Boolean Worksheet: A Medline/PubMed Search

Step 1: Choose databases that suit your research question

**Sample Search**

**Sample Research Question:** Is a checklist an effective intervention for improving patient safety in operating rooms?

**Recommended Databases:**

- CINAHLPlus
- **Medline** (via PubMed or Ovid)
- PsycINFO
- Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
- JBI (Joanna Briggs Institute) EBP Database
- Scopus
- Web of Science
- Embase
- ProQuest Central
- Dissertations and Theses Global
- Other

**Your Search**

**Your Research Question:**

**Recommended Databases:**

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Step 2: Perform a simple keyword search

Identify keywords that describe the important concepts in your research question. (For a PICO question, select keywords that describe your patient, problem or population and your chosen intervention)

**Sample Keywords:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1 (Patient or Problem or Population)</th>
<th>Concept 2 (Intervention)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>operating rooms</td>
<td>checklist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connecting keywords with **AND** in the database search retrieves article citations that contain both terms.

**Your Keywords:**

- Concept 1
  - (Patient or Problem or Population)
  - (your concept 1)
- Concept 2
  - (Intervention)
  - (your concept 2)
Step 3: Expand your search with MeSH terms and other synonyms

From the initial search results, retrieve alternate terms/synonyms/MeSH subject terms for one or both concepts.

Combining these terms with OR expands the search to find citations with ANY of the added terms (Remember - OR retrieves MORE!)

Sample Synonyms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>operating rooms</td>
<td>checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surgical procedures, operative</td>
<td>checklists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surgical safety</td>
<td>check list*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A larger OR’d set of MeSH/keywords/synonyms may be recombined with AND to narrow the search

Step 4: Add limits to your results

Most databases allow you to add “limits” or “filters” that restrict search results by characteristics such as type of study, type of article, date, time factors, age group, etc.

In your search, look for database ‘filters’, limits’ or ‘refinements’ to narrow your search.

You may want to consider how you can apply the following filters to best suit your research needs:

Article Type: ________________
Date: ______________________
Language: ________________
Age Group*: ________________

*Pro Tip: If you are looking for articles about a particular age group of patients, DON’T include terms like ‘pediatric’ or ‘elderly’ in your search. Instead, use the age group filter that is available in many databases.