

## Keyword Searching: Tips and Tricks

### Use Synonyms

- Keyword searching will only retrieve articles that use the exact word you put in the search box
- Think of alternative words to describe what you are searching for
  - Example 1: nursing homes OR assisted living facilities
  - Example 2: high blood pressure OR hypertension OR hbp

### Truncate

- Truncation uses symbols (or wildcards) to replace letters in words
- Truncation is used to get more results than you would with the one word alone
- Different databases and search engines use different symbols
  - The most common truncation symbol is \* (the asterisk symbol)
  - But you may also find search engines that use the symbols: ? (question mark) or # (pound sign)
- For example:
  - Diagnos\* will retrieve articles that use keywords like diagnosis, diagnosing, diagnostic, diagnostics, etc
  - Cell\* will retrieve articles that use keywords like cellular, cellphone, cellulite, cells, cellist, cells, cellophane, cellulose, etc

### Spelling

- Try using British spelling alternatives, for example:
  - Pediatrics or Paediatrics
  - Analyze or Analyse
- For more British spelling alternatives visit: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/words/british-and-american-spelling>

### Use Fields

- Many databases allow you to search in different fields (such as the abstract, or article title, etc)
- One way to limit results to more relevant articles are to look for keywords in the article abstract or article title fields.
- There are several different ways to do this depending on which database you are using, here are two examples:
  - EBM Reviews – type **.ab, .ti** at the end of your keyword search terms
  - PsycINFO – Next to the search box, change the **Select a Field (optional)** drop down menu to search in any of the specified fields listed in that menu (see screenshot on page 2)

Searching: **PsycINFO** | [Choose Databases](#)

Suggest Subject Terms

**Select a Field (optional)**

AND

AND

[Basic Search](#) [Advanced Search](#) [Search History](#)

**itions** \_\_\_\_\_

**Modes and Expanders** \_\_\_\_\_

- Select a Field (optional)
- TX All Text
- TI Title
- AU Author
- AF Author Affiliation
- SU Subjects
- DE Subjects [exact]
- MJ Word in Major Subject Heading
- AB Abstract