Medline, Embase, Emcare, HMIC & Social Policy & Practice
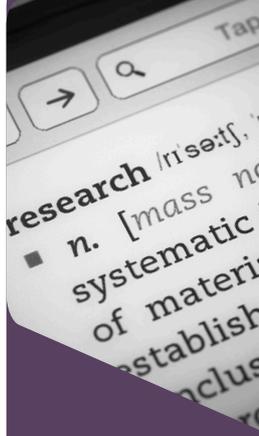
Ovid

Full Guide

LKS

NHS
Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Searching for Evidence using Ovid

Ovid is a search platform that enables you to search a variety of medical databases
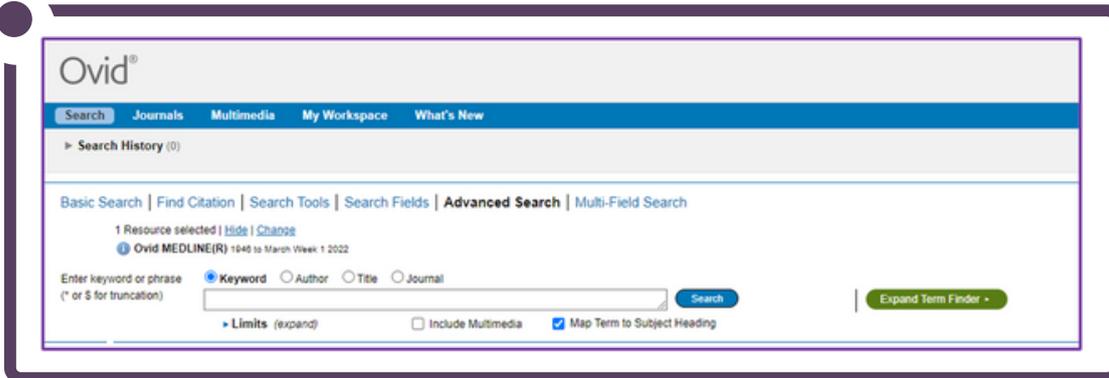
Databases that you can search with Ovid:

MEDLINE

The largest medical database. Produced by the US National Library of medicine it contains millions of citations from thousands of **biomedical** and **life science journals**. It covers allied health specialties, dentistry, nursing, medicine, pre-clinical sciences

Embase

The Excerpta Medica database (**Embase**), is a major biomedical and pharmaceutical database indexing over 3,500 international journals in the following fields. Although it has a large cross over with MEDLINE, Embase is more European and pharmacology focussed

Emcare

The **Emcare** database is a database encompassing nursing and allied health topics. It has nearly 5 million records dating back to 1995 and includes a comprehensive scope of international content

HMIC

The **Health Management Information Consortium** database is a compilation of data from the database of the Department of Health's Library and Information and from the King's Fund. It includes, articles, books, pamphlets, government reports, and a wide range of grey literature on health service policy, management and administration, with an emphasis on the British National Health Service

Social Policy & Practice

Social Policy and Practice represents an important source of evidence-based social science research for policy-makers, practitioners, educators and students working within economic and social development, social administration, social services, and care management

Accessing Ovid

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
- Embase
- Emcare
- HMIC
- Social Policy & Practice

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 Ovid Account

You will need your own Ovid account in order to be able to save your search and your search results.

To create your Ovid account, click on **My Account** on the top right of the Ovid search page
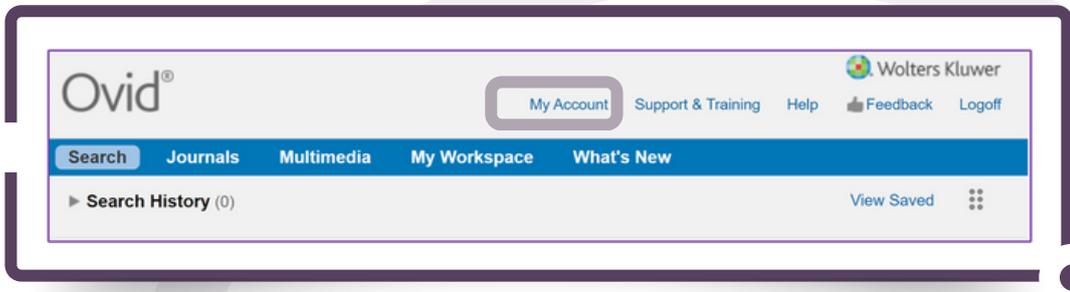
And then select **Create Account** on the right of the screen

If you already have an Ovid account you can log in at the page, entering your account name and password in the relevant boxes and then click on **Login**
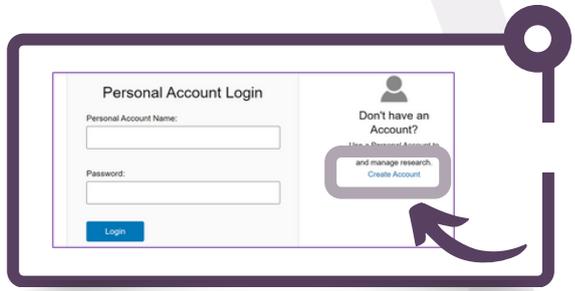
Questions and Concepts

It is important that you have a **clear idea of your question** before you start to search – what you get out of a database search is only as good as the question you put in.

The first thing to do is to identify the **key concepts or keywords** within your research question

Pick our your **main concepts**

What are the most **important** aspects of your search?

This will ensure you do not miss out on any important information or research. These keywords will become the **basis** of your search strategy

It may be helpful to frame your research topic as a **question**, with a question mark at the end

PICO is a framework that can help with this.

