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To refine your search for randomized controlled trials (RCTs), add these specific keywords and phrases to your search query. These "validated search filters" have been tested for accuracy and published in scientific studies, ensuring they provide reliable results. Try using a combination of RCT-related terms such as "randomized," "controlled clinical trial," "placebo," and "drug therapy." You can also use other study design-specific keywords like "quantitative studies," "follow-up studies," or "prospective studies." Additionally, you can filter by study types, such as single-blinded, double-blinded, triple-blinded, or controlled trials. Use specific phrases like "allocation" to find studies on random assignment. To further refine your search, try using keywords related to treatment outcomes, effectiveness evaluation, and clinical trial design. You can also use RSS feeds to stay updated with the latest information in your field and utilize citation management software to organize and format your references. Some popular tools for citation management include EndNote, Zotero, or RefWorks, which can help streamline your writing process. Developing a comprehensive search strategy is crucial for retrieving accurate results from a database. It involves combining key concepts of your search question and adapting to the specific database's functionality. This entails considering various aspects such as possible search terms, keywords, truncated, and wildcard variations, as well as subject headings. Each database has its unique characteristics, requiring researchers to tailor their search strategy accordingly. Some may necessitate developing multiple strategies for different areas of research. It is advisable to test and refine your approach based on the search results. To illustrate this concept, consider an example literature search in PsycINFO regarding self-esteem. The search utilized subject headings and keyword searches combined with Boolean operators, exemplifying how various techniques such as truncation, wildcards, and adjacency searching can be employed. therapist therapists or search for variant spellings of words using the wildcard function use it to find american and british spellings such as “behavio?r” in medline will find both behaviour and behavior try different symbols such as “wom#n” which finds woman and also women watch this video to learn more about searching with truncation and wildcards use adjacency searching for more accurate results by specifying how close two words appear together commands differ among databases so make sure to consult database guides searching for “physician ADJ3 relationship” will find both physician and relationship within two major words of each other When conducting literature reviews, it's essential to go beyond the initial articles and explore how they have been cited by others. This is where citation searching comes into play. By using tools like Google Scholar or Web of Science, you can uncover: * Whether other authors have built upon your sources * More recent papers on related subjects * How established ideas have evolved over time Citation searching can be a valuable addition to your literature search, but it's crucial not to rely solely on cited references. A robust literature search is necessary to mitigate publication bias. When dealing with large result sets, techniques like Boolean operators and search filters can help refine your search. For example: * Using "AND" instead of "OR" when searching for specific terms * Limiting by date range or language to focus on relevant sources * Applying search limits carefully to avoid narrowing the search too much By leveraging these strategies, you can create a more comprehensive literature review and ensure that your research is well-informed. To ensure comprehensive results, researchers employ various methods, including the Cochrane Collaboration's filters to limit search outcomes to randomized controlled trials. Additionally, manual searching is conducted by reviewing key journals in the subject area and scrutinizing each publication individually or electronically with specific criteria in mind. This approach also involves examining sections or chapters within books, thus capturing material that might have gone unnoticed otherwise. As no database search strategy can be entirely flawless, it's essential to account for potential oversights such as items not indexed correctly or missing from databases altogether. Moreover, errors in the search process itself could lead to incomplete results. Therefore, documenting one's search methodology is crucial. This documentation involves recording where searches were conducted and how many results were obtained. Keeping track of activities during the search process significantly eases justification and recall of findings afterwards. Utilizing a template for documenting search activity can facilitate this process. The type and level of detail in the documentation depend on the purpose of the literature search, whether for systematic reviews or other research endeavors. When writing up the search methodology, it's essential to provide enough detail so that others can replicate the steps taken and achieve similar results. This includes specifying sources searched, providers used (e.g., Medline through Ovid), any grey literature sources utilized, dates of searches, applied limits (language, publication date ranges, etc.), individuals or organizations contacted, and hand-searched materials. For systematic reviews, including detailed documentation in the Methods section is essential for transparency and reproducibility. This can be further supported by adding the search strategy as an appendix to the document. The Cochrane Library offers several examples of how this should be presented, showcasing specific search terms used, techniques employed (truncation, adjacency), and combinations thereof (AND/OR). To conduct a systematic search, refer to the PRISMA website and its flow diagram under Key Documents. Save relevant articles by printing or exporting article records from databases, usually as text files or RIS files. Directly downloading full texts is often not possible; instead, follow "full text" links or utilize library subscriptions. Record your search strategy in case you need to re-run it later. Take advantage of database alerts for staying updated on new research. For OvidSP databases (including Medline and PsycINFO), consult the advanced Medline workbook (PDF) for more information. You may find various types of relevant information, including government documents, grey literature, patents, statistics, and academic journals. Familiarize yourself with subject-specific databases, which are ideal for journal article searches and literature reviews. Choose appropriate databases based on your research topic and explore multiple subject pages if necessary. Other valuable resources include Scopus and Web of Science, which offer expansive records of research literature, including conference proceedings, letters, and grey literature. Access full-text articles through library subscriptions or links within these databases. Consider making a list of the information sources you want to search for your research using a search activity template (DOCX). Utilize online tools, such as handy guides and videos, to optimize your use of available resources. When using Google Scholar, set up University of Leeds links in your results by following these instructions: 1. Click the 3-bar ellipsis to reveal the menu. 2. Select the settings icon (a cog). This will filter results, bringing you back to Library pages for verified sources included in subscribed databases. To access University of Leeds resources on Google Scholar, go to "Library links" and type in "Leeds". Select "University of Leeds: Check@Leeds – Check@Leeds" and click "Save". A link for "Check@Leeds" will appear beside any material we have access to. A search strategy is a structured approach to key terms used to search databases. It combines the main concepts of your research question to retrieve accurate results, considering all possible search terms, keywords, truncated variations, wildcard searches, and subject headings where applicable. Each database has its own way of working, so you need to adapt your search strategy for each one. You may also want to develop separate strategies if your research covers multiple areas. Testing and refining your strategies after reviewing the search results is a good idea. The example literature search in PsycINFO shows how subject headings and keyword searches are combined using Boolean operators and techniques like truncation, wildcards, and adjacency searching. To develop your search strategy, you can use various techniques such as identifying synonyms with a thesaurus or searching for concepts on Google Scholar and scanning results for alternative words. Examine relevant abstracts or articles for alternative words and phrases, and create lists of words and phrases for each concept. As you search, you may discover new key terms to enhance your strategy. Using truncation and wildcards can save time by finding alternative keywords. You can search with keywords in free text fields, and use quotation marks for exact phrase searching. Most databases allow phrase searching, but check the guide if unsure. Truncated and wildcard searches can also be used to find variations of your key terms. Truncation and wildcards are useful tools in database searching. Truncation is denoted by an asterisk (*) in many databases. For instance, “therap*” would retrieve therapy, therapies, therapist, or therapists. A wildcard can be used to search for variant spellings of words, such as finding both behaviour and behavior in Medline. There are different wildcard symbols, so it's best to check the database help section for guidance. Citation searching allows you to find articles cited by other publications, helping you discover recent papers on similar subjects and confirm known ideas or innovations.

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