



Basic Searching in CINAHL

CINAHL covers the nursing and allied health literature, and can be useful for any search on a health sciences topic.

Accessing the Database

1. Go to the Hardin Library homepage at <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/>
2. Click on the link that says “CINAHL.” It is located near the top left of the page under the heading “Popular Databases.”
3. If you are off-campus, you will be prompted for your Hawk ID and password.

Searching via Subject Terms (More structured search meant to yield higher quality citations)

1. Break your search down into simple concepts. For example, if you want articles on the use of pet therapy for people with mental disorders, search for pet therapy first, then mental disorders. You can combine searches later.
2. Make sure the “Suggest Subject Terms” box is checked, and then type one concept into the search box and click on the button that says “Search.”
3. Check the box to the left of the most appropriate term. Notice that you will now see options for subheadings as well as the definition of the term if available. Subheadings can help you focus your search.

Searching: CINAHL Plus | Choose Databases »
☒ Suggest Subject Terms

The screenshot shows the 'Results for: pet therapy' section. On the left, there's a list of subheadings with checkboxes. 'Pet Therapy' is checked. Below it, 'Pet Therapies Use: Pet Therapy' and 'Alternative Therapies' are listed. On the right, the 'Subheadings for: Pet Therapy' section is expanded, showing 'Include All Subheadings' (checked) and 'Adverse Effects/AE'. A red arrow points to the 'Include All Subheadings' checkbox. To the right of this is a 'Search Database' button and a search box containing 'Pet Therapy'.

4. Once you have selected your subheadings, click the large green “Search Database” button. (NOTE: “Explode” will make your search more comprehensive. Use “Major Concept” only if you have already run the search and come up with too many results).
5. The database will run your search and present you with results. Clear the search box. Repeat steps
6. Repeat steps 2-4 for each additional concept.
7. Click the link for “Search History/Alerts. It is located below the search boxes.

The screenshot shows the search history/alerts section. It has a search box with '(MH "Pet Therapy")' and a dropdown menu set to 'Select a Field (optional)'. There are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons. Below this are two more rows for AND searches. At the bottom, there are links for 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', 'Visual Search', and 'Search History'. A red arrow points to the 'Search History' link.

- Clear your search box of all text. Now, you want to combine your search sets, so, check the boxes to the left of the searches you already ran, and then click on the little button that says “Search with AND” at the top of the Search History box.

Search History box interface showing two searches, S1 and S2, with checkboxes selected and the 'Search with AND' button highlighted.

Select / deselect all	Search with AND	Search with OR	Delete Searches	Refresh Search Results
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="button" value="Refresh Search Results"/>
Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S2	(MH "Mental Disorders+")	Search modes - Find all my search terms	View Results (209447) View Details Edit	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S1	(MH "Pet Therapy")	Search modes - Find all my search terms	View Results (559) View Details Edit	

- You will see a new search to your search history box. To view the results, click on the link that says “View Results.”

Search History box interface showing three searches, S1, S2, and S3, with the 'View Results' link for S3 highlighted.

<input type="checkbox"/> S3	S1 and S2	Search modes - Find all my search terms	View Results (119) View Details Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> S2	(MH "Mental Disorders+")	Search modes - Find all my search terms	View Results (209447) View Details Edit
<input type="checkbox"/> S1	(MH "Pet Therapy")	Search modes - Find all my search terms	View Results (559) View Details Edit

Refining Your Search

- If you need to find information on a certain age group, from a certain time period (e.g. the last ten years) or of a certain publication type (like peer reviewed), you will want to limit your results. To do this, click on the link that says “Show More” located in the “Refine Your Results” box to the left of the retrieved citations.
- Now, select the limits that are appropriate to your search. Keep in mind that you may select more than one, but the more you choose, the fewer results you will get. You might want to limit to only a few options at a time.
- When you have selected your limits, go to the top or bottom of the new screen that appears and click on the “Search” button. Once again, you will see a new search with the option to “View Results.”


Refine your results box interface showing options for Research Article, Peer Reviewed, and English Language, with a date range from 1989 to 2010 and a 'Show More' link highlighted.

Managing Results

- If you want to print or email citations, you can do so by clicking on the little folders near the bottom of the citations.
- Once you have selected all the appropriate citations, click on the folder icon at the top right of the screen. Now, you will see links for emailing or printing citations.

Citation management interface showing a citation for 'Mental Health Weekly, 2010 Jun 21; 2' and a folder icon highlighted.

Finding Full Text

- Click the title of an article to see more information, including options for full text access, abstracts (when available), and subject terms.
- To see if full text is available, use the InfoLink button .
- If no full text is available, contact us at Hardin or use our interlibrary loan service <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/illa.html>