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Medline

Medline is an authoritative collection of medicine, life sciences, health and biomedical research provided by the US National Library of Medicine. It contains 31 million references from 5,200 international scholarly journals dated from 1946 and content is updated daily. Medline also offers an alternative method of searching via MeSH (Medical Subject Headings).

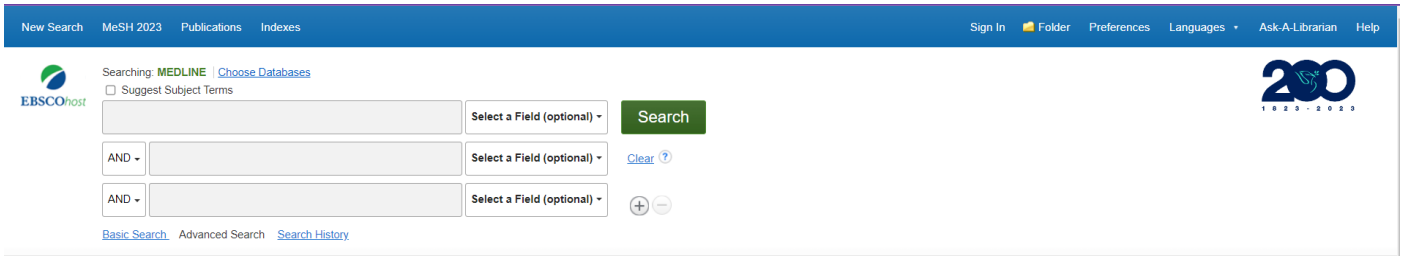
EBSCO is the primary platform for the Medline database; however, content is also included in the Web of Science database. This guide refers to the EBSCO database platform.

This database is available on and off campus and may be accessed from **Databases** in the **Electronic Library** at: www.ljmu.ac.uk/library/e-library

- Go to **Discover**, if prompted, **Sign in** with your **LJMU username@ljmu.ac.uk** and **password**
- Select the **Databases** option
- Type **Medline** into the search box and select the **search icon**
- Select **Medline** from the results list and then the online link in the **View Online** box

Searching

Medline will open in Advanced Search mode.



Enter subject keywords into the search boxes and select **Search** to find relevant books, journal articles and proceedings.

Select the plus icon to include additional search boxes if you would like to enter a more complex search.

Search Tips

Boolean Operators

Boolean search operators: **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**, link your keywords together and enable you to search more effectively:

- The term **AND**, will narrow a search to only find records which contain all search terms, for example:

diabetes **AND** insulin

- The term **OR**, will widen a search to find records containing any of your alternative search terms, but not necessarily all, for example:
  blood **OR** plasma

- The term **NOT**, excludes part of a topic or specific terms from a search, for example:
  asthma **NOT** inhaler

Exact word or phrases

You can search for an exact word or phrase of two or more words by surrounding it with quotation marks. If you type **"drug resistant bacteria"** in quotation marks this ensures that the database only retrieves records where these words appear together as a phrase.

Truncation

An asterisk is a truncation symbol that can be used after the first few characters of a word to include all varying endings of that word in a search, for example hormon* will find hormon**e**, hormon**es**, and hormon**al**.

Alternative Search Terms

If you are struggling to find information on a given topic – try changing your search terms to include alternative keywords, for example an alternative term for **vitamin C** is **ascorbic acid**.

Tick the **Suggest Subject Terms** box at the top of the Advanced Search screen to identify alternative or preferred search terms for your topic within the Medline database. This can be helpful if there are international differences in terminology.

