

CINAHL

Search Guide



EBSCOhost

CINAHL Search Guide

CINAHL provides indexing for over 5,500 journals from the fields of nursing and allied health. CINAHL covers nursing, biomedicine, alternative/complementary medicine, consumer health and 17 allied health disciplines.

Searching the database

1. Developing a Search Strategy

Before you begin searching you will need to develop a search strategy. This involves analysing the search topic and identifying the main concepts. Each concept may then have a number of different search terms which may describe that concept.

Example Search Topic: Does Decadron reduce the incidence/severity of postoperative nausea and vomiting?

Looking at the example search topic, the main concepts are: "Decadron", "Postoperative", "Nausea and Vomiting"
You can sometimes have several search terms for a concept, i.e.: synonyms or alternative descriptions.

Example of Concepts & Search Terms:

	Concept 1 Nausea and vomiting	Concept 2 Decadron	Concept 3 Postoperative
Search Term	Nausea	Decadron	Postoperative care
Search Term	Vomiting		Postoperative Complications

2. Access Cinahl via Ebscohost

Open the Library's Website at <http://www.alfredlibrary.org>

Go to the Resources page and click on the **Cinahl** link, under "Databases"

3. We will do a subject search first.

To start your search, look for the "CINAHL Headings" and click on the link.

This will open a search box where you can type in your first term Nausea

Once you've typed in your term and clicked on the magnifying glass, you will go to CINAHL subject headings

The screenshot shows the CINAHL search interface. At the top, it says "Search articles, books, journals & more" and "BAYSIDE HEALTH | Searching: CINAHL Ultimate". There are three search rows, each with a text input field, a dropdown menu set to "All fields", and an "AND" button. Below these rows are "Add row" and "Delete row" buttons. On the right, there are "Clear all" and "Search" buttons. A red arrow points to the "Search" button. Below the search rows, there are tabs for "Filters", "Search options", "Publication", and "CINAHL Headings". The "CINAHL Headings" tab is highlighted with a red circle. Below the tabs, there is a search input field containing the word "nausea". A red arrow points to this input field. To the right of the input field is a magnifying glass icon. At the bottom left, there are two radio buttons: "Relevancy ranked" (which is selected) and "Term begins with".

A list of possible subject headings will then appear onscreen. (scroll down).

The terms "Nausea" and "Nausea and Vomiting" together will make up our concept 1.

✕ 🔍

☒ Relevancy ranked
 ☐ Term begins with

OR ▼
Add to search

Term	Major Concept	Explode
☐ Nausea	☐	▼
☐ Nausea and Vomiting	☐	☐ ▼
☐ Anticipatory Nausea and Vomiting	☐	▼
☐ Nausea (Saba CCC)	☐	▼

4. Tick the box to the left of the preferred subject.

The screen changes and will display all of the subheadings for that subject. Ignore ALL subheading selections as they will be automatically included. You can close the subheadings viewer if it gets in the way by clicking on the up arrow

Scroll down to the next relevant term for our search: Nausea and Vomiting.

Term	Major Concept	Explode
☒ Nausea The unpleasant sensation of the impending need to vomit. For /drug therapy consider also ANTIEMETICS.	☐	^
☐ Select one or more subheadings to restrict your search		
☐ Blood/BL 🗨	☐ Etiology/ET 🗨	☐ Prognosis/PR 🗨
☐ Cerebrospinal Fluid/CF 🗨	☐ Familial And Genetic/FG 🗨	☐ Radiography/RA 🗨
☐ Chemically Induced/CI 🗨	☐ History/HI 🗨	☐ Risk Factors/RF 🗨
☐ Classification/CL 🗨	☐ Immunology/IM 🗨	☐ Rehabilitation/RH 🗨

Scroll down.

Do the same action for Nausea and Vomiting

☒ Nausea and Vomiting Emesis and queasiness.	☐	☐ ^
☐ Select one or more subheadings to restrict your search		
☐ Blood/BL 🗨	☐ Etiology/ET 🗨	☐ Prognosis/PR 🗨
☐ Cerebrospinal Fluid/CF 🗨	☐ Familial And Genetic/FG 🗨	☐ Radiography/RA 🗨
☐ Chemically Induced/CI 🗨	☐ History/HI 🗨	☐ Risk Factors/RF 🗨
☐ Classification/CL 🗨	☐ Immunology/IM 🗨	☐ Rehabilitation/RH 🗨

We need to ADD these terms to our search strategy by clicking on the ADD TO SEARCH link

The screenshot shows the 'CINAHL Headings' tab in a search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Filters', 'Search options', 'Publications', and 'CINAHL Headings'. Below these is a search bar containing the text 'nausea'. Under the search bar, there are two radio buttons: 'Relevancy ranked' (selected) and 'Term begins with'. To the right, there is a dropdown menu for 'Join terms using:' set to 'OR', and a blue button labeled 'Add to search'. Below this is a table with three columns: 'Term', 'Major Concept', and 'Explore'. The table contains two rows: 'Nausea' and 'Nausea and Vomiting'. Both rows have a checked checkbox in the 'Term' column. The 'Major Concept' column has an unchecked checkbox for 'Nausea' and a checked checkbox for 'Nausea and Vomiting'. The 'Explore' column has a dropdown arrow for 'Nausea' and an upward arrow for 'Nausea and Vomiting'. A green arrow points to the 'Add to search' button, and a red arrow points to the 'Add to search' button. Another red arrow points to the 'Explore' checkbox for 'Nausea and Vomiting'.

