensure that you find relevant and appropriate information

- **What type of patient/population are you looking at?**

- **Are you using a specific test or intervention, or a broad group?**

- **If you are looking for better outcomes, what are examples of those outcomes?**

Searching for Keywords

The default setting is for the **Advanced Search** option. This allows your search to be much more specific

You can now start entering your search terms in the fields

Note: * is used as a wildcard to truncate a word eg. clinic*
**For American /British spelling you can use the # symbol: p#ediatric, colo#r, etc.**

Remember to think about....
Synonymous terms
Potential alternative spellings (e.g. American)
Singular and plurals

Make sure the **Suggest Subject Terms** box is unticked
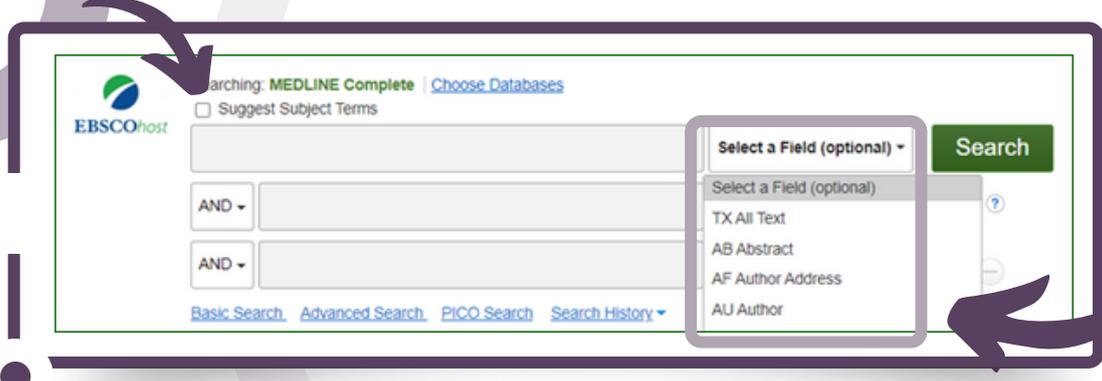
You can choose which **fields** to search by using the drop-down menus

If you want to search more than one specific field, for example, **Title** and **Abstract**, you need to search for these on separate rows using **OR**
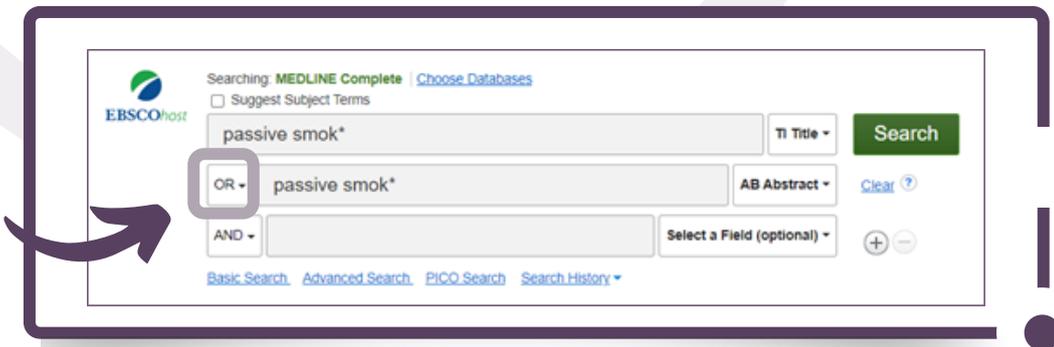
Note that EBSCO may suggest **similar concepts** which may be useful as you type. These can be selected by **clicking** on them

Your search will generate a **results line** for your search concept

Repeat steps for **ALL** keyword concepts

Searching for Subject Terms

When doing a comprehensive literature search you want to search for **keywords AND subject headings** (also referred to as a Thesaurus Search)

- **Subject headings** are what the databases use to index articles

- Because each database uses its own unique subject headings it is important to **search each database individually and one at a time**

Make sure the **Suggest Subject Terms** box is ticked

Type in the **subject headings** you want to search for and click **Search**

The thesaurus may have *exactly* what you're looking for, or offer suggestions to other subjects .....have a go at searching for **alternative terms** too

Click on the relevant **heading** if there is one

If we want to make certain the term is appropriate, we can click on the **Scope Note** to see if it is relevant for our search

The database will also give you options to apply **EXPLODE** or **MAJOR CONCEPT** to the term selected

These options can **widen** OR **narrow** the search

If we select the **TERM ITSELF** the database will bring up results where your term is used both as a major *and* minor focus, so it will be **broader**

Selecting **MAJOR CONCEPT** will bring up results where your term is more of a key element, so fewer but potentially more focussed results
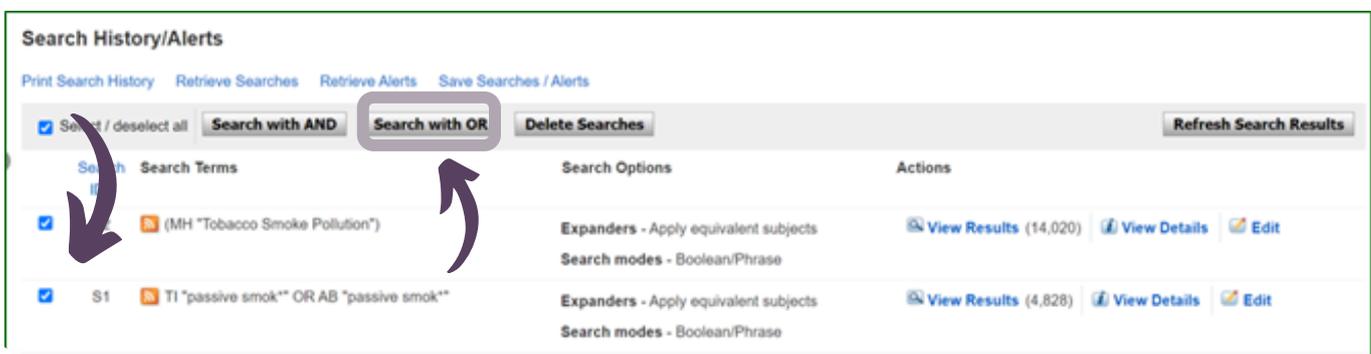
If we click **EXPLODE** the database will bring up results from that term and everything indented after it in its index tree, so a broader result

To see how the term explodes you can click on the term itself to see where it sits within its index tree

Combining Search Terms and Subject Headings

To get the best results, you should **COMBINE** the Search Term searches *and* the Subject Heading searches you have done previously

Select the **line numbers** you want to combine

Then click **Search with OR**

Repeat steps for ALL keyword concepts

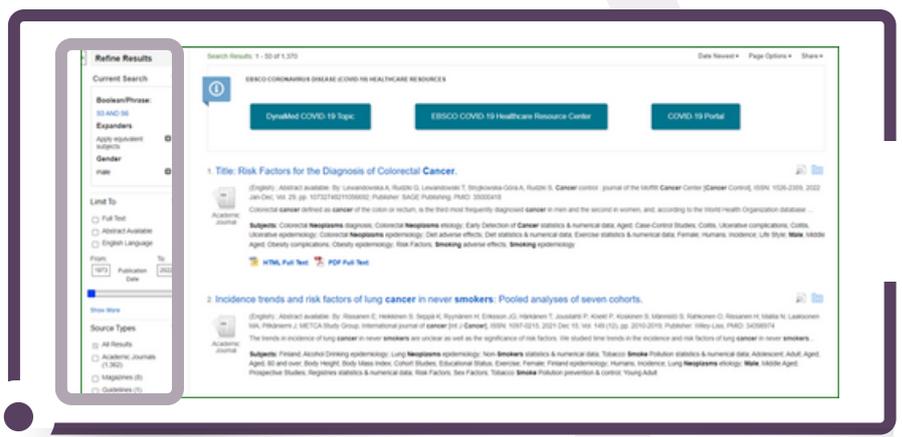Searching each subject **individually** and then **JOINING** your searches will ensure the best results
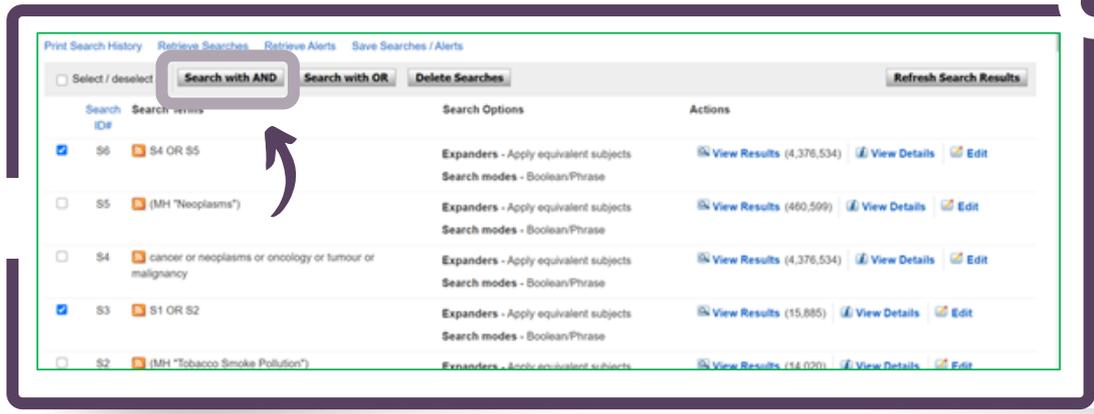
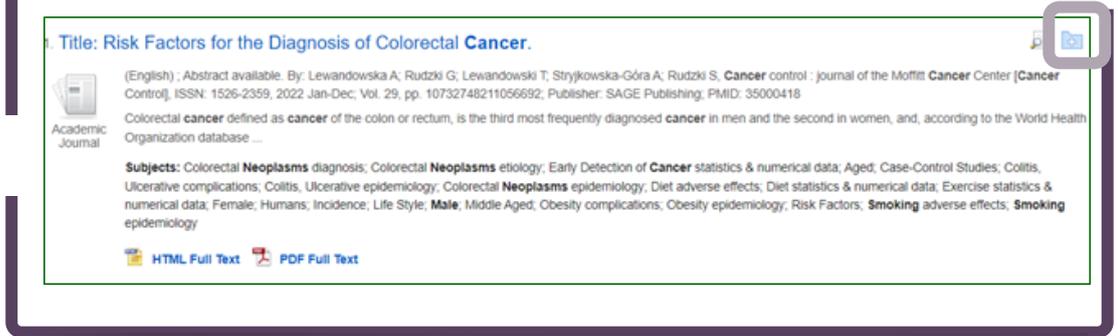Once you have searched all your concepts, combine them using **Search with AND**

● Limiting Your Results

You can reduce your results further by using the **LIMIT** function

On the results page, you can limit your results by **publication date**, **language**, **gender** etc.
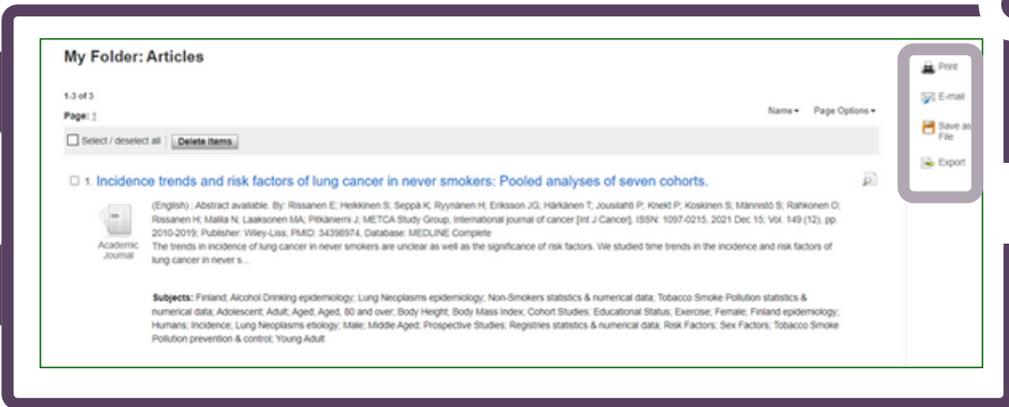

● Filtering & Saving Results

You can save individual results by clicking the **folder icon** next to the result you wish to save

Click on the **FOLDER** Icon at the top of the page to access your saved article

It is a good idea to create **individual subfolders** if you are saving lots of different topics

Exporting & Printing Results
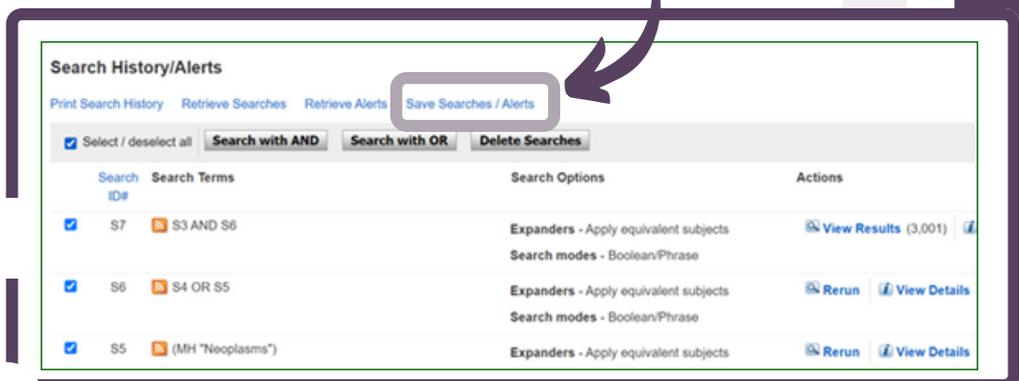
Click on **Folder**

From here you can **PRINT** your results, send them via **EMAIL**, or **EXPORT** to reference management software

Saving Your Searches

As well as saving the results, we highly recommend **saving your search**

Select the search lines and click **Save Searches / Alerts**

Give your search strategy a **name** and add a description if you wish

You can access your saved searches *and* saved results from your Folder

Contact Us & Help

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact us

01704 704202 **(Southport & Ormskirk)**
0151 430 1342 **(Whiston & St Helens)**

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