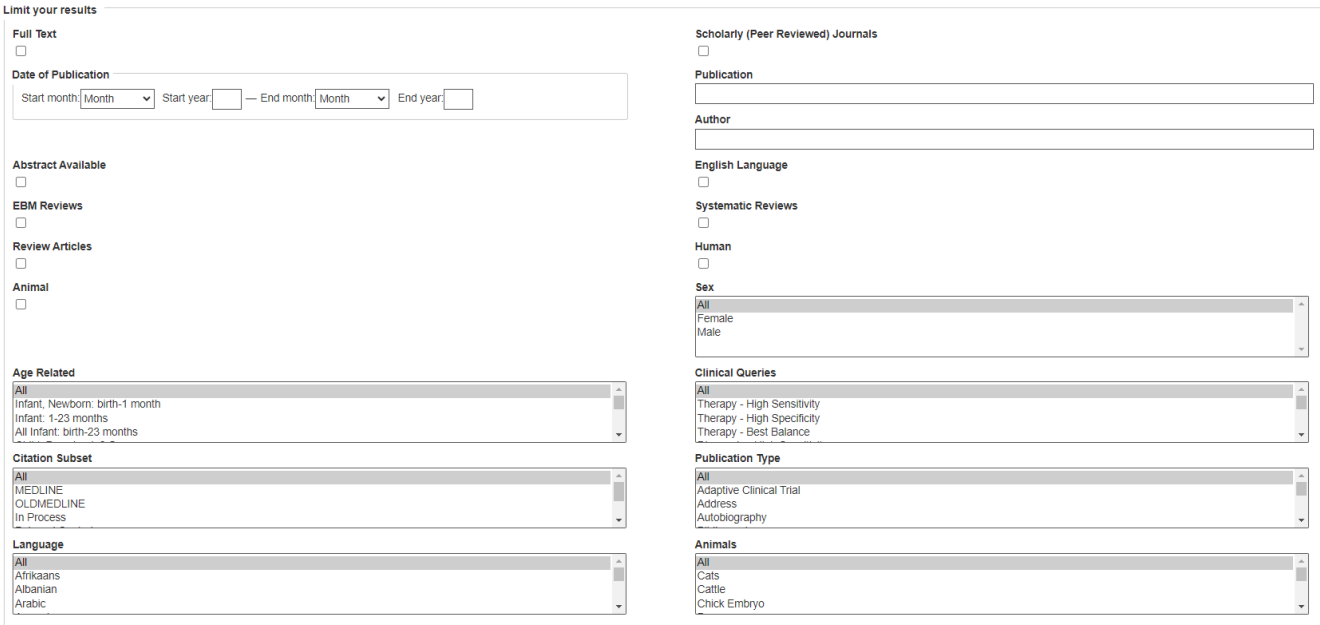
Search Limits

Each search box has a drop-down menu next to it, this enables you to choose where the database will search for your keywords.

The default setting **Select a Field (optional)** will search each item record for your search terms. You can make your search more specific or broader by selecting different options, for example within the **TX All Text**, **AB Abstract** or **MW Word in Subject Heading**.

- **TX All Text** searches will search the article record as well as the entire full-text document to identify all possible matches for your search terms. This is a good way of expanding your search so you don't miss related results and is particularly useful if you are looking into a new area of research.
- **AB Abstract** or **MW Word in Subject Heading** searches are more specific. If your search terms appear in one of these fields the article will be completely focused on your topic or include a major mention of it. This can be useful if there is a massive amount of research available on your topic as it will help to find the most relevant and subject-specific results.

Further refinement options such as **Age Related**, **Citation Subset** and **Clinical Queries** are available on the Advanced Search screen to limit your search.



You can also limit your searches by **Publication Date**, **Sources Type**, **Subject: Major Heading**, **Age** or **Gender** using the refinement options on the search results page. This is usually the preferred method for limiting a search because it can be helpful to see how many resources have been published on your topic in total before adding any limits.

MeSH – Medical Subject Headings

Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) are terms/categories assigned to each article in Medline, which represent the main subjects examined by the research.

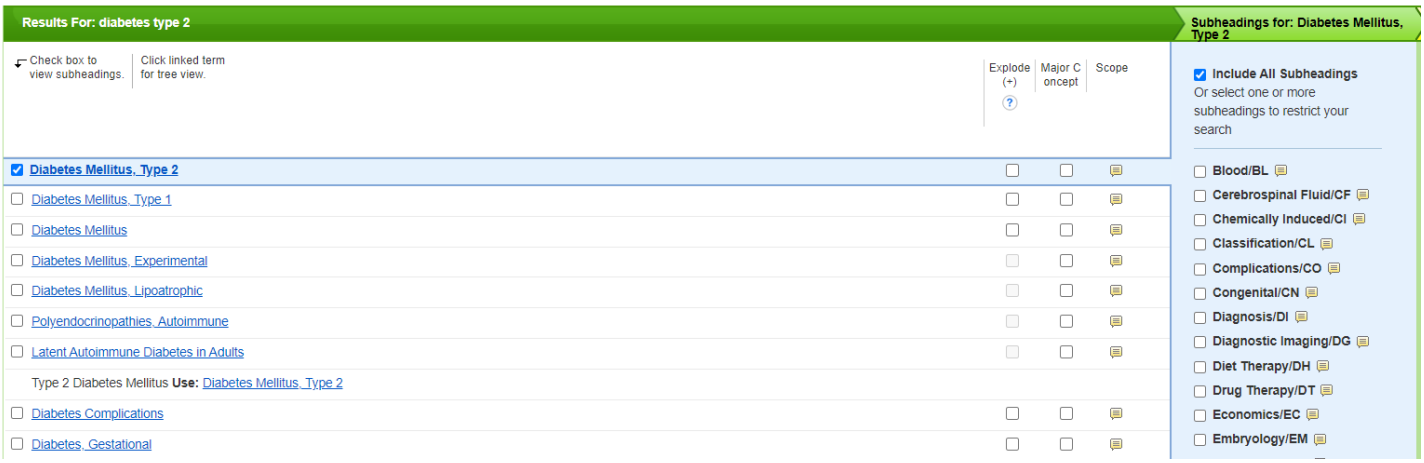
Traditional keyword searches only find research that contains the exact search terms you enter. MeSH offers an alternative method of searching, whereby the database provides access to all of the research that the database contains on a specific subject. MeSH searches usually produce a smaller number of highly relevant search results.

