NICE National Institute for
Health and Care Excellence

Healthcare Databases Advanced Search (HDAS): a quick guide

Step 1: Login to HDAS: http://hdas.nice.org.uk

Log in with a current OpenAthens username and password.

Step 2: Choose a database

Choose the most relevant database from the list below the search box by clicking on one. The database name will turn green to show it has been selected.

Hover your mouse over a database name for more information to help you choose.

You can select more than one database at a time, but if you do this your searching options are then more limited.: you won't be able to use the Thesaurus, and there will be fewer fields and limits available.
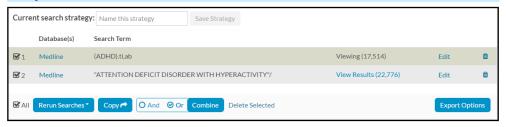
Step 5: Combine search results

As you carry out searches they are added to the search strategy as line numbers. When you have carried out more than one search you can combine the results to create new search rows.

There is a **Combine** button to combine line numbers using AND or OR (it becomes active once you select 2 or more rows). You can also type AND, OR and NOT to combine line numbers as well as search terms in the Search box.

Step 6: Limit your search

You can apply limits to narrow your search. You should do this after you have finished combining your rows. Type the number of the row you want to apply limits to into the search box. Open the Limit options by clicking in the box next to the word Limits. The available options are grouped into categories: click on a category to see all the limits, and select them by clicking. Click Search to run the search with the limits applied.

Step 7: View and save results

Your search results display below the search box and search history. There are various options to display abstracts and more detail for each result.

Select articles you want to save and export by clicking in the box next to a title. Then click on the **Add to Saved** button at the top or bottom of your results page.

Step 8: Export, print or email articles

When you have saved your results you can export them. Your saved results show as a new row in your search strategy. You can also find them listed under the **Saved Results** link at the top of the page.

Click on **Export Options**, choose the 'Short', 'Medium' or, 'Full' display format, and then create your export file by clicking on PDF or Word, etc. This then downloads a file which you can save, email or print.
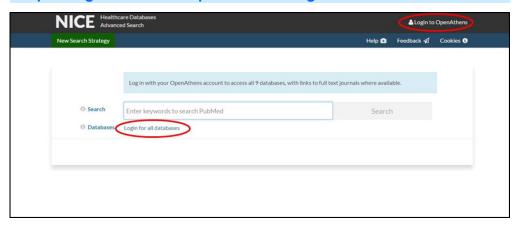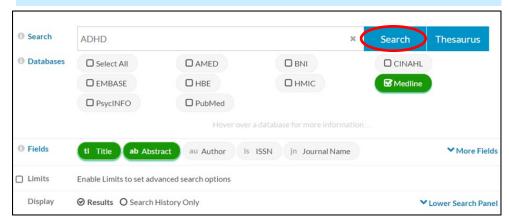
Step 9: View articles online

Where a full text link is shown in your results, use the blue **Available in full text from.**..link to open a copy of the full article online. If the link does not take you straight to the article, look for an OpenAthens login prompt.

Step 3: Enter your search terms

Type in your first term and click on **Search**. This will return documents that have the exact words you entered in their Title or Abstract. Title and Abstract are selected automatically. You can choose different fields to search, such as Author or Journal Name, by clicking on the options. Selected fields are shown in green.

SEARCH TIPS

PHRASES: enter phrases in inverted commas: **"frozen shoulder"**
PROXIMITY: use ADJ1 to find results with 2 terms appearing next to each other in any order: **cancer ADJ1 cells** finds results with cancer cells and cells cancer.

WORD ENDINGS: to search for words with the same stem, use * as a *wild card*: **pregnan*** will return documents with the words pregnant, pregnancy or pregnancies.

OR: use **OR** where you want either term included in your results:
oestrogen **OR** estrogen will return documents with either or both terms.

AND: use **AND** where you want both terms included in your results:
Cancer **AND** Chemotherapy will only return documents with both terms

NOT: use **NOT** where you want to exclude the second term from your results:
Cancer **NOT** Lung will return all documents with cancer except those that also have lung. Be careful though: a search using **NOT** is likely to miss relevant documents: in this example, documents that discuss several types of cancer would not be returned if they also mentioned lung cancer.
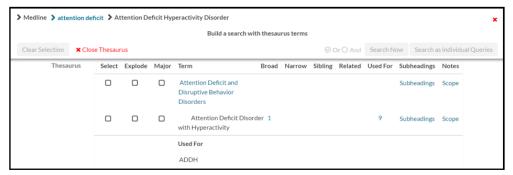
Find more search tips on the HDAS Help page

Step 4: Use the thesaurus

Use the thesaurus to find the subject headings used for indexing articles in the database: this helps you find articles that use synonyms for your chosen term. Enter a term and click on **Thesaurus**.

From the following screen, select the subject heading that best matches your needs. You are then taken further into the thesaurus, with a structured view of your term's place in the list:

You can check that you've selected an appropriate term by clicking on **Scope** to see more details, where available (not all of the databases provide scope notes).

Add terms to the thesaurus builder by clicking either Select, Explode or Major:

- **Select** will search for documents where the subject heading is used as an index term.
- **Explode** will search for documents where both the subject heading selected and any narrower subject headings are used.
- **Major** will search only for documents where the subject heading is an important concept.

Subheadings allow you to limit the search to different aspects of the subject heading.

Terms that you have chosen display at the top of the screen. You add them to your search by clicking **Search Now**.

The **Search as Individual Queries** button allows you to run separate searches for each term, if you have selected more than one term at a time.