

## INFORMATION SKILLS

*University Library*

# Searching CINAHL Using Thesaurus Headings

The CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature) database uses the same platform as the University Library's Discovery tool. In addition to basic search and advanced search features this database also allows you to search using a subject specific thesaurus. A thesaurus is a tool that uses a controlled vocabulary to search all the database records. Other databases offering a thesaurus search option include PsycInfo and Medline (also both available on the same platform). In the case of Medline the subject headings are MeSH Headings (the U.S. National Library of Medicine's controlled vocabulary). The subject headings used in CINAHL and PsycInfo relate to those individual databases only.

### Starting off

1. Go to the University Library website <https://library.port.ac.uk>
2. Click on **Resources** and then click on **Databases** on the drop down menu
3. Search for **CINAHL** and select this title on the results page. Alternatively you can search for it using the Discovery or Catalogue search or link to it through your [subject page](#).

The home page for this resource is shown below.

The screenshot shows the CINAHL search interface. At the top, there is a search bar with placeholder text "Search CINAHL...". Below the search bar are three dropdown menus for "Select a Field (optional)" with options "AND", "OR", and "NOT". To the right of these are "Search" and "Clear" buttons. The main search area has a large input field for the search term. To the left of the search field is a "Search Options" sidebar. This sidebar includes sections for "Search modes and expanders" (with "Relevancy ranked" selected), "Limit your results" (with "Linked full text" and "Abstract Available" checkboxes), "Author" (with a search input field), "Research Article" (checkbox), "Exclude MEDLINE records" (checkbox), "Pregnancy" (checkbox), "Outpatients" (checkbox), and "First Author is Nurse" (checkbox). To the right of the search field is another sidebar titled "References Available" which includes fields for "Published Date" (month and year dropdowns), "English Language" (checkbox), "Peer Reviewed" (checkbox), "Include Pre CINAHL" (checkbox), "Evidence-Based Practice" (checkbox), "Inputs" (checkbox), "Human" (checkbox), and "Any Author is Nurse" (checkbox).

### Searching

The search box at the top of the home screen allows you to search the database using keywords. This is the same as for all resources on the EBSCO platform – for more hints and tips on general searching please refer to the Discovery Library Guide

#### How to search using CINAHL Headings

On the CINAHL home search screen select CINAHL Headings from the purple menu bar at the top of the screen.

This takes you to a screen with a single search box. The option for 'Relevancy ranked' will have been automatically selected. You can change this to select 'Term Begins With' or 'Term Contains'.

The screenshot shows the CINAHL search interface. At the top, there are links for 'New Search', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Headings', 'Cited References', and 'More'. On the right, there are links for 'Sign In', 'Folder', 'Preferences', 'Languages', 'Contact Us', and 'Help'. Below this is the 'Library' logo. The main search area has a search bar with placeholder text 'Search all fields' and dropdown menus for 'Term Begins With', 'Term Contains', and 'Relevancy Ranked'. There are also 'View Tutorial' and 'Browse' buttons. At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'About and Advanced Search', 'PRIMO Support Site', 'Privacy Policy', 'Terms of Use', and 'Copyright'. A small note at the bottom right says '© 2016 EDSOCCO Industries, Inc. All rights reserved.'

Type a term into the search box. This term can be the lay term for the medical subject you are interested in e.g. heart attack then press Enter or click on Browse. Your results screen will look something like this:

The screenshot shows the CINAHL search results for the term 'heart attack'. The results are displayed in a tree structure where 'Heart Attack' is expanded to show narrower terms like 'Myocardial Infarction' and broader terms like 'Heart Disease'. To the left of each term is a checkbox. To the right of the tree is a search control panel with three checkboxes: 'Search Term', 'Explode (M)', and 'Major Concept'. Below the search controls is a note: 'Check a box to select a subject heading to begin tracking your search history.' At the bottom of the results page are buttons for 'Prev', 'More >', and 'Browse Additional Terms'.

If you enter a lay term you will be referred to the preferred term within the thesaurus. Clicking on any of the thesaurus terms will open up the tree to which this term belongs showing narrower and broader terms. Clicking on the box to the left of a term will add that term to the box on the right of the screen in preparation for searching the database. At the bottom of the screen is a 'Browse Additional Terms' link, clicking on this will allow you to add more terms to your search. Once you are happy with the terms in the box on the right of the screen click the 'Search Database' button to begin your search. Results will be displayed as per a Discovery search.

If you tick the box to Explode a term your search will retrieve all articles indexed to that term as well as all articles indexed to any narrower subject terms i.e. all of the subject terms that appear lower in the tree than the term you have selected.

If you tick the box for Major Concept your search will only retrieve references for which the subject heading is a major point of the article.

CINAHL is an abstracting and indexing database. It does not contain the full text of journal articles. For many of the references you will be able to either download a PDF, locate the full text within our subscribed journals or link out to publisher websites. For information on how to obtain articles that are not available via the University Library please see information on the InterLibrary Loans Service (<https://library.port.ac.uk/interlib.html>).