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This work is adapted from materials originally developed by the Education, Research and Clinical Outreach Department at the OHSU Library.

Searching PubMed:
Identifying Keywords and MeSH Terms

Exercise Instructions

Due date: TBD

Purpose

As we discussed in our instructional session on [*x date*], it is important for patient outcomes that healthcare professionals engage in finding and utilizing the best evidence for treatment for their patients. This is a core part of evidence-based practice (EBP). Forming clinical questions and identifying and appraising evidence are also skills you are expected to demonstrate upon your first day of residency (see Core Entrustable Professional Activity for Entering Residency #7).

Searching in PubMed can help you to identify evidence for clinical questions. Key to developing a search strategy in PubMed is identifying the keywords and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH terms) you will use in your searches. This exercise builds off the work you did in Exercise #1 in which you formed a searchable clinical question using the PICO framework. You will take the clinical question you developed in that exercise and identify keywords and MeSH terms that you can use in your search strategies.

Task

To complete this exercise, you should:
1. Fill in on the worksheet the searchable clinical question you developed in Exercise #1.
2. Break your question down into its core concepts using the PICO framework.
3. Think of as many keyword synonyms as you can for each concept. If you can think of only one or a couple of keywords/keyword phrases for a concept, that is okay.
4. Identify MeSH terms for each concept using at least one of the three techniques covered in our instructional session on [*x date*]:
   a. Identify relevant articles on your topic in PubMed by doing a keyword search, and look at MeSH terms that have been assigned to those articles.
   b. Go directly to the MeSH database and search each keyword/keyword phrase in it individually to find MeSH terms.
   c. Do a keyword search in PubMed and look at the "Details" for your search on the Advanced page to see what MeSH terms PubMed mapped to your keywords. *Remember that you should not solely rely on this method to find MeSH terms for your concepts as PubMed's algorithms do not always map correctly or completely.*

Johnson, Tova. (2021, July 29). Searching PubMed [Assignment prompt]. Pacific University Oregon Research Repository.]https://commons.pacificu.edu/work/ns/c7dea5de-174c-42c2-88e1-ae2fc3804125

Please view [x:xx] to [x:xx] of the class recording [*include link to recording*] to review how to use these three techniques to find MeSH terms.

Note: Sometimes no MeSH term exists for a concept, and that is okay. If you do not find any MeSH terms for a particular concept, just leave that part of the worksheet blank or fill it in with "N/A."

Criteria for success

Please look at the example assignment to see what a successfully completed worksheet looks like.

- You demonstrate that you can identify one or more keywords/keyword phrases for a concept.
- You demonstrate that you can identify relevant MeSH terms for a concept.
- You describe the technique(s) that you used to find MeSH terms for each of your concepts.
- You describe what you found to be most challenging about completing this exercise.