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Enhancing Search Strategies to Improve Clinical and Translational Research in Health Promotion

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Purpose

➢Key component in preparing clinical researchers is the development of more effective and efficient use of information technology.
➢The use of the MeSH Database requires that a researcher have an understanding of how the database functions. We will provide a step by step plan on how to access , use and refine a literature search.
➢Provide practical suggestions for conducting better PubMed searches

Methods

➢One clicks on the MeSH Database icon to begin the search process.

➢Upon entering the MeSH Database one types in a single word or phrase clicking “Go” in order to enter the MeSH thesaurus.
➢Identify the best MeSH term and click on the link under selected term (Hispanic). This opens a window that contains the broader and narrower terms that identify this specific MeSH term. This window enables one to tailor the search

➢Using the drop down menu with “Send To” in it , click on option “Search box with AND”.

Methods (cont’d)

➢One then enters the other MeSH term for the second concept. Click under the term to review the broader and narrower terms. One can restrict to major headings found under the term. Repeat process for entering a third term, if needed. Using the drop-down menu with “Send To” click the option “Search box with AND”. The selected terms will appear in the box above the Search PubMed icon.

➢If search strategy looks appropriate, click the rectangular “Search PubMed “icon which brings up the articles indexed under the MeSH terms. One can also apply limits to the search by clicking on the “Limits” tab and checking “human”, “English language” and “published in the last five years.”

➢If retrieval is still too large, one can experiment by restricting to major topic only one or several of the MeSH terms.
➢MeSH terms encompass larger retrievals whereas the restricting to Major topic term will focus the search primarily to that topic .
➢At the end of the search one can click on the “History” tab and retrieve the search history. This allows the researcher to document the search strategy for future reference.

Outcomes

➢The researcher is able to develop well-designed and tested queries that will contribute to an understanding of, for instance, health promotion among young Hispanic/Latino men.

Advantages

➢Provides the researcher with a basic knowledge of the MeSH Database.
➢Allows the researcher to create a more focused literature search, thus eliminating irrelevant references.
➢Teaches the researcher retrieval strategies that will enhance his/her ability to critically appraise the relevant health science literature.

Disadvantages

➢The PubMed search may be so narrow that it can miss important aspects of the biomedical/nursing literature of interest to the researcher.

Conclusions

➢Queries of the biomedical literature can be developed and refined to optimize retrieval of articles relevant to, for instance, health promotion among Hispanic/Latino men.
➢Understanding the use of bibliographic and research databases is crucial for working in a changing health science environment.

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