PICO is a format for developing a good clinical research question prior to starting your research

It is a mnemonic used to describe the **four elements of a sound clinical question**

P	**Patient or Population**
I	**Intervention or Treatment**
C	**Comparison**
O	**Outcome**
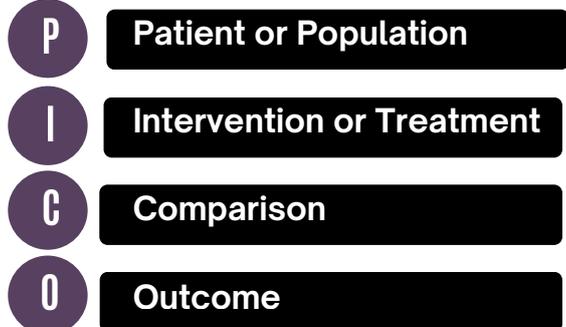
Example: **In patients with osteoarthritis of the knee is hydrotherapy more effective than traditional physiotherapy in relieving pain?**

P	**Patient or Population**	**Osteoarthritis and knee**
I	**Intervention or Treatment**	**Hydrotherapy**
C	**Comparison**	**Physiotherapy**
O	**Outcome**	**Pain relief**

If PICO does not work for your question, other frameworks are available. Find some more here:

https//information-specialists.leeds.ac.uk/information-specialists/search-concept-tools/

Once you have thought of your **question** and **search terms**, consider what **synonyms** and **alternative spellings** or **brand names** there might be for your terms. You will need to search for these too.

Example: aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid, ASA.

Opening the Search History

Before you start your search, click on **Search History** to open it

Carrying out a Thesaurus Search

A **thesaurus** is a list of terms (known as subject headings) that are used to label articles in a database. When you search using the thesaurus you will find **all the articles on the same topic no matter what text words you use**.

For example:

There are many possible phrases that could be used to search for articles on heart attacks, but the MEDLINE subject heading for this condition is **myocardial infarction.** If you were to carry out a thesaurus search on MEDLINE for this subject heading you would find all the articles on this subject regardless of whether they contain the phrase myocardial infarction, heart attack or cardiac arrest etc.

Check that **map term to subject heading** is selected

To carry out a thesaurus search, first type your term into the search box and then click on **Search**

You will then be shown a list of headings that most closely match your search term.

Sometimes this list can be quite long, other times there might only be one term that matches your search. If there is no close match there will be no headings listed – try to think of another term for your subject and try again.

If you cannot find a relevant thesaurus term – carry out a **text word search** instead
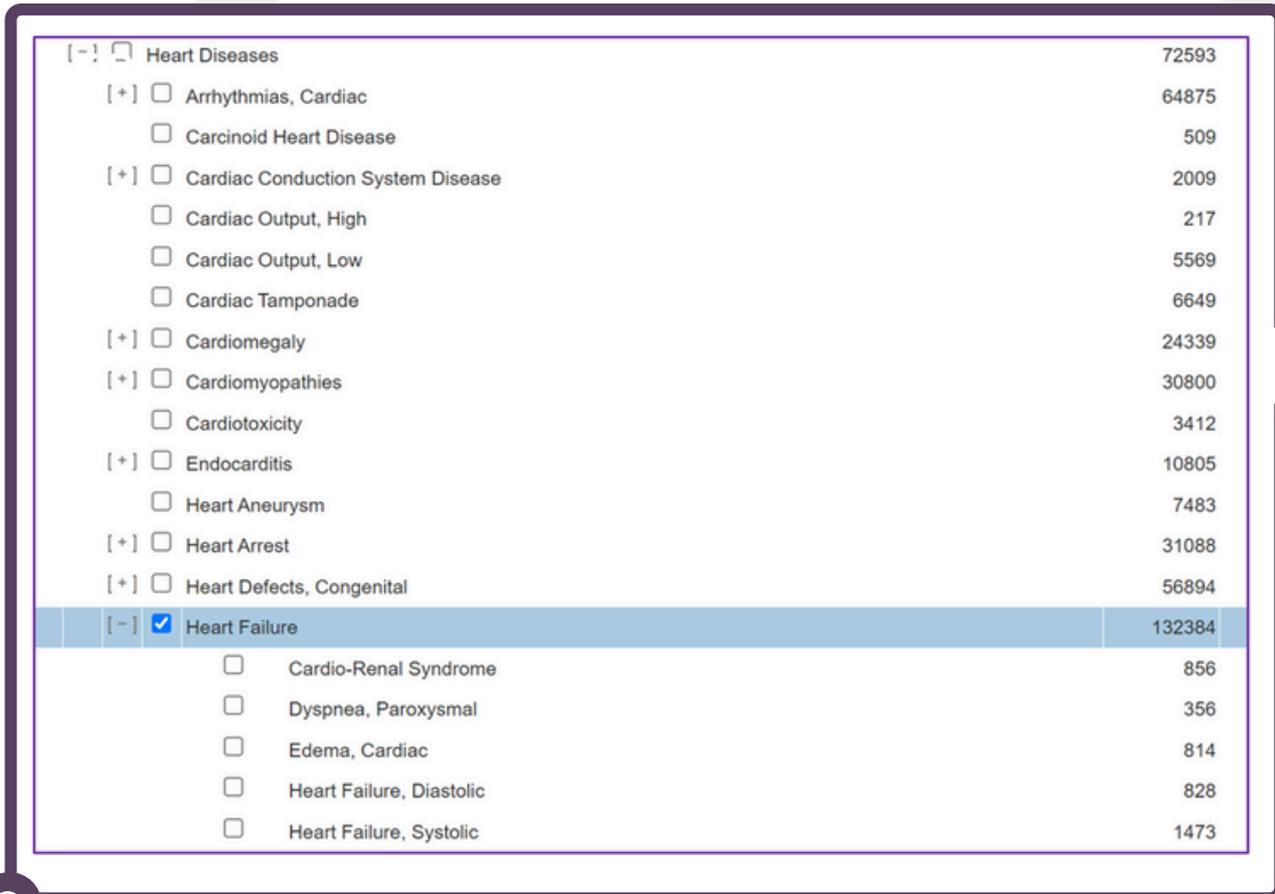
Click on the heading that most closely matches the subject you are searching
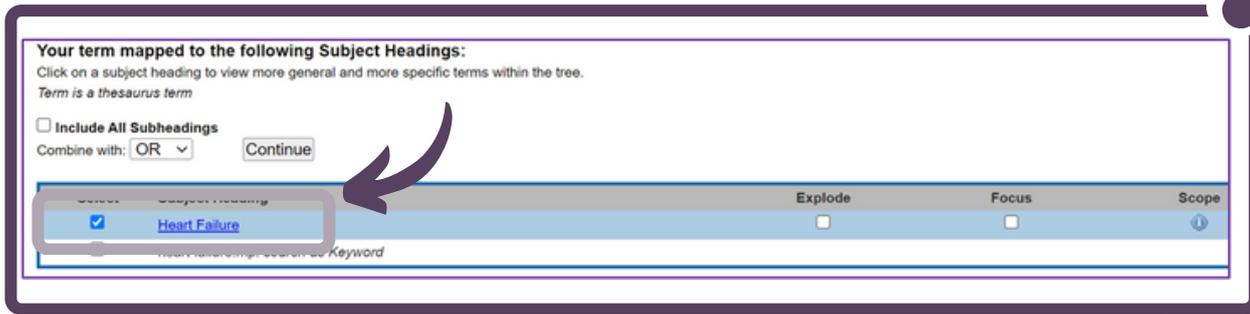
Your term mapped to the following Subject Headings:
Click on a subject heading to view more general and more specific terms within the tree.
Term is a thesaurus term