(Tick the Explore box to retrieve any narrower subjects that belong to the subject tree
If the box cannot be ticked, then that subject heading doesn't have any narrower subjects.)

Important Note: The two selected “nausea” subjects will be combined with the **OR** operator.

We use “**OR**” to combine synonyms or alternative terms for the same concept.

5. After clicking on the “Add to search” link, scroll up to the top.

The terms you have selected from the subject listing will now appear in the search box.

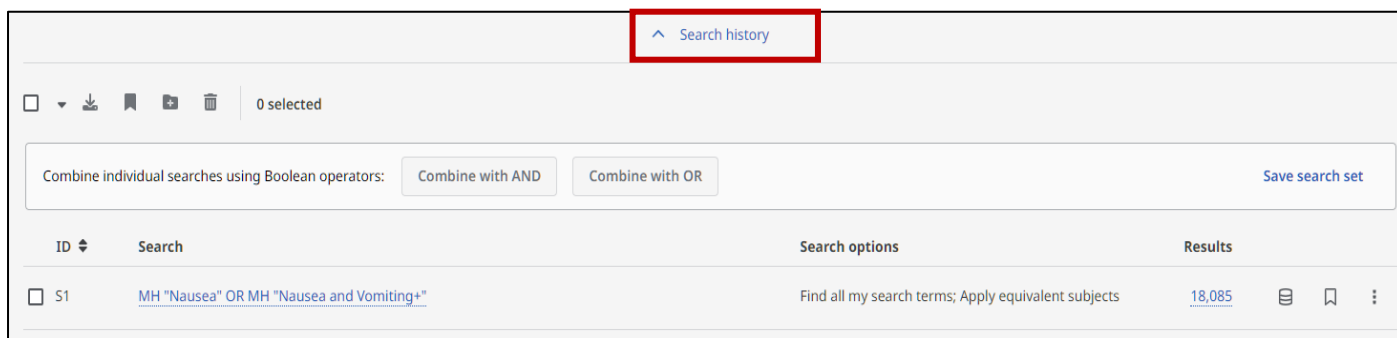
6. Click on the Search button

The screenshot shows the search interface after clicking 'Add to search'. The search bar now contains the text 'MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"'. Below the search bar, there are three rows of search criteria, each with a dropdown menu set to 'All fields'. To the right of the search bar, there is a blue button labeled 'Search'. A red arrow points to the 'Search' button. Another red arrow points to the search bar. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'Filters', 'Search options', 'Publications', and 'CINAHL Headings'. Below these is a search bar containing the text 'nausea'. Under the search bar, there are two radio buttons: 'Relevancy ranked' (selected) and 'Term begins with'.

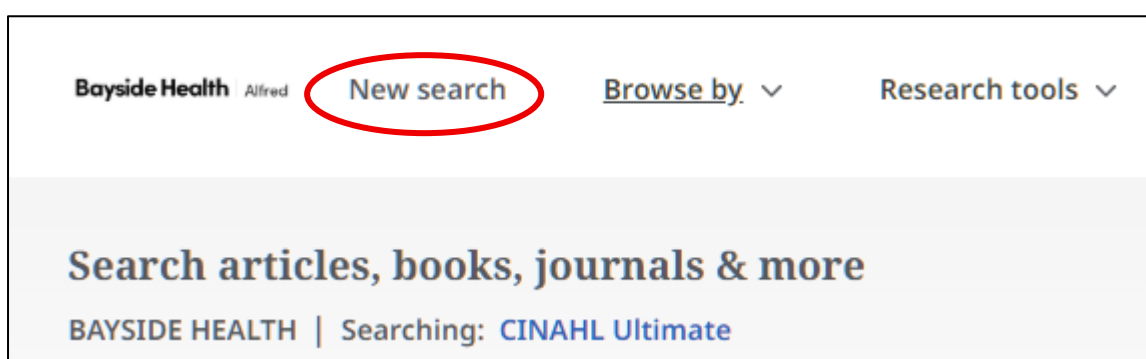
You will then be taken to the results screen.

Search history

You will then see the first search line in your search history onscreen.
However, you will need to return to the main search screen to continue building your search.



