

Searching CINAHL

The Importance of Using Subject Headings



CINAHL Coverage

CINAHL provides indexing and abstracting for over 3,000 current nursing and allied health journals and other publications. It contains over 1,000,000 records dating back to 1981. Subjects covered include biomedicine, health sciences librarianship, alternative/complementary medicine, consumer health and seventeen allied health disciplines. CINAHL also covers selected health care books, nursing dissertations, conference proceedings, and standards of practice.

Getting Started from UMDNJ Library Homepage

From the library home page, <http://www.umdnj.edu/librweb/newarklibrary/library/html>, scroll down and click on **Databases**. Scroll down for the link to CINAHL. Off campus users will be asked to sign in using their last name and the last four digits of the University ID or "A number".

Once you have logged in you are presented with the CINAHL main search page. Help is available on every page at the top right corner. You can also sign into or set up a Personal Account that can be used to save user preferences, search results, search strategies and alerts.

The screenshot displays the CINAHL search interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for 'New Search', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Headings', 'Cited References', and 'More'. On the right side of this bar, there are links for 'Sign In to My EBSCOhost', 'Folder', 'New Features!', and 'Help'. Below the navigation bar, the search area shows 'Searching: CINAHL' with a 'Choose Databases' link. There are checkboxes for 'Suggest Subject Terms' and 'Field Codes'. A search input field is present with 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons. Below the search area, there are links for 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', 'Visual Search', 'Search History/Alerts', and 'Preferences'. The 'Search Options' section includes a 'Reset' button and several filter categories: 'Search modes' (with radio buttons for 'Phrase (e.g. latex gloves)', 'Find all my search terms', 'Find any of my search terms', and 'SmartText Searching Hint'); 'Apply related words' (with a checkbox); 'Also search within the full text of the articles' (with a checkbox); 'Limit your results' (with checkboxes for 'Peer Reviewed' and 'English Language'); 'Age Groups' (with a dropdown menu showing 'All', 'Fetus, Conception to Birth', 'Infant, Newborn 0-1 month', and 'Infant, 1-23 months'); 'Research Article' (with a checkbox); 'Publication Year from' (with input fields for 'to'); 'Language' (with a dropdown menu showing 'All', 'Afrikaans', 'Chinese', and 'Danish'); and 'Clinical Queries' (with a dropdown menu showing 'All', 'Therapy - High Sensitivity', 'Therapy - High Specificity', and 'Therapy - Best Balance').

Searching with Subject Headings

Subject headings are specific terms that are used to index articles. They provide a consistent way to find articles that are about the same topic but where the author may have used different terms to describe that topic.

Every article indexed in CINAHL is read by a subject specialist and is indexed using appropriate **subject headings** that reflect the entire content of the article. The indexer selects terms from an annually updated list of subject headings. This list of terms is an integral part of the CINAHL database.

In most cases, using subject headings is the best way to search this database.

It is important to remember that ***the text of most of the articles indexed in CINAHL is not searchable***, so the subject headings that are assigned act as a surrogate for the complete article.

This outlines the difference between Subject Headings and Keywords.

	Subject Headings	Keyword
Definition	<p>Specific terms that are used to index articles.</p> <p>They provide a consistent way to find articles that are that are about the same topic</p> <p>but</p> <p>where the author may use different terms to describe that topic.</p> <p><i>For example</i> Cancer, Tumors and Neoplasms are all indexed under one Subject Heading: Neoplasms.</p>	<p>An author selected word used in a book or article to describe a topic in the book or article.</p> <p><i>For example</i> these are all keywords an author may use to describe the same topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -bedsore -bed sore -decubitus ulcer -pressure sore -pressure ulcer
How do they relate to each other?	In a database, the same Subject Heading is assigned to articles that may use different keywords for the same topic .	Different authors may use different Keywords when writing about the same subject.
What do they find?	A Subject Heading search will locate articles on the same topic regardless of the terms used by the authors.	A Keyword search will pick up all articles that have that word in the text regardless of whether it is a topic or not. It will also miss articles that use alternate terms for the same topic.