☐ Include All Subheadings
Combine with: OR ⌄   [Continue]

Select	Subject Heading	Explode	Focus	Scope
☑	Heart Failure	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	*Heart failure.mp. Search as Keyword*			

You will then be taken to a page that shows more detail about the thesaurus term you selected.

For example, on the page below we can see the hierarchy of the various related thesaurus headings. Heart disease is the **broader term,** that we could select if we wanted to also include articles that covered heart disease more generally. We can also see **narrower terms** which we can select to look at more specific types of heart failure

You can see **how many results** you will get by searching each term and if you are not sure if a thesaurus heading is the correct one, you can find out more by clicking on the ⓘ symbol to see the scope notes

[-] ⬛ Heart Diseases	72593
[+] ☐ Arrhythmias, Cardiac	64875
☐ Carcinoid Heart Disease	509
[+] ☐ Cardiac Conduction System Disease	2009
☐ Cardiac Output, High	217
☐ Cardiac Output, Low	5569
☐ Cardiac Tamponade	6649
[+] ☐ Cardiomegaly	24339
[+] ☐ Cardiomyopathies	30800
☐ Cardiotoxicity	3412
[+] ☐ Endocarditis	10805
☐ Heart Aneurysm	7483
[+] ☐ Heart Arrest	31088
[+] ☐ Heart Defects, Congenital	56894
[-] ☑ Heart Failure	132384
☐ Cardio-Renal Syndrome	856
☐ Dyspnea, Paroxysmal	356
☐ Edema, Cardiac	814
☐ Heart Failure, Diastolic	828
☐ Heart Failure, Systolic	1473

Explode and Focus

Explode allows you to expand your search to include additional, more specific terms

Focus will limit your search to only those articles in which the thesaurus term is the main subject of the article

	Subject Heading	Hits	Explode	Focus	Scope Note
☑ Heart Failure		132384	☑	☐	ⓘ
☐	Cardio-Renal Syndrome	856	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Dyspnea, Paroxysmal	356	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Edema, Cardiac	814	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Heart Failure, Diastolic	828	☐	☐	ⓘ

For example:

Selecting **explode** for the thesaurus heading Heart Failure will find all 132384 articles about heart failure in general, as well as all the articles under the headings Cardio-Renal Syndrome; Dyspnea, Paroxysmal; Edema, Cardiac; Heart Failure, Distolic; Heart Failure, Systolic

Note that you can use the Focus and Explode options **at the same time**

Once you are happy with the various options that you have selected, click on **Continue**

Tree for **Heart Failure**   Database: **Ovid MEDI**

Combine with: OR ▽   Continue   Contexts

Scroll down for highlighted search term.

Select Term(s)	Subject Heading	Hits	Explode	Focus	Scope
[+] ☐ Anatomy (Non MeSH)		0	☐	☐	ⓘ

Subheadings

You will now be given the option to restrict your search to **specific subheadings.** You can choose one or more sub heading at a time. Select the subheadings you want by clicking in the box to the left of the heading. If you don't want to restrict your search in this way you do not need to select any

Once you have selected the headings you require, click on **Continue**

Subheadings for: **Heart Failure**

Combine with: OR ▽   Continue

☐ **Include All Subheadings (132384)**

-- or choose one or more of these subheadings --

ⓘ ☐ /bl - Blood (9101)	ⓘ ☐ /lj - Legislation & Jurisprudence (1)
ⓘ ☐ /cf - Cerebrospinal Fluid (4)	ⓘ ☐ /me - Metabolism (9114)
ⓘ ☐ /ci - Chemically Induced (2537)	ⓘ ☐ /mi - Microbiology (123)
ⓘ ☐ /ch - Chemistry (3)	ⓘ ☐ /mo - Mortality (14223)
ⓘ ☐ /cl - Classification (824)	ⓘ ☐ /nu - Nursing (1329)
ⓘ ☐ /co - Complications (15989)	ⓘ ☐ /ps - Parasitology (55)
ⓘ ☐ /cn - Congenital (140)	ⓘ ☐ /pa - Pathology (6088)

Ovid will now run your search and you can see the **number of results** in your search history
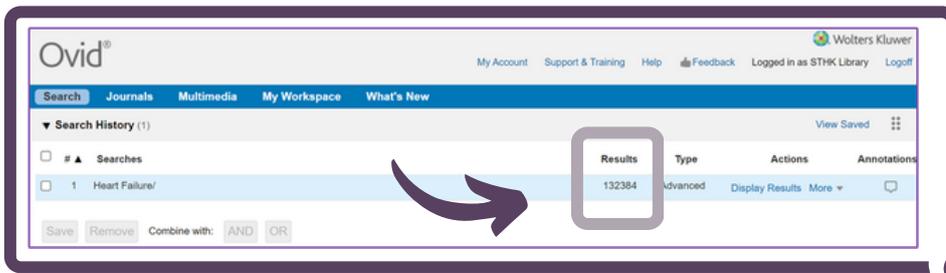

Carrying out a Text Word Search

This is also sometimes referred to as a **keyword search** or **free text search**.