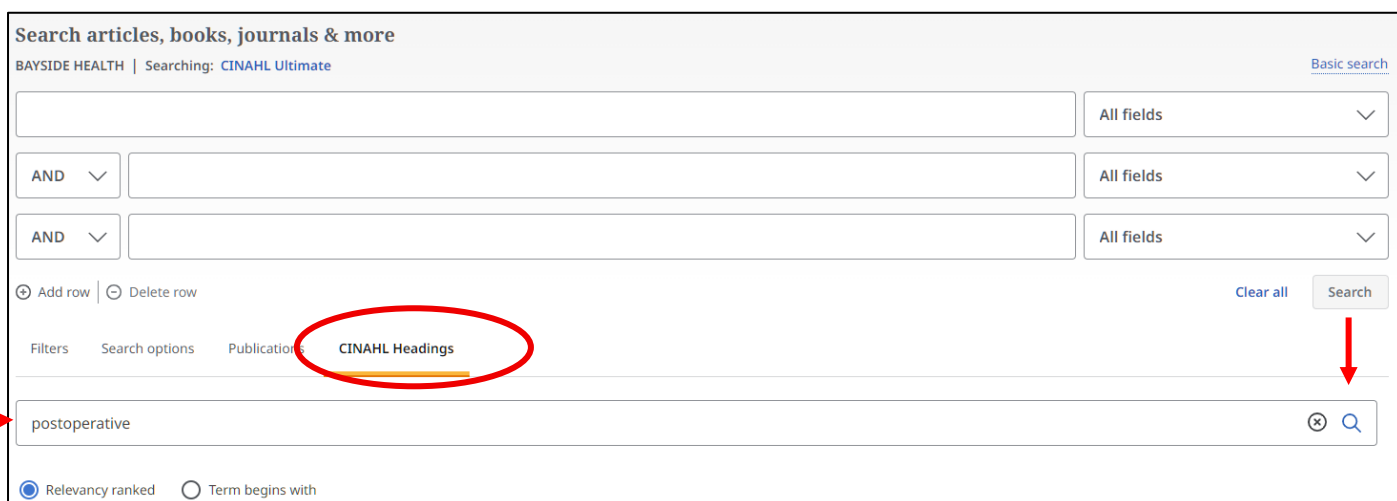
To return to the main search screen for searching the next term (scroll up) – click on **New Search** on the top menu and select “Cinahl Headings”.



7. Type in the next term into the CINAHL Headings search box

Remember to search the CINAHL Headings first.
In this example we will type the term postoperative, then click on the Magnifying Glass to search the subject index.

A list of possible subject headings appears.



8. Tick the boxes to select the relevant terms that relate to the concept of postoperative

Note that the explode boxes have been ticked to automatically collect narrower subjects.

Filters Search options Publications **CINAHL Headings**

postoperative

☒ Relevancy ranked ☐ Term begins with

OR Add to search

Term	Major Concept	Explode
☐ Postoperative Hemorrhage	☐	☐
☐ Postoperative Pain	☐	☐
☒ Postoperative Complications	☐	☒
☒ Postoperative Period	☐	☐
☒ Postoperative Care	☐	☒

9. Then click the “Add to Search” button

10. After clicking on the “Add to search” link, scroll up to the top.

The terms you have selected from the subject listing will now appear in the search box.

Search articles, books, journals & more

BAYSIDE HEALTH | Searching: CINAHL Ultimate

MH "Postoperative Complications+" OR MH "Postoperative Period" OR MH "Postoperative Care+"

AND AND AND

Add row Delete row

Clear all Search

Important Note: The three selected postoperative subjects will be combined with the **OR operator.**

We use “OR” to combine synonyms or alternative terms for the same concept.

Click on the Search button to add them to your search strategy.

You will then be taken to the search history onscreen with the results of the search displayed below.

Search history

0 selected

Combine individual searches using Boolean operators: Combine with AND Combine with OR Save search set

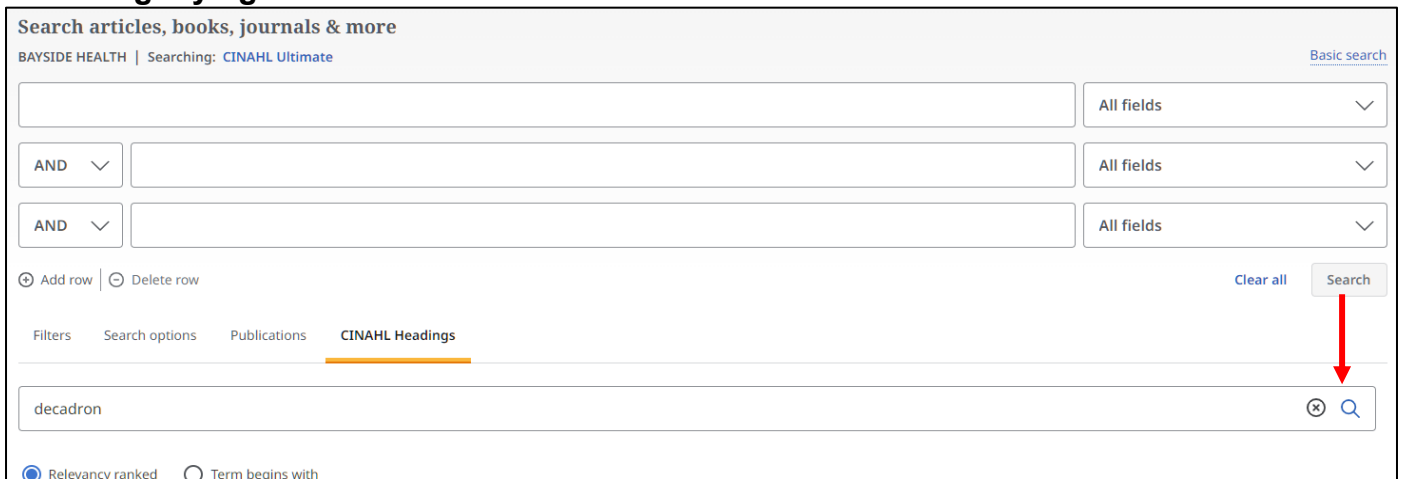
ID	Search	Search options	Results
S2	MH "Postoperative Complications+" OR MH "Postoperative Period" OR MH "Postoperative Care+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	185,251
S1	MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	18,085