<p>How are they used?</p>	<p>A Subject Heading is used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search a database - Index articles contained in a database - Standardize terminology 	<p>A Keyword may be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -search a database or - search for a Subject Heading that is then used to search the database.
<p>When are they used?</p>	<p>When a topic is established and clearly defined in the database</p>	<p>When a topic is new or rare or crosses concepts.</p>

CINAHL Headings

CINAHL offers Basic, Advanced and Publications search capabilities. The default at UMDNJ is set to "Advanced Search". CINAHL has the added benefit of a controlled vocabulary thesaurus, or **CINAHL Headings**. The **Headings** allow you to check whether you are using the correct terminology in your search, to locate a preferred term, and make the most of the database.

There are two points of entry to **CINAHL Headings**. You can use either.

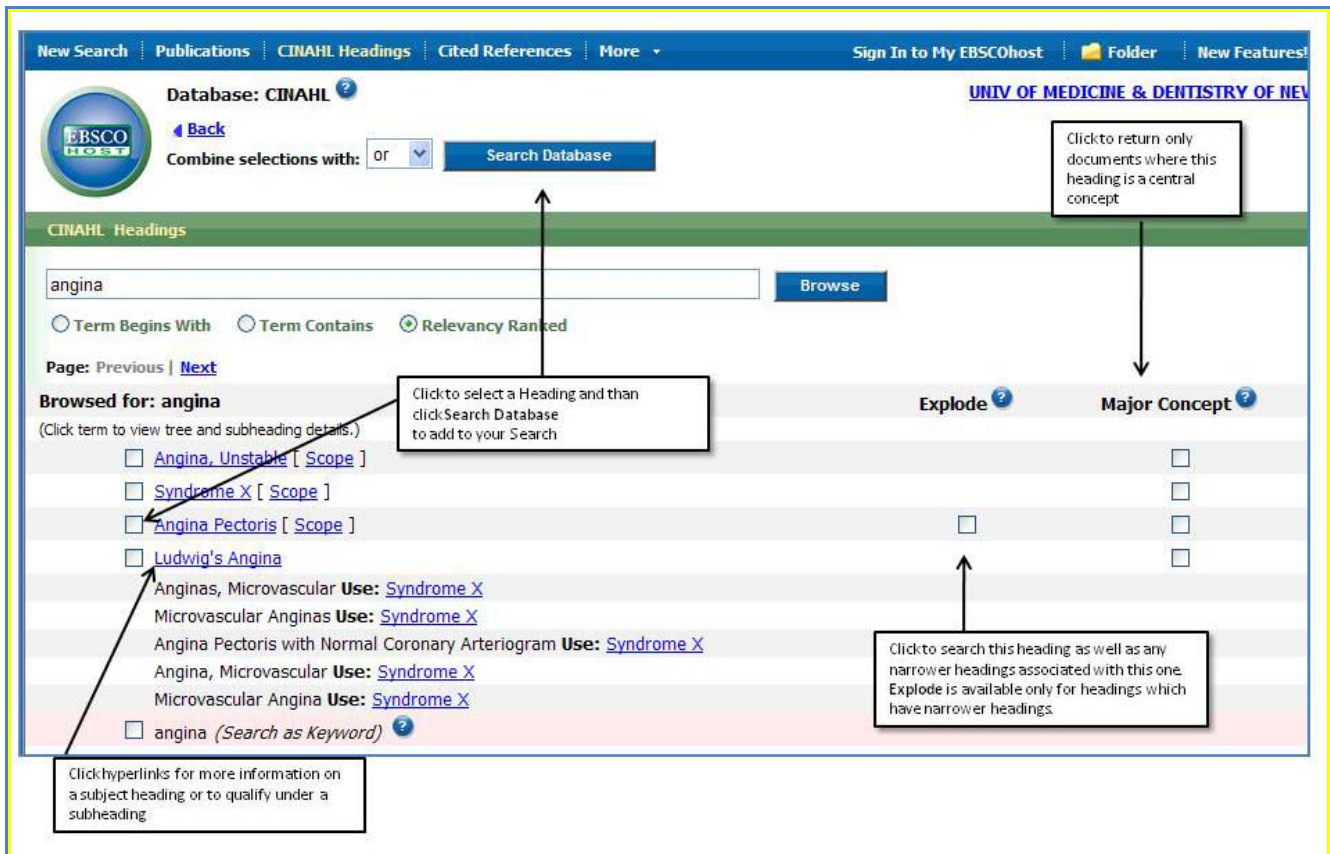
Method One to Access CINAHL Headings

1. Click CINAHL Headings. This will take you to the box below
2. Enter the search term you want to check in the thesaurus
3. Click relevancy ranked
4. Click Browse

Method Two to Access CINAHL Headings

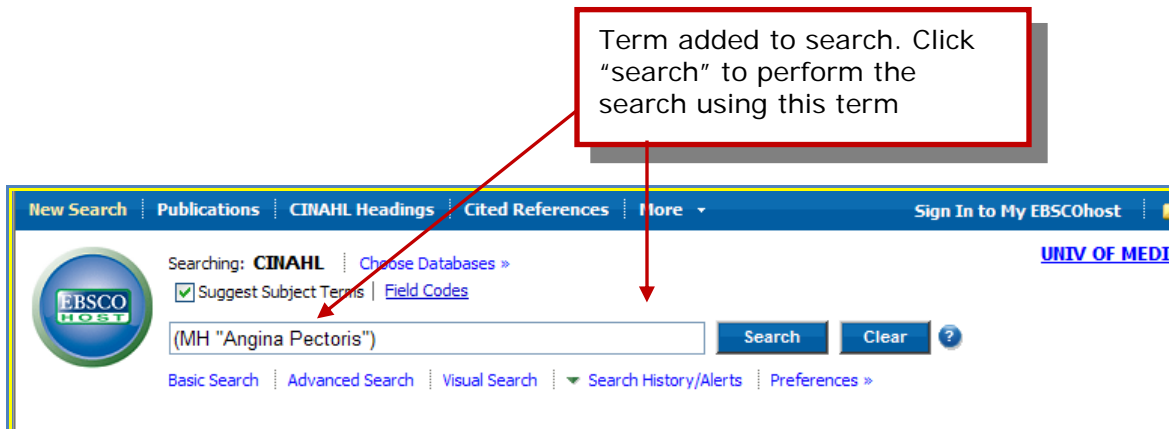
1. Be sure the Suggest Subject terms is checked. This is the default on the page when you open the database
2. Enter the search term you want to check in the thesaurus
3. Click to search the CINAHL Headings Thesaurus

The following screen shows the results list when we search for the terms "**angina**" in the CINAHL Headings.



At this point, you can choose to search the database using one of the terms (e.g. *Angina Pectoris*) by clicking on the box beside it and then clicking "Search Database".

This will enter the Search term into the **Find Box**. Click "Search" to begin the search on the term.



If you want to find out more about a particular term or want to limit the term using a **subheading** before searching then click the hyperlinked heading to bring you to the next screen.

CINAHL subject heading terms are arranged in a hierarchy or "**tree structure**" that permits searching at various levels of detail from the most general level to more narrow levels to find the most precise terms. The further a term is indented to the right, the more specific the term.

The headings can be **exploded** to retrieve all references indexed to that term as well as all references indexed to any narrower term(s). You can add more than one heading to a search by using **Boolean logic** to links the terms.

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost CINAHL database search interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'New Search', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Headings', 'Cited References', and 'More'. The 'Database: CINAHL' is selected. A search box contains the text 'Angina Pectoris'. To the right of the search box, a callout box states: 'Construct your Search with a number of terms by using Boolean Operators (OR, AND, NOT) to link them in an appropriate way.' Below the search box, there are options for 'Combine selections with:' (set to 'OR') and a 'Search Database' button. On the left, a 'Tree Views' section shows a hierarchical structure of terms, with 'Angina Pectoris' selected. A callout box points to this section: 'Use Explode to search for "Angina Pectoris" along with any narrower terms. Use "Major Concepts" to retrieve only documents where this heading is the central focus'. Below the tree, there are 'On Search:' options for 'Explode' (checked) and 'Major Concept' (checked). To the right, a 'Qualify Subheadings' section lists various subheadings with checkboxes. A callout box points to this section: 'Chose a Subheading to refine your search. You may choose more than one subheading at a time. Click on a Subheading to find out more about it. You may not always get results from a particular Subheading.' Below the subheadings, there is a 'Scope:' section with a definition: 'Acute chest pain resulting from myocardial ischemia. The pain is usually distinctive in nature, location, and radiation, and may be brought on by emotional stress or physical activity.' and a 'Used For:' section: 'Stenocardia; Stenocardias'. A callout box points to this section: 'The Scope Note gives information on what is meant and what is not meant by a term. Some terms may also have historical notes.' At the bottom left, another callout box points to the tree view: 'See where your term fits in the hierarchy of broader and narrower terms'.

Once you have constructed your search using whichever **Subject Heading and Subheadings** you choose click on **"Search"** to conduct the search. You will get a results list from where you can review, print, email or save the documents that you find most useful. Subheadings limit a broader term to a specific focus. For example, clicking on "prevention & control" would limit retrieval to articles about that specific aspect of angina pectoris.

Use **"Search History"** to revise a search, (such as adding extra limiters such as year of publication), combine a number of searches to make a very precise search. You can save your search into a personal account for future use.

Obtaining Full Text

Each article in CINAHL contains an icon that will lead you to full text of an article or provide you with information to obtain full text through the Library Inter Library Loan System.



A screenshot of the EBSCO CINAHL search results page. The search term is "(MH "Angina Pectoris+")". The page shows a table of search results with columns for Search ID#, Search Terms, Search Options, and Actions. Three results are visible, each with a "Findit UMDNJ" icon highlighted by a red box. The first result is "Late-breaking news" by Lee HC, Alberg A, Maddox TM, etc. The second is "Quality of life with PCI versus medical therapy in stable coronary disease..." by Weintraub et al. The third is "Review: an early invasive strategy has similar benefits in men and women with NSTEMI or unstable angina" by Granger CB. The page also includes a "Limit your results" sidebar with filters for Peer Reviewed, Research Article, and English Language, and a "Filter by Publication Date" range from 1980 to 2008.

Saving a Search Strategy / Alerts

To save searches, you must first register for a free account. This can be done at the top of the page by clicking on "Sign into My EbscoHost".

Select the search you want to save and click on Save Searches / Alerts link and follow the prompts.

The screenshot shows the EBSCO CINAHL search interface. At the top, the search term is "(MH "Angina Pectoris+")". Below the search bar, there are buttons for "Search" and "Clear". A red circle highlights the "Search with AND" and "Search with OR" buttons. The search results are displayed in a table with columns for "Search ID#", "Search Terms", "Search Options", and "Actions". The first result is "Late-breaking news" by Lee HC, Alberg A, Maddox TM, Bottom Line Health, 2008 Dec; 22 (12): 1-2. The second result is "Quality of life with PCI versus medical therapy in stable coronary disease..." by Beltrame JF, Tavella R, Cutri N, Rodriguez AE, Maree AO, Palacios JF, Reppel M, Radke PW, Schunkert H, Kinlay S, et al., New England Journal of Medicine, 2008 Nov 20; 359 (21): 2289-93. The third result is "Review: an early invasive strategy has similar benefits in men and women with NSTEMI or unstable angina" by Granger CB, Annals of Internal Medicine, 2008 Nov 18; 149 (10): ACP Journal Club: JCS-7. On the right side, there are filters for "Peer Reviewed", "Research Article", and "English Language", and a "Filter by Publication Date" section with a date range from 1980 to 2008. The "Update Results" button is also visible.

For any further help you can call the Reference Desk at (973) 972-4358.