

Template Example for Search Strategies in Databases

Develop table for key concepts in research question (e.g. according to PICO model) and find search terms for each concept –identify free text terms and controlled vocabulary terms to create your searches; join all terms within each concept with **OR** .

| | Concept 1 | Concept 2 | Concept 3 | Concept 4 |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Key concepts | COPD | Elderly | Nursing | Perceptions Experiences |
| Free text terms / natural language terms (synonyms, UK/US terminology, medical/laymen’s terms, acronyms/abbreviations, drug brands, more narrow search terms) <i>Consider: phrase searching, proximity operators, truncation, wildcards, field qualification e.g. title, abstract</i> | COPD Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease | Elderly Older Aged Geriatric | Nursing | Attitudes Beliefs Values Understanding Responsibilities Rights Role Impressions Recommendations |
| Controlled vocabulary terms / Subject terms (MeSH terms / Subject Headings) <i>Consider: explode, major headings, subheadings</i> | MeSH terms Pulmonary Disease, Chronic Obstructive | MeSH terms Aged Frail elderly Health Services for the Aged | MeSH terms Nurse-patient relations Nursing Hospice and palliative care nursing Primary care nursing | |

Search 1 result (#1) =

Search 2 result (#2) =

Search 3 result (#3) =

Search 4 result (#4) =

Now you are confident you have found all relevant information for each concept in your topic, join them together using **AND**. In most databases you do this in your search history. Your search may be #1 AND #2 AND #3 AND #4

Notes for Ara Databases:

- Pubmed – You can use MeSH headings in **Advanced Search** and tick each needed concept and click “Add to search builder”
- CINAHL subject headings in **Advanced Search** work similarly to MeSH in Pubmed. Tick the concept and **Explode** to include all subheadings. “Browse additional terms” to add other headings.
- Proquest **Thesaurus** in **Advanced Search** includes MeSH
- Use Ovid’s **Search translator** to translate a **Pubmed** search strategy into Ovid terms for searching in Ovid Basic Search