Literature Searching: MSc Chinese Medicine
This session will cover...

• General principles of searching databases
• Search tips
• Ensuring you are authenticated into the subscription resources so you may access full text
• A sample search on Medline
• How to combine keywords – using AND, OR and truncation *
• How to get the full text of articles
• Where to find information on searching and the resources for your subject
Do you have a topic of interest?

Do you know how to choose your topic, devise a research-focused question, build a search strategy and search for literature?

There are a variety of books in the library to help you. One of these is:

Before you Search

Break your question into key concepts and identify keywords

It is useful to identify and list the key words and concepts you are interested in.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valerian</td>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Adults</td>
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<td>Valeriana officinalis;</td>
<td>Insomniac</td>
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<td>Valeriana edulis;</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
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<td>Valeriana angustifolia;</td>
<td>Sleeping</td>
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<td>Valeriana jatamansii,</td>
<td>Sleep disorder/s</td>
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<td>Valeriana wallichii;</td>
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<td>Valeriana sitchensis.</td>
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<td>Acupuncture</td>
<td>Back pain</td>
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<td>Low back pain</td>
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<td>CLBP</td>
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<td>St. John's Wort</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Hypericum perforatum</td>
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<td>Hyperforin</td>
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Be aware of....

• **Synonyms** - words that mean the same or similar thing. Make a list. Authors may choose to use one particular term rather than another in their articles.

• **Related terms and different word endings/plurals.**

• Make a note of **acronyms** and **abbreviations**. Including these in your search strategy ensures you are doing a thorough search.

• **Different spellings/terminology.** Most databases are international in scope. Alternative spellings are worth including in your list of search terms. e.g. colour / color, behaviour / behavior, lift / elevator.
More tips...

• If you are interested in a particular ailment, illness or health condition, identify the different names that are used for it - **medical** and more **general** (formal/informal). e.g. heart attack / myocardial infarction

• If you are interested in a particular treatment, identify the **medication** and the **ingredients/herbs** it contains (and the various names for those herbs). Natural Medicines and Medicinal Plant Names Services (MPNS) are useful tools for looking these up.

• If you are focussing on **Chinese medicine**, you need to ensure you identify **language/translation/spelling variations**.
Be thorough and keep records

• Consider **monitorable changes and improvements** in the ailment or condition, and use the **variety of keywords** relating to these to find research in the area of interest in relation to the treatments you are searching on. Research may not refer to treatments as curative, but may discuss **measurable improvements** in conditions.

• **Keep a record of keywords and your search strategies.** These are an essential part of your research. They need to be described and recorded in your final dissertation as proof of a **systematic** and **thorough** approach.

• **Most databases allow you to create your own individual account** where you can save your searches/results, print out the search strategy and set up email alerts to update you on up to date articles in your area of interest.
Once you start Searching

• Break your topic or research question into its **component parts** and search for each separately.
• Look at the number of results to see which are most/least commonly used.
• Do this for **each part or concept** within your topic of interest or research question. **This gives you more flexibility in the way you can combine concepts together at a later stage.**
Add the Middlesex Institutional Cookie to your web browser.
Ensure you are authenticated into our subscription resources

ALWAYS Log into MyUniHub>My Study>My Library

Click on any of the links in the My Library box to authenticate into our online resources
Let’s Search...

• Log into MyUniHub. Go to My Study, and the My Library box
• Click on Library Subject Guides, Click on Health and find the Complementary Health Guide
• Click on Finding Journal Articles and Literature Searching for search tips and general principles
• Click on Databases for links to databases for your subject area
• There are online tutorials and helpsheets on using the individual databases on the drop down menu underneath the Finding Journal Articles and Literature Searching tab
Combining Searches

-When to use OR

• You have conducted a number of separate searches for different keywords related to one concept in your question.

You can combine these using OR to include articles that contain any of the keywords, for a broad search.

• This is useful for synonyms, or terms that mean the same or similar.

  e.g. X OR Y OR Z retrieves results which have either term X or term Y or term Z in.
Combining Searches – when to use **AND**

- Once you have done searches for each concept in the question, combine these using **AND** to search for articles which include all terms to focus/narrow a search.

  e.g. Q **AND** R **AND** S retrieves results which contain **all three** terms Q, R and S.
Truncation

• To increase your search terms and help ensure all relevant articles are retrieved, you can use truncation, often denoted by the asterisk *

• Truncating a term will look for all words which start with the term you've entered, so is particularly good for variant endings and plurals.

  teen* will find teen, teens, teenager, teenagers
  nurs* will find nurse, nurses, nursing, nursery
Remember

• Use your knowledge of the topic.
• Computer systems don’t interpret in the same way as the human brain.
• **Additional Keywords** - Articles, and search results (especially abstracts) may indicate additional keywords you may not have identified, which you can add to your search strategy.
• You may **modify your search strategy** as your knowledge of your topic grows.
Saving Searches

• **Save your Searches and Results** - Many databases allow you to create your own personalised log in so you can save searches, set up email alerts so you are automatically informed/updated on your topic, and save results.

• You may **insert your search strategy** into your appendices of your work.
You won’t always get full text

- You will only get full text access to journal articles where we have a subscription – you can check this searching the library catalogue using the journal title.
- You may find a few freely available peer reviewed journals.
- You may find freely available copies of draft or pre-publication versions of articles in institutional/research repositories. CORE or Google Scholar is useful for finding these.
- Use any libraries you have access to, SCONUL access scheme or InterLibrary Loans Service for articles we don’t have access to.
Library Subject Guide – for information and contact details/booking appointments

Please read this BEFORE logging into the electronic resources

Make sure you use the following route to access the resources, so you are fully authenticated as a Middlesex University student. This should ensure the resources grant you access where we have a subscription: Login to MyUniHub > My Study > My Library > click on a link in the My Library box

If you are experiencing problems accessing the resources, installing this cookie may help: Click here to install the Middlesex Library Cookie onto your computer