
Translating search queries in multiple databases

Creating a master search.

A master search is used to translate your query into various databases. Each database works differently. The master search is your “blueprint”

1. Copy and print the search history box from Medline or PsycINFO into MS Excel
2. Delete Column A (search line numbers) and Column C (result numbers).
3. Copy the new Column A into Column B on your spreadsheet. Column B will be your Master search.
4. On your Master Search (Column B) remove the search field at the end of text word search lines, for example .tw,kw
5. Add double quotes around phrases (two words or more), including hyphenated terms
6. Change all lowercase ‘or’ to uppercase ‘OR’.
7. Combine each concept with AND
8. **See example on page 2.**

The search example is in response to the question:

*“How does body weight affect the psychological well-being of teenage girls?” ****

please note that this is a simplified search for illustrative purposes.

| # | Medline | Master Search |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | body weight changes/ or weight gain/ or weight loss/ or overweight/ or obesity/ or thinness/ or body mass index/ | body weight changes/ or weight gain/ or weight loss/ or overweight/ or obesity/ or thinness/ or body mass index/ |
| 2 | ("Weight gain" or "Weight loss" or "Weight status" or Obesity or BMI or "Body Mass Index" or "Body weight" or Overweight).tw,kf. | ("Weight gain" OR "Weight loss" OR "Weight status" OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight) |
| 3 | or/1-2 | 1 OR 2 |
| 4 | self concept/ or body image/ or self efficacy/ or Self-Assessment/ | self concept/ or body image/ or self efficacy/ or Self-Assessment/ |
| 5 | (Self adj2 (status or concept or perception or esteem or acceptance or efficacy)).tw,kf. | (Self adj2 (status OR concept OR perception OR esteem OR acceptance OR efficacy)) |
| 6 | or/4-5 | 4 OR 5 |
| 7 | Adolescent/ | Adolescent/ |
| 8 | (adolescen* or youth* or teenage*).tw,kf. | (adolescen* OR youth* OR teenage*) |
| 9 | or/7-8 | 7 OR 8 |
| 10 | Female/ | Female/ |
| 11 | (girl* or female*).tw,kf. | (girl* OR female*) |
| 12 | or/10-11 | 10 OR 11 |
| 13 | 3 and 6 and 9 and 12 | 3 AND 6 AND 9 AND 12 |

Textword Databases

Scopus

Copy your master search into a new column/section named Scopus in Excel/word.

1. Change adjacency (adjx) to W/x (reducing the adjacency by 1 e.g. adj3 becomes W/2)
2. Change ? wildcards to *
- 3.

| # | Master Search | Scopus |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | body weight changes/ or weight gain/ or weight loss/ or overweight/ or obesity/ or thinness/ or body mass index/ | NA |
| 2 | ("Weight gain" OR "Weight loss" OR "Weight status" OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight) | ("Weight gain" OR "Weight loss" OR "Weight status" OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight) |
| 3 | 1 OR 2 | NA |
| 4 | self concept/ or body image/ or self efficacy/ or Self-Assessment/ | NA |
| 5 | (Self adj2 (status OR concept OR perception OR esteem OR acceptance OR efficacy)) | (Self W/1 (status OR concept OR perception OR esteem OR acceptance OR efficacy)) |
| 6 | 4 OR 5 | NA |
| 7 | Adolescent/ | NA |
| 8 | (adolescen* OR youth* OR teenage*) | (adolescen* OR youth* OR teenage*) |
| 9 | 7 OR 8 | NA |
| 10 | Female/ | NA |
| 11 | (girl* OR female*) | (girl* OR female*) |
| 12 | 10 OR 11 | NA |
| 13 | 3 AND 6 AND 9 AND 12 | |

4. Put each concept search string on a separate line combining each with AND using drop down menu at left hand side.

The screenshot shows the Scopus Document search interface. At the top left is the Scopus logo. The main heading is "Document search". Below this, there are radio buttons for "Documents" (selected), "Authors", and "Affiliations", and a link for "Advanced". The search area contains four lines of search strings, each with a dropdown menu and a plus sign button:

- Search: (obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight) × Article title, Abstract, Keywords [v] [+]
- AND [v]
- Search: (status OR concept OR perception OR esteem OR acceptance OR efficacy)) × Article title, Abstract, Keywords [v] [-] [+]
- AND [v]
- Search: (adolescen* OR youth* OR teenage*) × Article title, Abstract, Keywords [v] [-] [+]
- AND [v]
- Search: (girl* OR female*) × Article title, Abstract, Keywords [v] [-] [+]

At the bottom left, there is a link "> Limit". At the bottom right, there are buttons for "Reset form" and "Search Q".

Web of Science

1. Change adjacency (adjx) to NEAR/x
2. Change wildcard ? to \$
3. Select the appropriate field code from the right hand side of the line entry eg Topic
4. Put each concept search string on a separate line create more lines by clicking “add row”.
5. Combining each line with AND using drop down menu on the left of each row.

The screenshot displays the Web of Science search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links to various databases: Web of Science, InCites, Journal Citation Reports, Essential Science Indicators, EndNote, Publons, Kopernio, and Master Journal List. Below this is the main header "Web of Science" and a sub-header "Tools | Searches and alerts". A message states "We're building the new Web of Science." Below this is a "Select a database" dropdown menu set to "Web of Science Core Collection".