Type in the term you are looking for and Ovid will look for records that include that term. It uses the **exact** term that you type in, so it is important to consider if there are **alternate terms** you should also be searching for. Consider if your term has a**lternative spellings** (anaesthetic, anesthetic) or **synonyms** (stroke, cerebrovascular accident) or **abbreviations** (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ADHD) or brand names (ibuprofen, neurofen).

To carry out a text word search, **type the term you are looking for** into the search box and then click **Search** as you did before for your thesaurus search
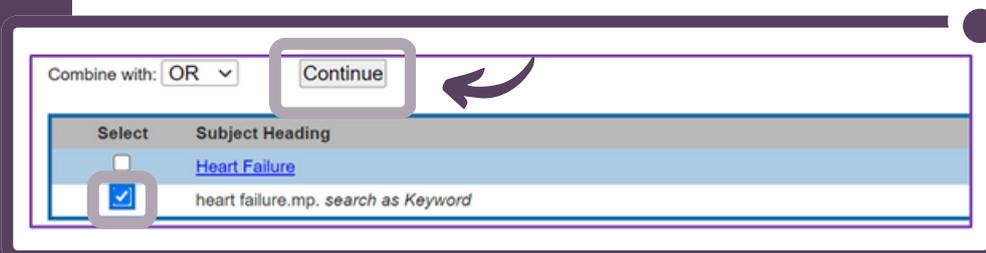
This time, select the **search as keyword** option and then click on **Continue**

Ovid will now run the search and a new search line will be added to your search history
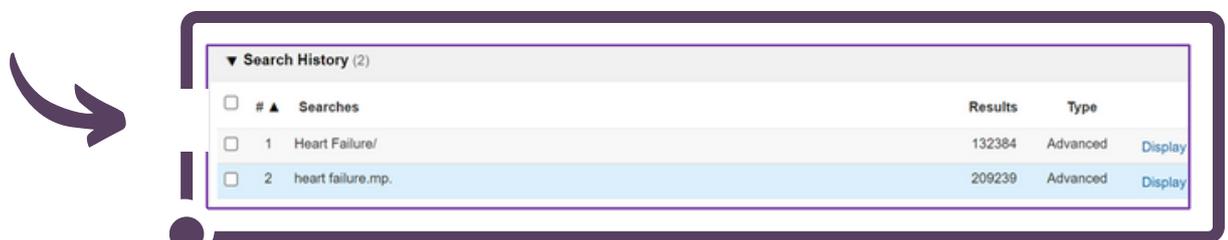
Note that Ovid defaults to **.mp** for keyword searches. This stands for **multi purpose search** and means that Ovid will search in the **Title, Original Title, Abstract, Subject Heading, Name of Substance, and Registry Word** fields
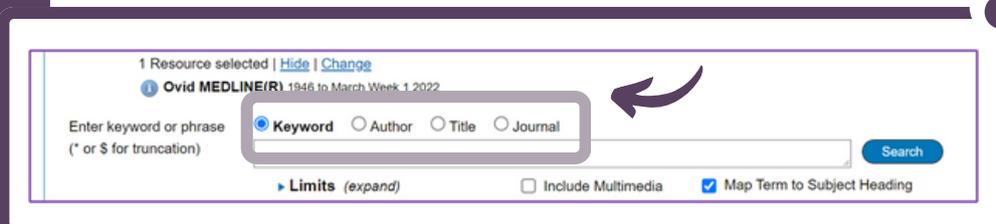
If you would prefer to search in the **title, author** or **journal title** fields you can specify this before you search

Truncation

You can use **truncation** to help the database find various forms of a word/term.

Ovid allows you to use * or **$** for truncation

For example: entering the term **prevent$** (with the **$** or * at the end) into the search box will retrieve results containing prevents, preventative, prevention, preventing etc

And entering the term **wom*n** will retrieve results containing both woman and women

*will work both at the end of a word and in the middle of a word. **$** can only be used at the end of a word.

Combining Your Searches

To retrieve relevant articles you will need to **link** your various searches together. This is done by using **AND** or **OR** (known as Boolean searching)

OR searching broadens a search by looking for either
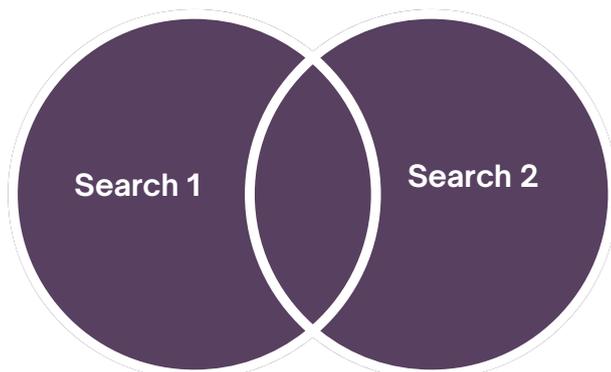
Search 1   Search 2

AND searching narrows a search by only looking for both terms in combination
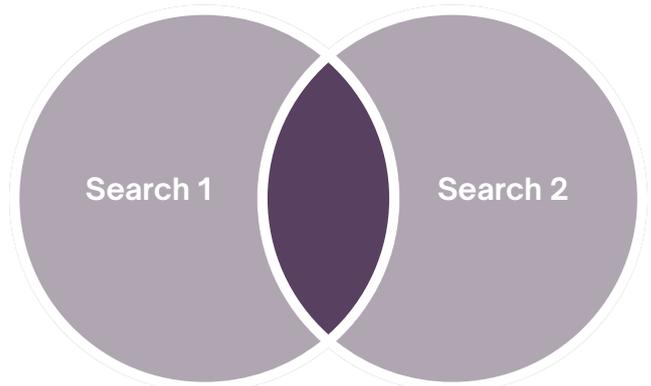
Search 1   Search 2

For example. In the search below, we have searched using the thesaurus heading **anemia, sickle cell** (**Search 1**) and we carried out a keyword search for **penicillin (Search 2)**

We can combine them using **OR,** by **clicking in the box** next to the search lines to be combined and then selecting the **OR** option

▼ Search History (2)				View S
▲	Searches	Results	Type	Actions
☑ 1	Anemia, Sickle Cell/	22701	Advanced	Display Results More ▾
☑ 2	penicillin.mp.	65941	Advanced	Display Results More ▾

Save Remove Combine with: AND OR

This gives us a new set of search results in our search history **(Search 3)**, with 88, 414 articles found

If we were to combine the two searches using **AND** we get only **228** results

Note: If you can't see all your search lines displayed – click on expand.

