Searching CINAHL and PubMed for Nursing Articles

You can get to the databases either from the Grabske Library homepage (www.graceland.edu/grabske) or from the Nursing LibGuide (graceland.libguides.com/nursing). The LibGuide also has more tutorials for PubMed, CINAHL, InterLibrary Loan, APA citations, and developing PICO questions.

For this example, I’m going to use the research question “How does diet affect diabetes in adult women?”

**CINAHL**
First, we’ll go through CINAHL. At the top of the page, you’ll see the search boxes:

![CINAHL search interface](image)

When you search, you want to break down your question into the smallest parts to create keywords. In my research question, the keywords are “diet” “diabetes” and “adult women”. You’ll want to put one in each of the search boxes, rather than typing the whole question into the box. However, I wouldn’t put “adult women” in a search box, I’d use it as a Limiter, which I get to below.

You can play with the “Select a Field (optional)” box if you’d like, to find specific authors or subject headings, but if you leave it as is, it’ll just do a keyword search, which is fine.

Farther down the page, you have your search limiters:
At the top, you definitely want to check English Language, Peer Reviewed, and Any Author is Nurse. Where it says Published Date, you can also set limits for however many years you’d like to go back. As you can see, there are also boxes for Evidence-Based Practice, First Author is Nurse, and Randomized Controlled Trials. These are a matter of preference for what you’re looking for.

In the second half, you have more specific limiters. For my research question, I want studies about adult women, so I used the Sex and Age Groups limits. I also limited my Publication Type to Randomized Controlled Trial. You can play around with these and see what works for your research.

In these scroll boxes, if you want to select more than one limit (like I did with the Age Groups) you hold down Command on a Mac and Control on a Windows as you click the ones you’d like to use.

Once you have all of the limiters you want, click search. A variety of sources will pop up with links underneath:
If it says “PDF Full Text” or “Linked Full Text,” that means you can access the text there. If it says “Full Text Finder” or “Request this item through interlibrary loan,” that means you’ll have to see if we have it in another database by clicking Full Text Finder or request it through InterLibrary Loan.

Our ILL Librarian is Karima Burns (ieclib@graceland.edu), and it can take up to 3 days for ILL articles to arrive. Keep this in mind as you’re planning your research and assignments.

Playing around with the limiters and your keyword phrasing can help you find more things applicable to your topic!

**PubMed**

This is our other popular database, also linked on the Grabske Library homepage and the Nursing LibGuide. Rather than using the basic search function on the PubMed homepage, we’re going to use the advanced search. Click on the hyperlink “Advanced” under the search bar.
Unlike CINAHL, PubMed doesn’t have the limiters here. So type in your keywords and then click Search.

To create your limits, use the info in the red box. It doesn’t have everything CINAHL does at first glance, but it’s easy to add them.

Under Article types, click “Customize …” and a box will pop up. Go through and click the article types you want, such as Randomized Controlled Trials, then click Show. Once you have them shown, you have to click them again so they become blue and bolded with a checkmark next to them.

You can also click “Show additional filters” at the bottom to add other things like Sex, Age, and Journal categories. I like to click “Nursing Journals” to make it much more likely that one of the authors is a nurse.
The box with Best matches at the top of the search results often has really good articles, so they’re definitely worth looking through. Once you find one that looks good, you can click on it to read the full abstract and see other information.

If it looks good, you can click on one of the Full text links. If it is the blue Full text @GU, that means we definitely have access to it, and you can click that to get there (it’s the same as CINAHL’s Full Text Finder). Sometimes, it won’t have Full text @GU, it’ll have other buttons, like the Elsevier one in this case. It is always worth clicking those to see if they offer us full access as well. Sometimes PubMed also provides free access!

At the bottom of the entry is the PMID and the DOI. The PMID is very useful for Karima to have if you end up needing to interlibrary loan the article or request it through DocLine.

If you don’t use DocLine, you can use the Article request form we provide, which is linked to in the Nursing LibGuide and on the Grabske Library homepage.

If you have any questions or if you would like more detailed research help, feel free to reach out!

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