Combining keywords using CINAHL or MEDLINE

There will be times during your course when you will need to do a more advanced systematic literature search, for example a literature review. We recommend you search your keywords one at a time and then combine them the following way:

1. **Search KEYWORDS one at a time**

   **TIP** The words you use to do your search (and the spelling) are so important – identify your search terms or keywords from any reading you have done as well as similar words (synonyms) e.g. heart attack or myocardial infarction or cardiac arrest.

2. **Use OR to combine similar terms (synonyms)**

   **TIP** The example here is *health education OR health promotion*. Combining them together using OR increases the number of results because a broader range of keywords is searched.
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3. **Use AND to join your search terms**

   ![Image of search history with AND option selected]

   **TIP** The example here is *obesity AND S2 or S3* (which is our earlier health promotion OR health education combination).

4. **Apply LIMITS**

   ![Image of search results with limits applied]

   **TIP** Look down the left column of your screen to find useful limits such as peer reviewed, date of publication, age group and gender.

5. **Read through your results CAREFULLY**

   ![Image of search result with abstract and full text options]

   **TIP** Read the abstract to give you a summary of the article and note whether it is available full text. If not check the library catalogue for the journal as we may hold it in print.

   **Check out our video tutorials on searching databases available via your subject guide.**