Limits

If you are getting **too many results**, you can apply limits to narrow your search further. You can apply limits such as **Language, Dates** or **Age Group** to ensure the articles you retrieve are more likely to be relevant

To limit your search, select the search line that you want to apply the limit to and then click on the **limits button** underneath the search box.

You will now be able to see your limit options

Select the options you require and click on **Search**

This will give you a **new search line** in your search history.

By limiting our search to **English Language** only and articles published since 2010 we have gone from 270 results (line 7) to **79 results** (line 8)
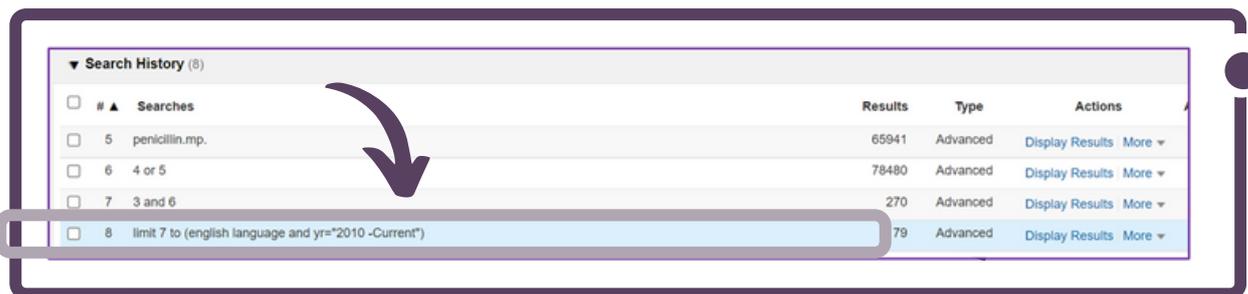
	# ▲	Searches	Results	Type	Actions
☐	5	penicillin.mp.	65941	Advanced	Display Results More ▾
☐	6	4 or 5	78480	Advanced	Display Results More ▾
☐	7	3 and 6	270	Advanced	Display Results More ▾
☐	8	limit 7 to (english language and yr="2010 -Current")	79	Advanced	Display Results More ▾

Saving your Search Strategy

You may want to **save your search strategy**. This is a good idea if it is a search you might want to rerun at a later date or if you need a record of the search strategy to include in the write up of your search

To save your search history select the **Save All** option
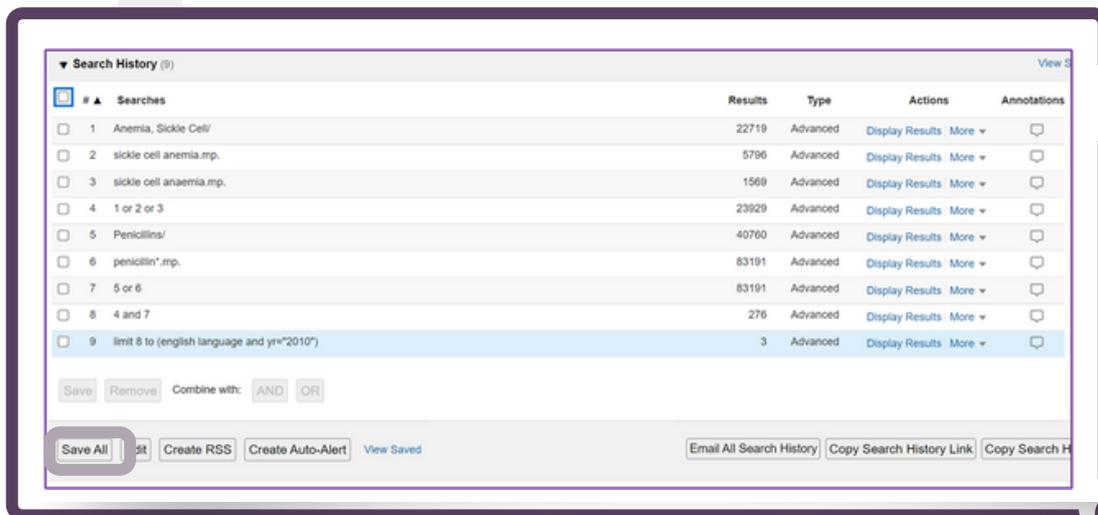
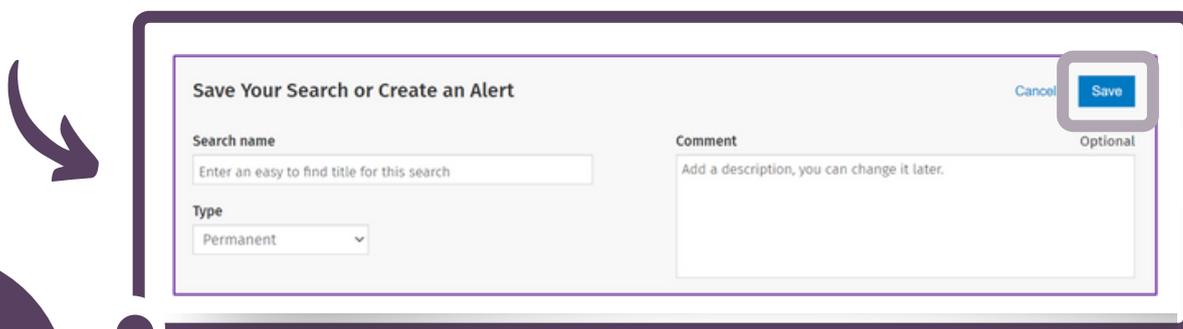|	# ▲	Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations
☐	1	Anemia, Sickle Cell/	22719	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	2	sickle cell anemia.mp.	5796	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	3	sickle cell anaemia.mp.	1569	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	4	1 or 2 or 3	23929	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	5	Penicillins/	40760	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	6	penicillin*.mp.	83191	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	7	5 or 6	83191	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	8	4 and 7	276	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬
☐	9	limit 8 to (english language and yr="2010")	3	Advanced	Display Results More ▾	💬

Save Remove Combine with: AND OR

Save All dit Create RSS Create Auto-Alert View Saved   Email All Search History Copy Search History Link Copy Search H

You will then be prompted to create a **name** for your search. You can choose to save as a permanent search or temporary (which is deleted after 24 hours). You can also use this option to create an **Alert**

Click on **Save** to save your search
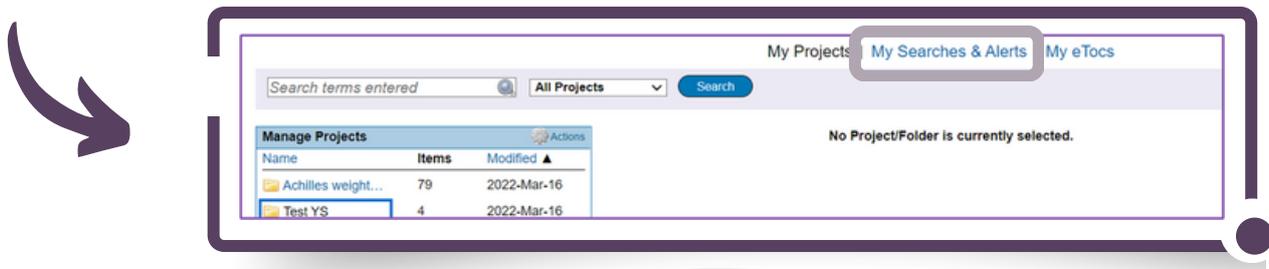
Save Your Search or Create an Alert   Cancel   Save

Search name   Comment   Optional

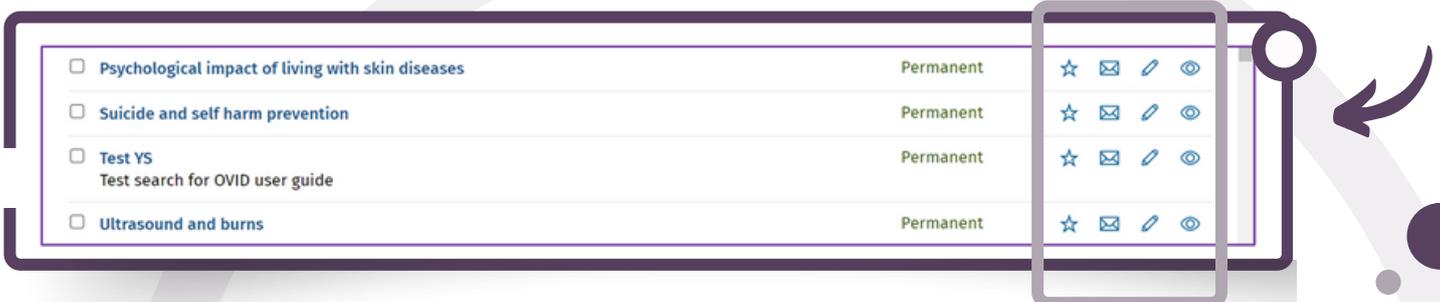Enter an easy to find title for this search   Add a description, you can change it later.
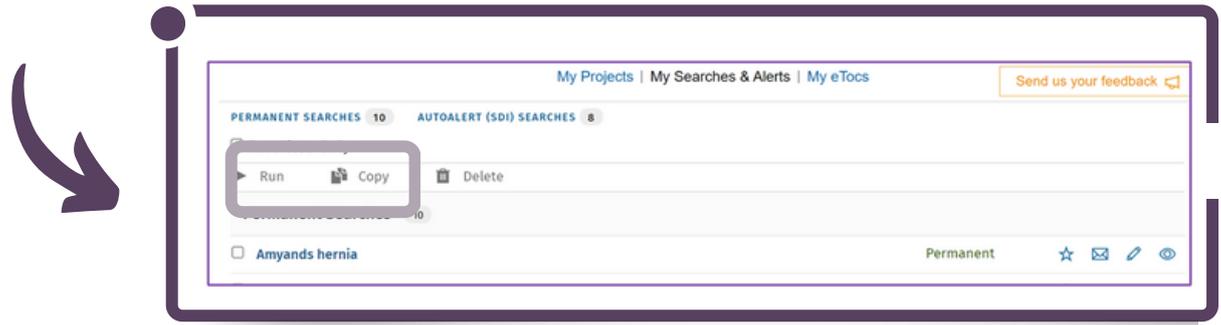
Type

Permanent ⌄

To view your saved searches, go to **My Workspace** and then select **My Searches & Alerts**

From here you can **email** the search history to yourself, **edit** the search history, or **view** it using the icons on the right


Or you can **copy** the search history or **run** the search again using the options at the top of the screen

● Viewing your Results

When you are happy that you have completed all of your search you can look at the **results** that you have found. The results will contain the **citations** for all the articles that Ovid has found. You can **view** the results, **export** them and **save** them in a range of different formats

To view your results, click on **Display Results** for the relevant search line and then scroll down the page where all the results for your selected search line will be displayed
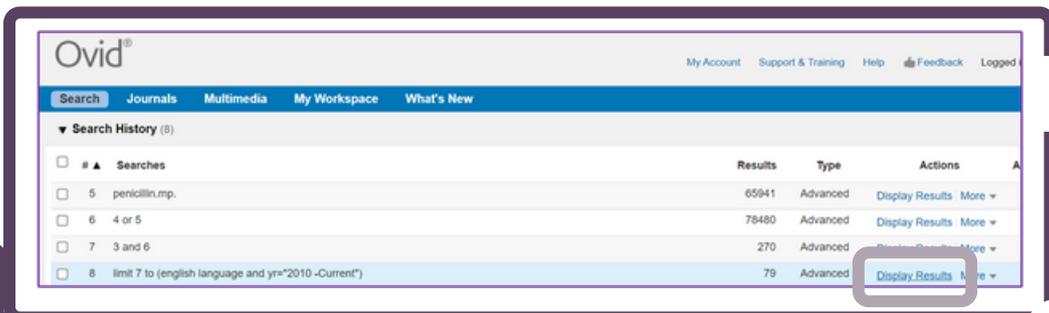
There are a number of options available to you at this point. You can opt to view just the **title**, the **title and citation** or the t**itle, citation and abstract.**

You can also choose **how many results** you would like per page

You will see a **Get Full Text** option next to each article for instant access to the PDF or to a form to request it from the library. You may prefer to **save** your results to review at a later time

To save results, you can **select the records** that you are interested in by clicking in the box next to the title – or if you prefer, you can also tick **All** to select all the results.