All filters (0) Full Text Peer Reviewed All dates Source type

All results Evidence-based care sheets Quick lessons Images Video

Click “New Search” on the top menu to go back to the Main Search screen.

11. Type the next term 'decadron' into the CINAHL Headings search box and click on the Magnifying Glass.



The subject headings page appears. Note that Decadron is a non-preferred term and CINAHL uses the preferred subject heading of "Dexamethasone".

12. Tick the box next to it and then click on the "Add to Search" button.



Term	Major Concept	Explode
☒ Decadron Use: Dexamethasone	☒	
☒ Dexamethasone	☒	▼

13. After clicking on the "Add to search" link, scroll up to the top.

The terms you have selected from the subject listing will now appear in the search box at the top of the screen. Click on the Search button to add them to your search strategy.

Now we need to combine our search concepts.

Combine with AND, Combine with OR, Combine with NOT.

The OR operator is used to combine alternative terms for the same concept.

For example,

MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"

The AND operator is used to combine concepts.

For example,

S1 AND S2 AND S3

Now we are ready to join the three concepts together.

14. Select the sets you wish to combine using the boxes on the left-hand of each.

First Option for combining sets: The easiest option is to use the Search History table onscreen.
Tick the boxes of the search lines you wish to combine: S1, S2 and S3
Then click on the “**Combine with AND**” button

The Main search bar at the top of the screen will then be populated with the 3 combined searches

The screenshot shows a search interface with a table of search sets. At the top, there are buttons for 'Combine with AND' and 'Combine with OR'. The 'Combine with AND' button is circled in red, and a red arrow points to it from the left. Below the buttons is a table with columns: ID, Search, Search options, and Results. Three rows are visible, each with a checked checkbox in the ID column.

ID	Search	Search options	Results
☒ S3	MM "Dexamethasone"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	3,455
☒ S2	MH "Postoperative Complications+" OR MH "Postoperative Period" OR MH "Postoperative Care+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	185,251
☒ S1	MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	18,085

Scroll up to see the combined search populated in the main search bar and then click on **Search** button to execute the search.

The results for your combined search appear as S4 (Set 4)

The screenshot shows the search results screen. At the top, there is a search bar and a dropdown menu for 'All fields'. Below the search bar, there are three rows of search sets, each with a dropdown menu for 'All fields'. The first row is highlighted with a red arrow. Below the search bar, there is a table with columns: ID, Search, Search options, and Results. The first row of the table is highlighted with a red arrow.

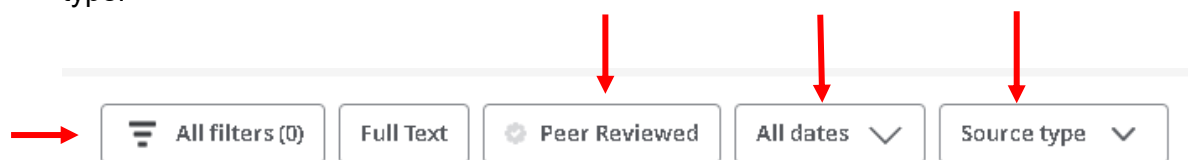
ID	Search	Search options	Results
☒ S4	(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	139
☐ S3	MM "Dexamethasone"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	3,455
☐ S2	MH "Postoperative Complications+" OR MH "Postoperative Period" OR MH "Postoperative Care+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	185,251
☐ S1	MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	18,085

15. Limits

To access the complete selection of Limits, you need be at the results screen.
Click on the **All filters** button in the top menu.

There are also some quick limits available in the top menu bar on the results screen.

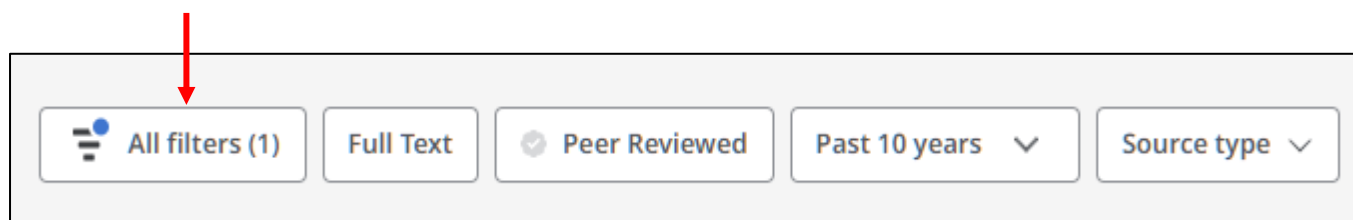
Here you can limit to Peer Reviewed articles, recent date ranges and also academic journals via the source type.



