One of the things I’m going to tell you able is MeSH Terms. They’re basically just a standardized set of terms for searching. In this example, articles about palliative care/treatment/surgery would all be “filed” under palliative care. Once you have these terms, it makes it easier to find articles!

1. You can find a link to PubMed at www.graceland.edu/grabske or https://graceland.libguides.com/nursing

2. To find MeSH terms, click “MeSH Database” under More Resources

3. When you start typing in your term, suggestions will pop up. In this case, I’m looking up “palliative care,” so I’m going to click the top suggestion.
4. Sometimes this will bring up multiple potential MeSH terms. Click on the one that most fits your topic, and it should bring up this page:

You can click on the little boxes to make the term more specific (red arrow), but you don’t have to do this. Once you’ve clicked (or not) on all the little boxes you feel are most useful to your research, click “Add to search builder” (green arrow), and the terms will show up in the PubMed Search Builder box (green circle). You can go through a couple of MeSH terms to find these (though sometimes it’s better not to be extremely specific). Once you have all the terms you’d like, click “Search PubMed” (purple arrow).

However, I want to add something about pain management. So I’m going to type “pain management” into the search bar. This time, it doesn’t bring up any good suggestions, so I’m not going to click on a suggestion, I’m just going to click search:

This brought up a similar page to “Palliative Care,” and so I’m going to “Add to search builder” then “Search PubMed.”
5. This will bring you your list of results! I would change the filters on the left hand side to what you need. If you don’t see a limiter like “Randomized Controlled Trial”, then click “Customize …” below it, pick the ones you want to show up, and then click them again on this page so they’re bolded/checked. You can do add as many filters as you want!

6. When you find an article you want, click on the title, read through the abstract, etc. In the upper right hand corner, look for the Full text links. If it says “PMC FREE Full text” or “Full text @ GU” that means you can access it right away! If there are other icons (like “BMJ Free Full Text” in this case) then you can always try those to see if we have access to their full text as well.

I would definitely play around with the MeSH terms! You don’t have to use them at all either, you can also just do an advanced search (a link is located under the search bar) with the pieces of your PICOT question. When you’re doing an advanced search, put each piece of what you’re searching in its own box, like so: