Searching in Scopus

Scopus is a multidisciplinary database that contains literature across multiple areas of study, including medicine, psychology, public health, sociology, science, arts and humanities, and business. Unlike other databases used in Medicine, Scopus is searched using keywords as it does not have its own subject headings. It is strongly recommended that you search other databases in addition to Scopus when conducting research.

Access Scopus through the [Medicine and Public Health database list](#).

Keywords

Articles in Scopus can be found by constructing complex keyword searches. **Keywords** find a term in an article record, not the full text. Synonyms, alternate spellings, and related terms should be included in a Scopus search to ensure that your search is comprehensive. Scopus does **not** use subject headings.

Advanced search syntax

The table below contains the advanced search syntax that can be incorporated into a Scopus search to improve its accuracy and increase the number of results.

Note: in the table below, *n* stands for a number, not the letter n. To use these operators, replace the *n* with the number of letters or numbers you'd like in between terms.

Syntax	Symbol	Example	Function
Truncation	*	therap*	Finds 'alternate endings' to a word
Mandated wildcard	?	wom?n	Replaces 1 letter in a word
Optional wildcard	#	p#ediatric	Replaces 0-1 letters in a word
Nesting	(...)	health AND (wellbeing OR "well being")	Group similar terms in a search
Proximity	W/*n*	health W/3 wellbeing	Find a word within a specified limit of another word in any order
Specified proximity	PRE/*n*	health PRE/3 wellbeing	Find a word within a specified limit of another word in a specific order
Nested proximity	(a or b) w/*n* (c or d)	(breast OR skin) w/3 (cancer* OR tumo?r* OR neoplasm*)	Finds terms combined with OR within a specified number of words from another group of terms combined with OR
Loose/approximate phrase search	"..."	"quality of life"	Searches for variations of an exact phrase
Exact phrase search	{...}	{quality of life}	Searches for an exact phrase

For search terms containing several words (e.g. quality of life or art therapy), it's important to use either loose or exact **phrase searches** to ensure that the database searches them as one complete concept instead of multiple words combined with AND.

Using Scopus

Scopus searches are conducted by building search strings to search for all your terms at once. The following search aims to find articles about the effects of art therapy on the wellbeing of people with dementia.

Search for one concept at a time on a single line, using 'OR' to search for synonyms and alternate terms. Use the 'Document Search' option.

To add multiple lines to your search, click the plus (+) icon. Scopus will automatically combine the two lines using 'AND'.

Add lines until you have entered all your concepts, then click 'search' to run your search. Use the options on the left to refine your results.

To add or remove terms or additional lines to your search, you can edit your search by clicking edit (✎ Edit) on the top left.

Search history

Some concepts with multiple keywords might not fit in one line of a Scopus search. Each line of a Scopus search is limited to 256 characters - any searches longer than this will need to be split up using the 'search history' function. This is more likely to happen with systematic searches or broad searches that include multiple alternative terms.
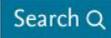
First, build the parts of your search that *do* fit in the lines. The search below will aim to find articles about the link between sleep disturbances, depression, and pregnancy - 'sleep disturbances' is the concept that does not fit in the search template.

Click 'search' (**Search Q**) to run this search, then click 'edit' (✏ *Edit*) to go back to the search page. Your search will have been automatically added to the 'search history'.

Next, enter your long concept into the search form. Make sure you change the drop down box combining the two lines from 'AND' to 'OR'.

Click 'search' and 'edit' again. This search will also have been added to your history.

Combine the two searches using the 'combine queries' box. Click search (🔍) - this will show you the combined results of the two searches. These searches can be run using several lines - to do this, include multiple search numbers in the 'combine queries' box.

For more information, contact your **Academic Liaison Librarian**.

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