Introduction to Searching
Healthcare Databases Advanced Search (HDAS)

Planning Your Search

1. **Try to rephrase your topic as a specific, focused question**
   (You won't be searching using the whole sentence, but it will help you focus).

   Imagine you have been asked to write a paper that answers the following question:

   e.g. Which methods of physiotherapy will help to recover function in a 65-year old with heart disease?

2. **Breakdown the question into its major components/topics or key words.**
   (You will search each topic individually in advanced search)

   Use **PICO** to help (you may not need all 4 elements of your search).

P	**Patient or Problem** – e.g. condition, disease, age etc.	Heart disease
I	**Intervention** – e.g. therapeutic, diagnostic, managerial	Physiotherapy
C	**Comparison** – e.g. alternative treatment, therapy or intervention, no intervention	No physiotherapy
O	**Outcome(s)** – e.g. clinical outcomes (morbidity, mortality etc.), patient outcomes (quality of life etc.), provider outcomes (service improvement etc.),	Recovery of function

3. **Alternative words**
   Think of synonyms for your search terms, e.g.
   - Heart disease OR coronary disease OR heart attack OR myocardial infarction OR cardiac problem OR atrial fibrillation
   - Physiotherapy OR physical therapy OR exercise
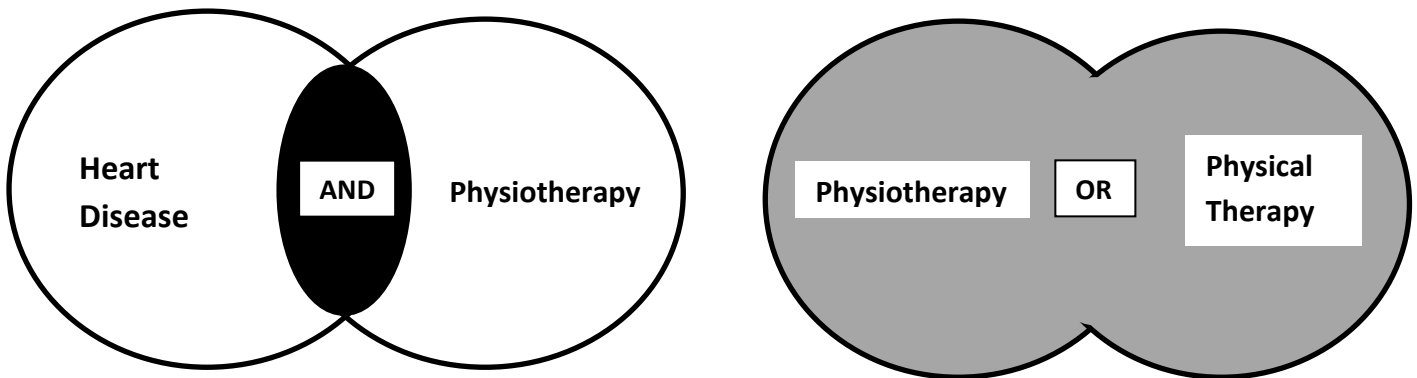   - Recovery of function OR functional recovery OR level of activity

4. **Select a database** at https://www.uhdblibrary.co.uk/e-resources
   e.g. Healthcare Databases Advanced Search (HDAS) – includes Medline, Embase, Cinahl, BNI, PsychInfo, AMED and HMIC.

   There is also PubMed, The Cochrane Library and TRIP Database.

Conducting Your Search

5. Using Boolean Terms; AND, OR

- o **AND** – this focuses a search, and decreases the number of results, e.g. heart disease AND physiotherapy
- o **OR** – this widens a search, and increases the number of results, e.g. physiotherapy OR physical therapy

6. Apply limits
e.g. Age range: 60+, English Language, Gender, Study Type etc.

Search Tips

- **Exact phrase**

Use quotation marks **" "** if you want words to appear next to each other in an exact phrase, e.g. **"advanced nurse practitioner" "complex regional pain syndrome"**

- **Truncation**

Shortening a word to retrieve multiple words
e.g. **develop*** will find **develop, developing, developed, development, developmental etc.**
e.g. **manag*** will find **manage, managing, management, etc.**

- **Using Adjacent**

Retrieves records with your terms in any order, within a specified number of words from each other, e.g. **ADJ3** means the words are (max) **3 words apart**.
- e.g. **cancer ADJ3 cells; activity ADJ3 level;**

- **Brackets ( )**

This is one way to combine results using both **AND** and **OR**.
- e.g. **(heart OR cardiac OR myocardial) AND disease**
- e.g. **(kidney OR renal) AND dialysis**

Appraising Your Results

7. Appraise the evidence found.
A useful tool is CASP: http://www.casp-uk.net/