The search interface is divided into several tabs: Basic Search (selected), Author Search^{BETA}, Cited Reference Search, Advanced Search, and Structure Search. The search area contains four rows of search criteria, each with a search string, a field code, and a dropdown menu:

- Row 1: Search string: " OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight) x; Field code: Topic
- Row 2: Connector: And; Search string: (Self NEAR/1 (status OR concept OR perception OR esteem OR ac) x; Field code: Topic
- Row 3: Connector: And; Search string: (adolescen* OR youth* OR teenage*) x; Field code: Topic
- Row 4: Connector: And; Search string: (girl* OR female*) | x; Field code: Topic

At the bottom right of the search area, there is a "Search" button and a "+ Add row | Reset" link. Below the search area is a "Timespan" dropdown menu set to "All years (1900 - 2020)" and a "More settings" link.

ProQuest

1. Change adjacency (adjx) to NEAR/x
2. Change wildcard ? to \$
3. Replace \$ with * - unless \$ indicates single character end truncation. In this case, spell out truncation.
4. Go to Advanced Search
5. Paste each concept textword search string on a separate line
6. Select the appropriate field code from the right hand side of the line entry eg NOFT
Note: In ProQuest NOFT is the closest to Title/abstract/keywords
7. Combine concept lines with AND located between the search lines
8. Click on Search to view results

The screenshot shows the ProQuest Advanced Search interface. The header includes the ProQuest logo and "Access provided by FLINDERS UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA". The navigation bar has tabs for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Publications", "Browse", and "Databases (18)". The "Advanced Search" section has sub-tabs for "Command Line", "Thesaurus", "Field codes", and "Search tips".

The search query is built using four rows of search terms connected by "AND" operators:

- Row 1: ("Weight gain" OR "Weight loss" OR "Weight status" OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight) in Anywhere except full text – NOFT
- Row 2: AND (Self NEAR/1 (status OR concept OR perception OR esteem OR acceptance OR efficacy)) in Anywhere except full text – NOFT
- Row 3: AND (adolescen* OR youth* OR teenage*) in Anywhere except full text – NOFT
- Row 4: AND (girl* OR female*) in Anywhere except full text – NOFT

Below the search rows, there are options to "Add a row" and "Remove a row". The "Limit to:" section has checkboxes for "Full text" and "Peer reviewed". The "Publication date:" dropdown is set to "All dates". A "Search" button and a "Clear" button are located at the bottom right.

Subject Heading Databases

CINAHL

1. Find and search on subject headings for the first concept. CINAHL, like Medline, maps to the closest subject heading.
2. Enter the first concept textword search string in both the first and second search lines
3. Choose TI Title from the drop down menu at right ("Select a Field") for the first line, and AB Abstract for the second
4. Change Boolean operator to OR (drop down box) and run the search

The screenshot displays the CINAHL search interface. At the top, there are navigation links: New Search, Publications, CINAHL Subject Headings, Cited References, and Indexes. The main search area includes the Flinders University logo, a search bar with the query "BMI OR 'Body Mass Index' OR 'Body weight' OR Overweight", and a dropdown menu set to "TI Title". A yellow "Search" button is to the right. Below the search bar, there are additional search options: a dropdown set to "OR", a search bar with "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight", a dropdown set to "AB Abstract", and a "Clear" button. Further down, there is an "AND" dropdown, an empty search bar, and a "Select a Field (optional)" dropdown. Below the search area, there are links for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", and "Search History".

The "Search History/Alerts" section is visible below the search area. It includes links for "Print Search History", "Retrieve Searches", "Retrieve Alerts", and "Save Searches / Alerts". There are buttons for "Select / deselect all", "Search with AND", "Search with OR", and "Delete Searches". A red speech bubble with the text "Subject headings" points to the search history table. The table has columns for "Search ID#", "Search Terms", and "Options". The first entry in the table is:

| Search ID# | Search Terms | Options |
|------------|--|--|
| S1 | (MH "Body Weight") OR (MH "Body Weight Changes") OR (MH "Body Mass Index") | Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase |

5. Combine the subject heading search set with the textword search set using OR

Library at **Flinders** UNIVERSITY

Searching: CINAHL | [Choose Databases](#)

Suggest Subject Terms

Select a Field (optional) ▼ **Search**

AND ▼ **Select a Field (optional)** ▼ [Clear ?](#)

AND ▼ **Select a Field (optional)** ▼ + -

[Basic Search](#) [Advanced Search](#) [Search History](#) ▼

Search History/Alerts

[Print Search History](#) [Retrieve Searches](#) [Retrieve Alerts](#) [Save Searches / Alerts](#)

Select / deselect all **Search with AND** **Search with OR** **Delete Searches**

| Search ID# | Search Terms | Search Options |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S2 | TI (("Weight gain" OR "Weight loss" OR "Weight status" OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight)) OR AB (("Weight gain" OR "Weight loss" OR "Weight status" OR Obesity OR BMI OR "Body Mass Index" OR "Body weight" OR Overweight))) | Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S1 | (MH "Body Weight") OR (MH "Body Weight Changes") OR (MH "Body Mass Index") | Expanders - Apply equivalent subjects Search modes - Boolean/Phrase |

6.Repeat this for each concept search string.