Select MeSH

at the top of the screen to begin searching. Enter your subject term/keyword into the search box and then select Browse.

Medline will show a list of MeSH terms that closely match your search and identify any preferred terms for your topic. Select a term by selecting the tick box.

When you select a term, Medline will display additional Subheadings related to your topic that you may choose to narrow your search, for example Adverse Effects, Diagnosis, Immunology, Metabolism, Psychology, Toxicity, etc… or you can include all Subheadings in your search by default.



There are also other options available to improve your search results: **Explode** and **Major Concept**.

- **Explode** is used to expand your search. Medline headings are 'exploded' to include wider research that is indexed or connected to the specific term you select, as well as retrieving all relevant research on the topic and any narrower subsections of it.
- **Major Concept** refines your search and increases the relevancy of your search results. Medline will only find research that contains a major mention of your subject or focuses exclusively on it.

Tick the option to include Explode and/or Major Concept in your MeSH search.

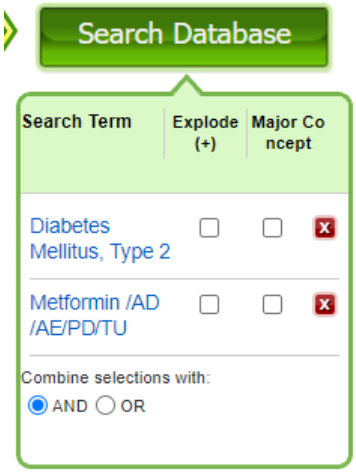
Select **Scope** for further information about the subject covered by the MeSH term.

To add other terms to your MeSH search, select **Browse additional Terms**

Browse Additional Terms at the bottom of the screen and follow the steps as above.

If searching for more than one MeSH term, you need to choose whether to combine your terms with **OR**, or **AND**.

- **OR** will widen your search and find research that includes <u>any</u> of your MeSH terms but not necessarily all.
- **AND** will narrow your search and ensure that research contains <u>all</u> selected MeSH terms.

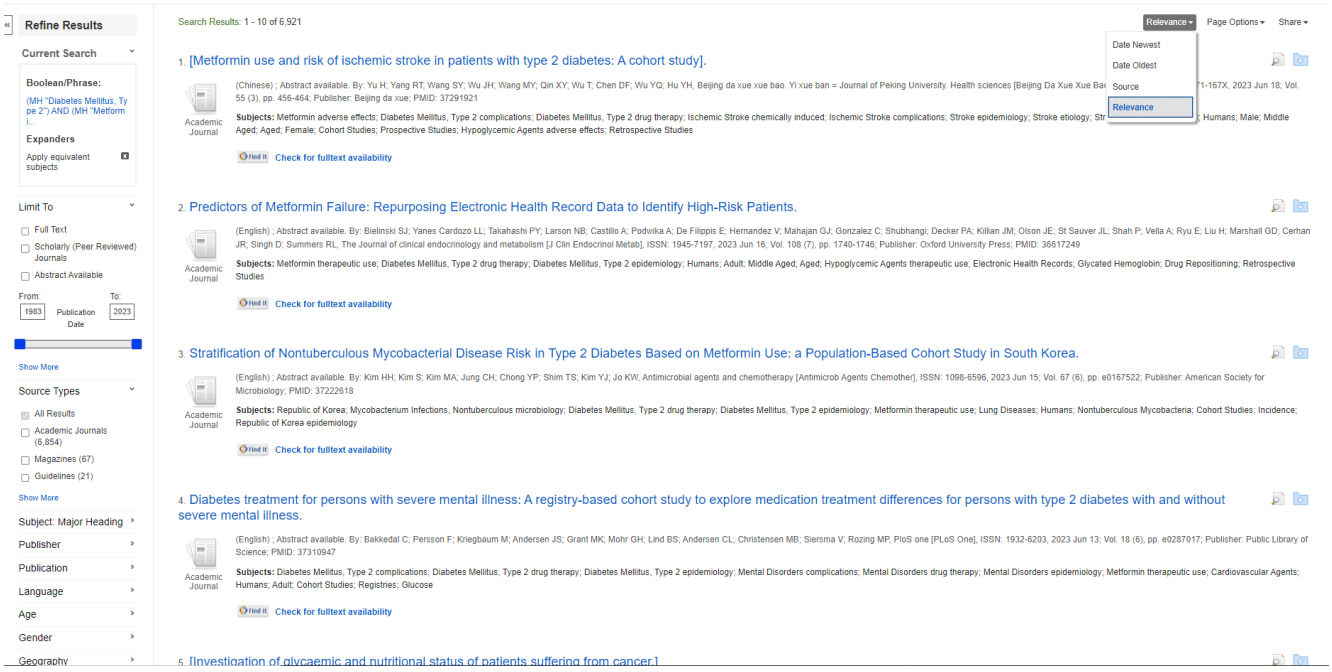


Once you have selected relevant MeSH terms select the **Search Database** button to view your results.

Displaying Results

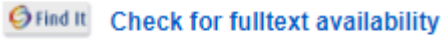
Search results are sorted by **Relevance** although this may be changed to **Date** order using the drop down menu.

The number of search results per page and detailed/brief record formats may be selected using **Page Options**.



To view further details of an item, either select its title or hover your mouse over the magnifying glass icon to display the abstract/summary.

To view full-text content – select the **Linked Full Text** link

to open the article within Medline or select **Find It** 

to check for full-text availability from other electronic resources.

Email, Print, Save

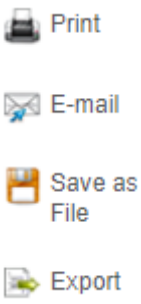
You can print, email or save selected item records from the list of search results in Medline.

Select the blue **Add to Folder** icon next to an item record that you wish to keep.

The icon will turn yellow to indicate the item is in your folder.

At the top of the screen select **Folder** to view all item records you have identified.

Tick the checkbox next to individual item records or select all, then choose whether you wish to **Print**, **Email** or **Save** the records from the side menu.



Item records are stored temporarily in the Folder for the duration of your internet browsing session. You can register for a free personal account with the database to permanently save record details.

You can also **Print** or **Save** full-text content from within a PDF Full Text document by selecting the appropriate icon on the toolbar.

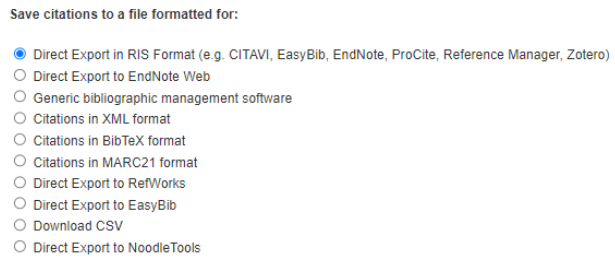
Export Citations

You can export citations into Referencing Managing software such as EndNote.

Select the blue **Add to Folder** icon next to an item record that you wish to keep. The icon will turn yellow to indicate the item is in your folder.

Go to the folder and select the checkboxes next to the item records you wish to export. Select **Export** from the options on the side menu.

Select the appropriate format from the list presented and then select **Save** on the left side of the screen.



Alerts

You can save your searches and set-up database alerts to notify you when new resources are published that match your search criteria. This helps you to keep up to date with research and new developments/innovations in your subject area.

You will need to register for a free personal account with Medline in order to use this feature.

To set-up an alert – sign in to your personal account and perform your search.

Select **Share**

at the top of the search results page.

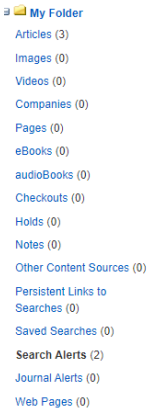
From the list of options, select **E-mail Alert**

in the Create An Alert section.

Name your search alert and provide your university email address. Choose how frequently you would like to receive email notifications about new resources, for example weekly or monthly.

Alerts will stay active until you delete them.

You can view and edit your alerts by logging into your personal account, selecting **Folder** and then **Search Alerts** from the menu on the left side of the screen.



Alternatively, you can select **Search History,** which is located underneath the Advanced Search boxes, then select **Retrieve Alerts**.

To change the alerts, select the **Edit Alert** icon.

Further Help

Further help is available by selecting **Help** in the top right corner of the screen. You can also contact your Academic Engagement Librarian for help and guidance via **LJMU HelpMe.**

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