If there is more than one page of results you can move onto the next page by clicking on **Next**

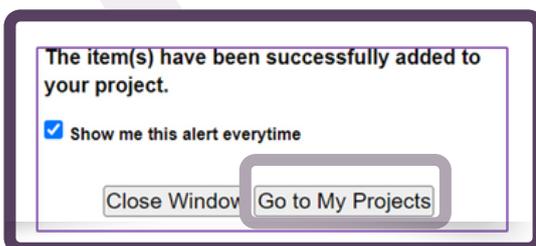# ⬤ Saving your Results

Saving your Results to My Project

Once you have selected all the results that are of interest to you, you will want to create a Project to save them in to

- Click on **My Projects**

- You will then be asked if you want to add it to an **existing project** (you can choose from a dropdown list of projects you have already created) or if you want to **create a new project**

- Create a **name** for your project and you can also add a description if you wish

- Click on **Add Items** to add your selected results to your project

- You can now either return to your search by selecting **Close Window** or you can select **Go to My Projects** to look at your saved results and export them
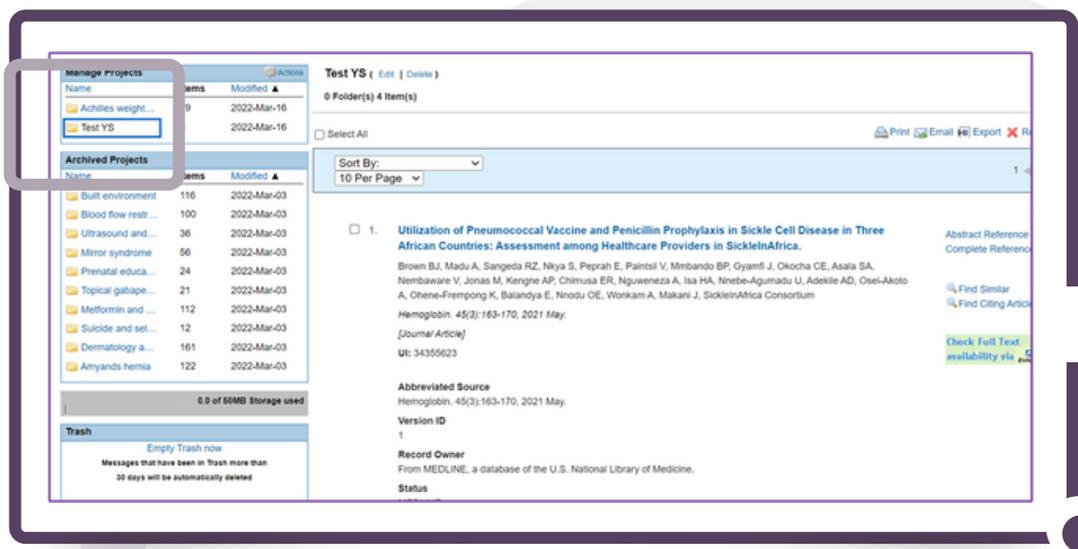

Exporting Your Results

If you select **Go to My Projects** you will be taken straight to your **My Project Page**. If you want to access your 'My Projects' page at a later time, you will need to select **My Workspace** at the top of your screen
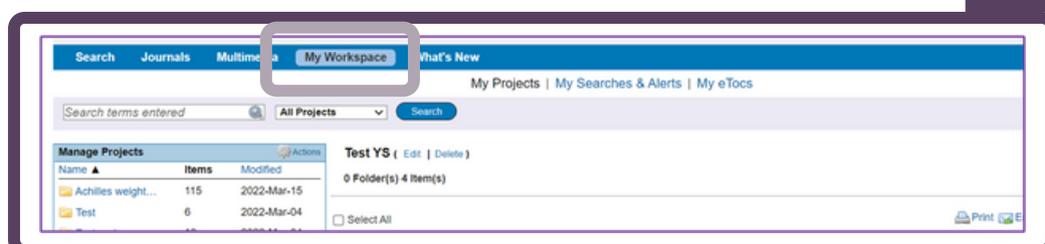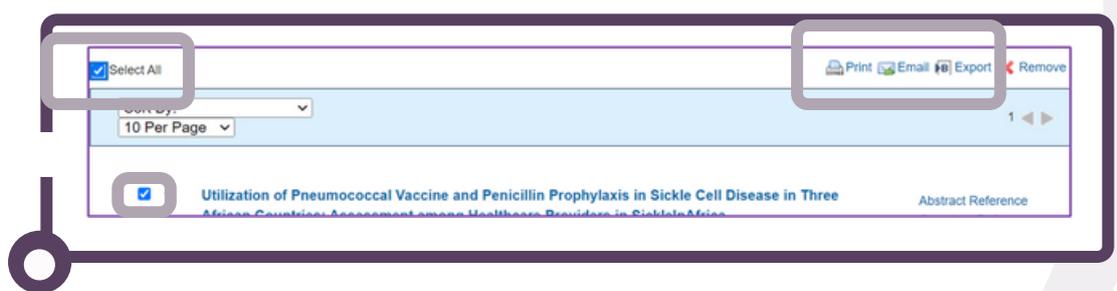
Select the project you wish to use from the **My Projects Menu** on the left of the screen and then select the items you want to export.