You can do a quick limit such as setting the year range to the last 10 years by clicking on the drop arrow for All dates.

(If you are using the Search History onscreen, be sure to tick the box alongside the search set that you would like to limit.)

Once a limit has been placed, a blue dot appears in the All filters button.



ID	Search	Search options	Results			
☐ S5	(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)	Past 10 years; Find all my search terms	61			
☒ S4	(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	139			
☐ S3	MM "Dexamethasone"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	3,455			
☐ S2	MH "Postoperative Complications+" OR MH "Postoperative Period" OR MH "Postoperative Care+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	185,251			
☐ S1	MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"	Find all my search terms; Apply equivalent subjects	18,085			

Below the table is a filter bar with buttons: 'All filters (1)', 'Full Text', 'Peer Reviewed', 'Past 10 years', and 'Source type'.

16. More Limits

The Limits Page appears as an overlay on the right side of your search screen.

Select the required limits.

In the following example we have selected English Language to add to our last 10 years limit.

All filters

Search mode: Find all my search terms

Active filters  [Clear all](#)

Past 10 years 

English Language 

☐ Full Text

☐ References Available

☐ Abstract Available

☒ English Language

☐ Peer Reviewed

Publication Date (1) 

Databases 

Source Types 

Subject: Major Heading 

Publication 

Publisher 

Apply



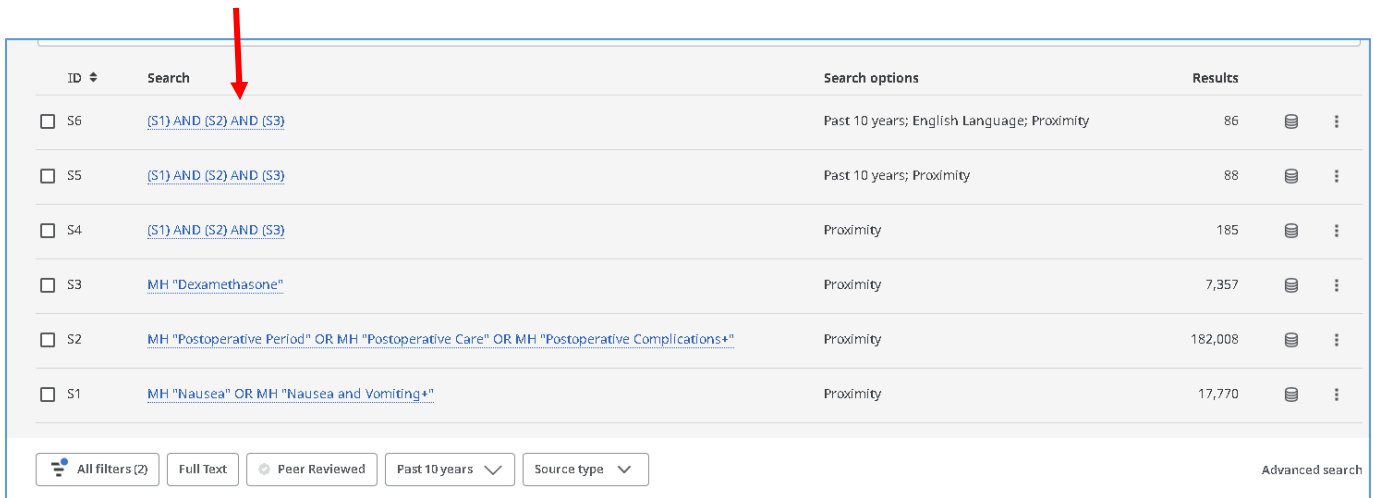
Click the arrows to open facets and display available filters

After selecting the limits click on the APPLY button and you will be taken back to the search screen.

The All filters button will now have a blue dot in it to indicate that limits are activated, and the parenthesis indicates how many have been activated. The locked icon indicates that filters are "sticky" and remain applied for your updated searches until you manually clear them. To clear them, click the x to remove an active filter from your search.

17. View Results

After limiting your search you will see it appear as S6 in the search history with details of the applied limits under the search strategy. To view the results, you must click on the search line itself.



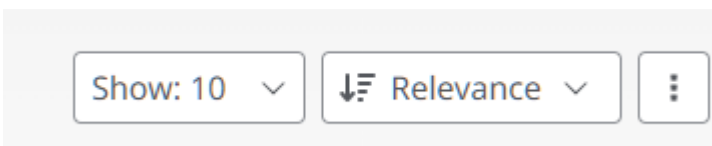
ID	Search	Search options	Results
☐ S6	[S1] AND [S2] AND [S3]	Past 10 years; English Language; Proximity	86
☐ S5	[S1] AND [S2] AND [S3]	Past 10 years; Proximity	88
☐ S4	[S1] AND [S2] AND [S3]	Proximity	185
☐ S3	MH "Dexamethasone"	Proximity	7,357
☐ S2	MH "Postoperative Period" OR MH "Postoperative Care" OR MH "Postoperative Complications+"	Proximity	182,008
☐ S1	MH "Nausea" OR MH "Nausea and Vomiting+"	Proximity	17,770

Advanced search

Filters: All filters (2) Full Text Peer Reviewed Past 10 years Source type

You can customise the number of results shown per page (maximum is 30) and the default is newest to oldest.

(NB: once the results are on the screen, you can select to show up to 50 per page)



You can view the complete fields - e.g.: authors, subjects and dosage by clicking on the “+ more” at the end of the line.



1-10 of 61 total results

Show: 10 Relevance

0 selected

1  Peer reviewed | Academic Journal

Low-dose perineural dexamethasone in supraclavicular brachial plexus blocks: Optimising postoperative analgesia.

By: Bani Salameh, Ahmad; Khasawneh, Jawad F; Kreeshan, Ghaith M; +8 more • In: Journal of Perioperative Practice, Apr2026, volume 36, issue 4, pages 215-221 (7p) • CINAHL Ultimate

Subjects: Postoperative Pain Drug Therapy; Analgesia; Brachial Plexus Block; Dexamethasone Administration and Dosage; +33 more

Access options Cited by 1 AI Insights

By clicking on the title of the reference, the detailed record is displayed.

← Results

Peer reviewed | Academic Journal

Low-dose perineural dexamethasone in supraclavicular brachial plexus blocks: Optimising postoperative analgesia.

Published in: Journal of Perioperative Practice, Apr2026

Database: CINAHL Ultimate

By: Bani Salameh, Ahmad; Khasawneh, Jawad F; Kreeshan, Ghaith M; [+8 more](#)

Access options  Download 

Details  References  Cited by 1  Publication contents

Additional information

Title

Low-dose perineural dexamethasone in supraclavicular brachial plexus blocks: Optimising postoperative analgesia.

18. Managing your results

	    	Bookmark	Quote	Folder	Arrow	Download
		Saves items to dashboard.	Access end text citation & bibliographic data export.	Add item to a "project" this is <u>personalisation</u> option.	"Share" your items to the cloud, generate a permalink.	Download the metadata/full text.

Tools menu available:

- On result list
- In the abstract record
- In the online viewer
- From the result list

       10 selected Results: 150

All on this page: 10 (Up to 50)

☒ Select 1-50

☐ Deselect all

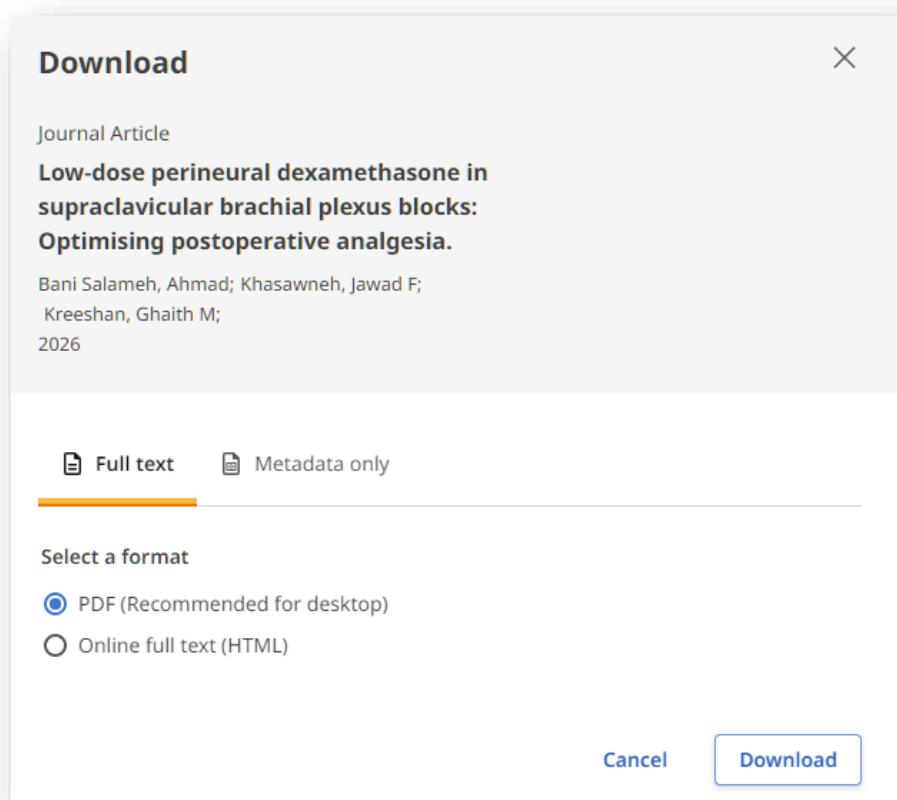
☐ Export results (Up to 25,000)

Bulk export/save options available from the top of the result list.

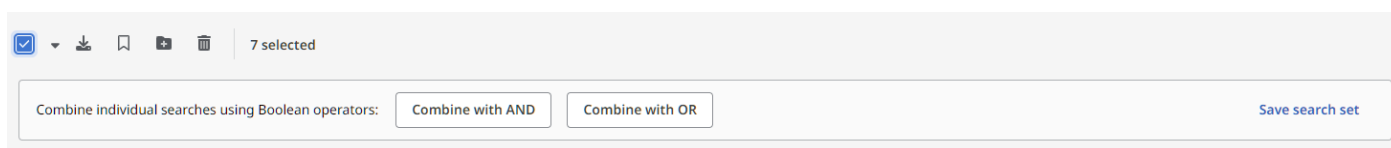
Download options available:  OR

NB: clicking on download symbol or button provides the same details:

Access options  Download 

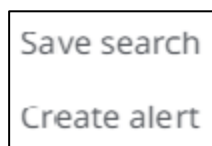
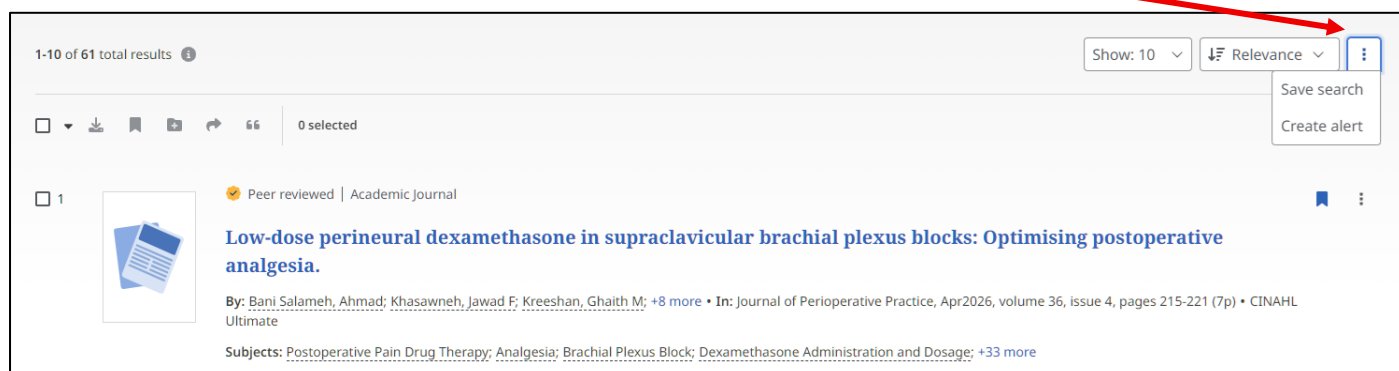


If you **SAVE** the results you can view them by signing into your EBSCO account. You will see the records listed here once you have saved them from your search results.

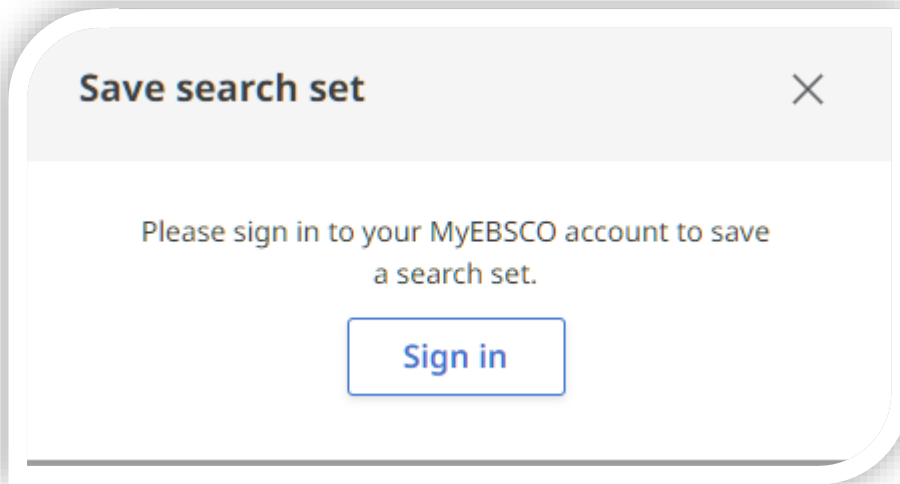


Save Searches

You can save a search from the results screen, simply by clicking on these 3 dots:



Then you will see 2 options appear onscreen: Here you can either save the search strategy or create an alert with it.



If you don't sign in straight away, the details screen appears where you can add details about the search and it reminds you to sign into your ebSCO account .

A "Search details" screen with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains a blue notification box at the top with the text: "Don't lose your research We noticed you're not signed in to your MyEBSCO account. You can still save searches, but your data will be lost when the session ends. To keep your data, [sign in](#) now." Below the notification box are several sections: "Search name" with a text input field containing "(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)" and a character count "22/255"; "Description (optional)" with a large text area and a character count "0/300"; "Combined search string" with a text input field containing "(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)" and a link "Edit search"; "Expanded search string" with a text area containing a complex search string and a link "Copy to clipboard"; "Results" with the number "61"; and "Search options" at the bottom.

You may wish to store your citations for later use and/or save your search history. To do this you will need to have an EbscoHost account.

19. Saving your results and/or search history for later use



Click on the login link in the top right corner:

The following pop-up will appear onscreen:

Sign in with MyEBSCO

Don't have an account? [Create an account](#)

MyEBSCO username or email address

Password or PIN

[Forgot your password?](#)

Sign in

 Sign in with Google

If you already have an account, click on “Sign in to MyEBSCO. Type your username and password.

Once logged in, click on your name in top right corner beside the person icon  . A dialog box will appear onscreen where you can select what you have saved and also see your recent activity.

 Projects

 Saved

 Recent activity

 Holds & checkouts

 Alerts

 My preferences

 Manage your account

Sign out of MyEBSCO

Saved

Records Searches Search sets

Records: 7 Show: 10 ↓ Newest

0 selected

1 Peer reviewed | Academic Journal

The effect of dexamethasone on functional pain following Transoral Robotic Surgery: a randomized double blinded clinical trial.

By: [Larsen, Mikkel Hjordt Holm](#); [Channir, Hani Ibrahim](#); [Madsen, Anne Kathrine Østergaard](#); +5 more • In: Acta Oto-Laryngologica, Oct2023, volume 143, issue 10, pages 894-901 (8p) • CINAHL Ultimate • Cited by: 1 • Saved: 11:22 AM

Pain is prevalent after most TransOral Robotic Surgery (TORS) procedures and may limit function i.e. swallowing. Currently, there is limited knowledge regarding optimal pain treatment in TORS. This clinical trial randomized patients to either a high-dose dexamethasone or low-dose dexamethasone treatment in addition to a multimodal basic analgesic protocol. The aim of the trial was to investigate ... [Show more](#)

Subjects: Dexamethasone Administration and Dosage; Postoperative Pain Drug Therapy; Robotic Surgical Procedures Methods; Surgery, Oral Adverse Effects; +43 more

Access options

2 Peer reviewed | Academic Journal

The effect of local dexamethasone on stapedotomy surgery outcomes in patients with otosclerosis.

By: [Mandegari, Mohammad](#); [Meybodian, Mojtaba](#); [Baradaranfar, Mohammadhossein](#); +3 more • In: Acta Oto-Laryngologica, Jan2024, volume 144, issue 1, pages 35-38 (4p) • CINAHL Ultimate • Cited by: 3 • Saved: 11:22 AM

Some studies have shown a positive effect of systemic corticosteroid on hearing results after stapedotomy, but its side effects can limit its routine administration. The aim of this study was to investigate the

In Saved – RECORDS – displays all the records you saved from the results listing of your search.

- SEARCHES – lists all of the searches you have saved.

Recent activity

Search History Viewed Records

Searches: 8 Show: 10 ↓ Newest

0 selected

Combine individual searches using Boolean operators: Combine with AND Combine with OR

S8

(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)

Added: 11:35 AM • Results: 139

Find all my search terms Apply equivalent subjects

S7

(S3) AND (S2) AND (S1)

Added: 10:57 AM • Results: 61

Past 10 years English Language Find all my search terms

S6

Search details

Add to project

Delete

In recent activity – SEARCH HISTORY, you can click on the 3 dots to see options:

Here you can view the search details, line by line of the search strategy and edit the search if need be and save any changes made.

20. Keyword (Textword) Searching

If your subject heading search does not map to a suitable term, try searching with keywords (also known as textwords). Textword searching lets you search for the exact word or phrase in a chosen field such as title or abstract. It is useful for finding information about a concept that:

- has no appropriate subject heading
- might be very new to the literature
- has a very specific name, such as the GUSTO Trials

You can search specific fields such as Title and Abstract in the drop-down menus next to the search boxes

If no field is selected, then your search term is found in multiple text fields as a general keyword search

To search for phrases, you will need to use quotation marks around your phrase to keep the terms together.

❖ Truncation & Wildcards

Textwords can be truncated to pick up various forms of a word. Truncation is useful if the textword or phrase can be expressed in a variety of ways. Use the wildcard and truncation symbols to create searches where there are unknown characters, multiple spellings or various endings. Neither the wildcard nor the truncation symbol can be used as the first character in a search term.

- ❖ **Truncation** is represented by an asterisk (*). To use truncation, enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with an *.

For example, type **comput*** to find the words **computer** or **computing** or **computed** etc.

- ❖ The **Wildcard** is represented by a question mark ? or a pound sign #.

To use the ? wildcard, enter your search terms and replace each unknown character with a ?. The software finds all citations of that word with the ? replaced by a letter.

For example, type **ne?t** to find all citations containing **neat**, **nest** or **next**.

To use the # wildcard, enter your search terms, adding the # in places where an alternate spelling may contain an extra character. The software finds all citations of the word that appear with or without the extra character.

For example, type **colo#r** to find all citations containing **color** or **colour**.

2. Accessing the full text of your citations.

For those citations that do not have a full text link available, you will have to check the online journals list on your University Library's website.

For articles that are not held by your University Library, check with them to see what document delivery services are available to you.

For further information, please contact either your University Library, or The Ian Potter Library on 90763042 or library@alfred.org.au