Welcome to the Health Sciences Library Online Tutorial Series.

Part 2 of the OVID Medline tutorial will look at refining the search from Part 1.

We will supplement our subject headings with keywords, combine concepts using operators, and narrow our results using limits.

In Part 1, our research question concerned immunotherapy for pre-school children with food allergies.

The search history shows that we have already translated two concepts into subject headings.

Food allergies are represented by "Food Hypersensitivity". Oral immunotherapy is represented by the combined subject headings "Desensitization, Immunologic" and "Administration, Oral" (line 4 of our search history). All our subject headings have been exploded.

We can broaden some of these concepts by supplementing our subject headings with more general keywords. This is an important part of systematic searching.

For a comprehensive understanding of the use of keywords, check out Part 1 of our "Database Fundamentals" tutorial.

Let's perform a keyword search for the more common term food allergies. If we are interested in the keyword "food allergies", chances are we are also interested in "food allergy", as well as "food allergens".

If we put an asterisk after the "g" in food allergies we tell the database that word can be completed in any way. This is called truncation and it allows us to search for multiple forms of the keyword with a single search.

Again, Medline provides a list of potential subject headings but, remember, we're looking for a keyword. At the bottom of the list, we are given the option of searching for our term as a keyword.

Click the check box and click "Continue".

A new line is added to our search history and the results are displayed. These are articles in which some form of the phrase "food allergy" appears in either the title or the abstract.

We can also use keywords to search for specific terminology that we know is used in the literature but that does not have a corresponding subject heading.

We combined subject headings to represent our concept of oral immunotherapy but we can also search it directly as a keyword.

Now that we have a good mix of subject headings and keywords to represent our concepts, we can start to combine them.
We can view all previous search lines by clicking the red "Expand" button located to the right of the search history.

We have two options for combining. Combining with "OR" will find articles containing any of our search terms. This strategy will be helpful for broadening our subject heading "Food Hypersensitivity" to include the more common keyword "food allergies". Select each line and click "Combine selections with Or".

This creates a new search line with results representing our concept of food allergies.

We'll do the same thing with our concept of oral immunotherapy. Choose our subject heading search (line 4) and our keyword search (line 6) and combine with OR.

Ultimately, we want to find the places where these result sets overlap. To do this, we will combine these new search lines using AND.

This tells the database that we are only interested in articles containing both concepts.

A new search line is created and the results are displayed.

Before we review our results, recall we have one more concept to add to our search. We are specifically interested in pre-school children.

We can narrow our current results based on factors like age group, language, or publication date using the databases limits. This will help us filter out irrelevant results.

In OVID, limits can be found beneath the database's search history. Here, you'll find a small set of the most commonly used limits. Clicking "Additional Limits" will take you to the full list.

By default, limits act on our most recent search line but we can always choose a different search line if necessary.

Scroll down to take a look at our limiting options. Here's a box for "Age Groups". Scroll through and click on "Preschool Child".

Selected limits will be highlighted in blue. You can activate multiple limits in the same category by holding down the control key while making your selections. But for our question, we will stick to "Preschool Child".

Other useful limits include: "Language", "Publication Types", and "Year Published".

To ensure our results are up to date, we could limit our search to articles published in the last three years.

Once limits are selected, click "Limit a Search" to see our new result set.

This creates a new search line, the results of which are automatically displayed. Scroll down and take a look.
By default, results are sorted by publication date, with the newest articles appearing first. The database provides a number of other sorting options.

Results are listed as brief records containing information like title, author, and source. You'll notice that our search terms have been highlighted in yellow, allowing us to quickly identify why each result has been returned.

Each record has a check box in the upper left corner which, when selected, can be used to "Print", "Email", or "Export" citations to reference management software.

This first result looks promising. Clicking on the title will take us to the complete reference for this article. Here, we'll find some additional information, including the article's subject headings and abstract.

Click the "Get It!" button in the top right corner to check full-text availability through McMaster's libraries.

Your browser's pop-up blocker may prevent the Get It! page from opening. If so, follow the link provided to see the options for online and print access.

You have now completed the OVID Medline tutorial. The skills you've learned here may be applied to many OVID databases, including: Embase and PsychINFO.

If you have any further questions about these databases, please contact the Health Sciences Library reference desk at extension 22327. Or send us an e-mail at hslib@mcmaster.ca.

Thanks for watching!