You can choose **Select All** if you want to export all the results in that project

And then you can choose to **print,** email or **export** your results

When exporting you can choose which file format you want to export in (word, pdf, RIS and many others) and you can also select what fields you would like to include and what citation style you prefer. When you have made your choices, click on **Export** and your file will be created
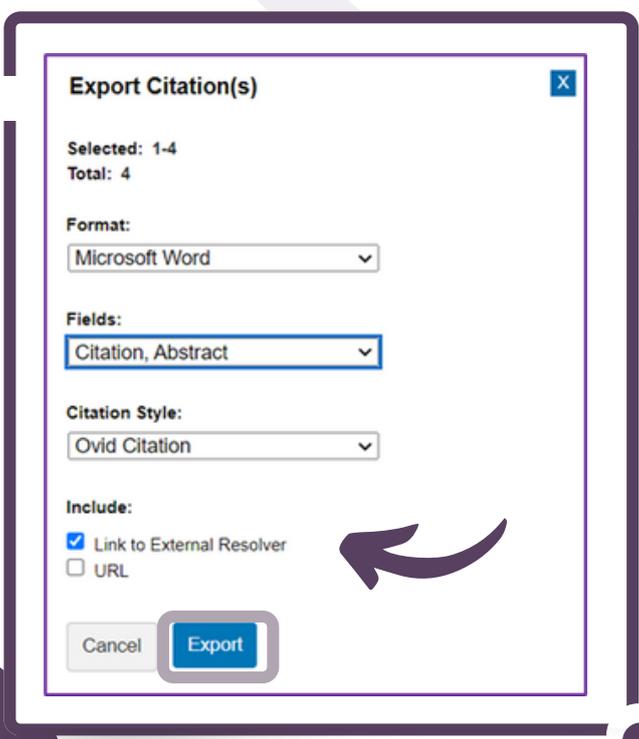
We also recommend that you untick the URL option and include only the option to export as **Link to External Resolver**

Alerts

When saving your search history you are given the option to save it as an **Auto Alert (SDI)**

If you choose this option, you will then be able to set up an **Alert**. You can set up a schedule for the alert, deciding **how often** you want it to run, h**ow you would like the alert to be delivered**, and specify the **email address** you want the alert to be sent to (if you want to receive the alert via email)

Changing Databases

Once you have completed your search, saved your search history and saved your results – you may wish to repeat the search on a **different Ovid database**

To do this, select the **Change** option located just above the search box

You can now select a **new database** to search
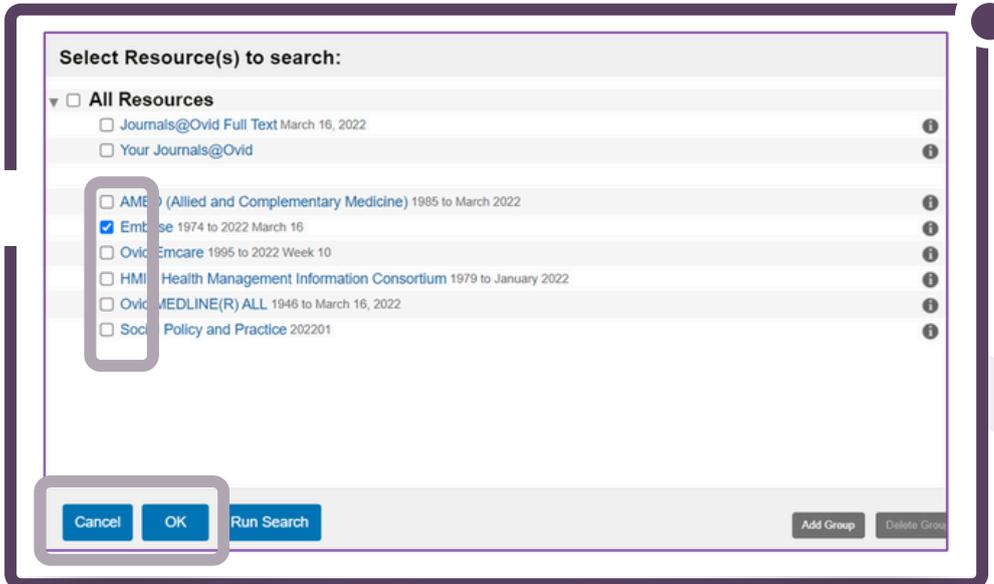
You will be given the option to **Run Search** which will rerun your previous search in the new database that you have chosen.

However, because thesaurus terms vary from one database to the other, doing this may cause problems with your new search. It is best to create your new search from scratch, by clicking on **OK** instead
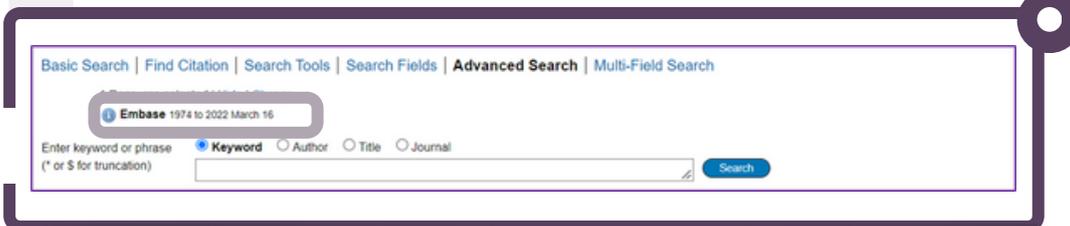
Further Resources

This workbook is designed to **demonstrate and explain how to carry out a successful basic search** using Ovid databases. However, **further resources are available** if you wish to go into more detail about how Ovid works or how to search for literature in general

We have links to a number of **guides and video tutorials** on our website **here**

www.knowledge-nw.nhs.uk/evidence-searching

Framing your questions (PICO and other search strategies). The following websites look at search strategies in **more detail**

NYU Library - Identifying Core Search Concepts & Selecting Keywords

Leeds University - Search Concept Tools

The Library and Knowledge Service also has a **number of books** available on how to carry out a literature search.

Search the **Library Catalogue here**

We can carry out an **evidence search** for you (unless the search is part of an assignment or coursework)

To request an **Evidence Search** fill in our online form **here**

Contact Us & Help

LKS

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

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

library@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk