Conducting an Effective Literature Search

Victor Sylvia, PhD
8 October 2020

The views expressed are those of the [author(s)] [presenter(s)] and do not reflect the official views or policy of the Department of Defense or its Components
"The views expressed are those of the [author(s)] [presenter(s)] and do not reflect the official views or policy of the Department of Defense or its Components"
What is a Literature Search?

A literature search is a well thought out and organized search for all of the literature published on a topic. A well-structured literature search is the most effective and efficient way to locate sound evidence on the subject you are researching. Evidence may be found in books, journals, government documents and the internet.
Objective

Identify successful strategies for finding the best evidence resources
Prepare for the Search

- Make a plan for how to get evidence
  - One database is NOT enough
  - Select databases that contain the subject of your question
59th Medical Wing
Warrior Medics – Mission Ready – Patient Focused

Defense Medical Virtual Library
The Defense Medical Virtual Library (DMVL) offers mission-essential online collections of medical ejournals, ebooks and searchable medical/biomedical databases.

Reference
- Assistance in using the electronic resources
- Reference and research on topic of interest
- Customized literature searches and bibliographies
- Verification of bibliographic citations

Interlibrary Loan
- The library user will be expected to request only materials that are related to their work.
- The library will support military personnel and DoD civilians pursuing course work.
- All copyright restrictions apply.
- Material not owned by the library can be requested on interlibrary loan. If you have an urgent need for articles, please let us know when you make the request. Turnaround is usually 24-48 hours. Book requests are dependent on the U.S. postal system or other carriers.

Recommending New Materials
Military personnel and DoD civilians are invited to suggest digital resources to include e-books which they feel are important to the mission. We are no longer purchasing books and journals in hard copy.

Ask a Librarian
- The Ask a Librarian service is for registered users of the DMVL.
- If you’re not registered or eligible for DMVL services, we’ll refer you to a more appropriate library or source of information.
- Contact us for more information.

Contact Us
Enter the Virtual Library
(Log in Required)
Reset Your Password
Send us an Email Message

Telephone Numbers
- Director: 703-681-7703
- Reference: 703-681-7703
- Interlibrary Loan: 703-681-8032 or 703-681-7703
- Technical Services: 703-681-8032
- Fax: 703-681-6588

Service Hours
- 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Monday - Friday

Mailing Address
Defense Health Headquarters Library Services
7700 Arlington Blvd., Ste.
5142
Falls Church, VA 22042-5142

The Defense Medical Virtual Library (DMVL) offers mission-essential online collections of medical ejournals, ebooks and searchable medical/biomedical databases.

Email: dha.ncr.dmrti-admin.list.defense-med-virtual-lib-owners@mail.mil

Phone: 703-681-7703
PubMed is a free search engine accessing primarily the MEDLINE database of references and abstracts on life sciences and biomedical topics. The United States National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health maintain the database as part of the Entrez system of information retrieval. [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PubMed)

**Date launched:** January 1996

**Created by:** National Library of Medicine
Useful Tools and Techniques

- Combine Search Terms
  
- Boolean terms: AND, OR, NOT

### AND
- puppy
- kitten
- Both terms

### OR
- puppy
- kitten
- Either term

### NOT
- puppy
- kitten
- Just one term
Prepare for the Search

• Hone your clinical question
• Use PICOT format
  P – Population  I – Intervention
  C – Comparison   O – Outcome  T – Time
Example:

**PICOT Question:**
For *adults* status post *hip replacement*, how do *pneumatic compression devices* versus *low molecular weight heparin administration* affect the *incidence of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) formation*?
Tips for Organizing the Evidence Gathered

• Use a Reference Management Tool (RefWorks, End Note, Zotero)
• 3X5 or 4X6 Cards with Important Details and/or Abstract Attached
• Highlight the Best Articles with Information that Answers Your Question
Consolidate the Evidence

- Use Tables to Organize Most Important Details
- Types of Tables: Evaluation Table; Synthesis Table; Levels of Evidence; Outcomes; Miscellaneous, i.e. Criteria, Factors, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article #</th>
<th>First Author (year)</th>
<th>Conceptual Framework</th>
<th>Design/Method</th>
<th>Sample / Setting</th>
<th>Major Variables Studied (and their definitions)</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Appraisal: Worth to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
QUESTIONS???