EBM Limits in Ovid MEDLINE

Open School of Medicine Library in another browser window to work through this tutorial side by side.

Introduction

If you are unable to find information on your topic in the Cochrane Library or other filtered resources, then it is time to search MEDLINE, using PubMed or Ovid MEDLINE.

When you search Ovid MEDLINE, you can use a variety of EBM limits to help focus your search. Using these limits can potentially save you time by narrowing your search results to quality studies with a sound methodology.

Clinical Queries

You can use the limits called Clinical Queries to identify clinically sound studies.

There are nine categories to choose from:

- Therapy
- Diagnosis
- Prognosis
- Causation-Etiology
- Qualitative
- Costs
- Clinical Prediction Guides
- Reviews
- Economics

Accessing Ovid

Let's take a look at some of these limits. Select the Ovid MEDLINE link below Resources to access Ovid.

The Ovid "Select a Resource to search" page appears. In this example, we are only interested in recent articles.

Click on the Ovid MEDLINE(R) without Revisions 1996 to "most recent week" link. (This is the first MEDLINE link listed. Or you can select the check box and click the continue button.)
Your screen should look similar to this:

**Ovid Search Screen**

The Ovid search screen appears. Let's search for articles on jet lag and melatonin.

Type **jet lag** in the search box and click **Search**.

**Medical Subject Headings**

The Ovid Mapping Display appears. The green box at the bottom of the screen includes search tips to help you remember the explode and focus features.

Select the check box for **Jet Lag Syndrome**. Now click the **Continue** button.

**Subheadings**

The Subheadings page appears. Select the check boxes for these four subheadings:

- Diet Therapy
- Drug Therapy
- Prevention & Control
- Therapy

Your screen should look like similar to this:

Now click the **Continue** button.
**Ovid Search Screen**

On the Ovid search screen, type **melatonin** in the search box and click **Search**.

**Medical Subject Heading**

Melatonin is a medical subject heading. It is already selected for you. Click the **Continue** button.

**Subheadings Page**

On the subheadings page, simply select the **Continue** button. This will automatically include all subheadings.

**Ovid Search Screen**

Now we want to combine the Jet Lag Syndrome and Melatonin searches using the Search History.

Select the **check box for the Jet Lag Syndrome** search. Next, select the **check box for the Melatonin** search.

Your screen should look similar to this:

![Search History Screen]

Finally, select the **AND** button near the bottom of the search history box to combine the two searches.

**Limits**

Below the search box, there are some limit options in a blue box.

Notice the Clinical Queries limits. These limits are based on the work of Dr. Brian Haynes at McMaster University. They filter your results to articles reporting research conducted with specific methodologies.

There are three options for each limit.

- **Maximizes sensitivity** - will retrieve the most relevant articles but probably some less relevant ones
- **Maximizes specificity** - will retrieve mostly relevant articles but probably omitting a few
**Best balance of sensitivity and specificity** - will use the combination of terms that optimizes the trade-off between sensitivity and specificity

Let’s add the therapy (best balance of sensitivity and specificity) filter to our search.

Select the **Therapy (best balance of sensitivity and specificity)** limit.

Your screen should look similar to this:

![Image of search interface with selected limit]

Now select the **Search** button. (If you leave the search box blank when you add a limit, Ovid will add the limit to your most recent search.)

The goal of the Clinical Queries filters is to identify studies using sound methodology.

After you run your search and add limits, you will be ready to scan the citations you retrieved. (You may need to scroll down to see the citations.) To find full text for these articles, you would select the black **Find Full Text @ USC** button.

Take a moment to browse through the first page of search results. Click the arrow below when you are ready to move on.

**Publication Type Limits**

Scroll to the top of the page where you can see the blue limits box.

There are other useful limits available on the **Additional Limits** page. Limiting your results to a particular publication type can be a helpful technique for identifying quality articles.

Select the **Additional Limits** button.
The Ovid Limit a Search page appears. We want to add a limit to an earlier search, the combined jet lag syndrome and melatonin search (with the therapy limit added).

Select the circle for the 1 and 2 search.

Your screen should look similar to this:

![Limit A Search]

Scroll down the page until you find the limits for Publication Types.

Notice the following limits that will help you identify secondary sources: Meta Analysis, Practice Guideline, and Systematic Reviews. You can select multiple publication types by holding down the Shift, Ctrl, or "Apple" key while selecting.

Select Systematic Reviews.

Now scroll to the top (or bottom) of the screen and click on the Limit A Search button.

**Cochrane Library Full Text**

Take a look at your search results.

One result will be "Melatonin for preventing and treating jet lag", which is a Cochrane systematic review.

Unfortunately, you can't link to the full text of a Cochrane systematic review in Ovid using the Find Full Text @ USC button.

In order to access the full text of a Cochrane systematic review, you need to go to the School of Medicine Library web site. There is a link to the Cochrane Library on the Library's Databases page.

**Conclusion**

During this module, we looked at the Clinical Queries and publication type limits in Ovid. In the next module, we will take a look at similar EBM filters available in PubMed.