Tip Sheet – Ovid MedLine

Suggested Field Tags:

One of the ways that key word searches can be narrowed in databases when running a comprehensive and systematic search is through the use of field tags – most commonly those associated with title, abstract, and key words. The specific field tags that can/should be used differ by database. In Ovid MedLine, we recommend ab,kf,kw,ti, which searches the title, abstract, keyword, and keyword heading.

Proximity Operators:

Proximity operators in databases allow you to search for one word/phrase within a certain proximity to another word. For example, you could use a proximity operator to find the word systematic *within two words of* the word protocol. Proximity operators are best used to create relationships or associations between words that cannot be accomplished through phrase searching and other search functions. In Ovid MedLine, the proximity operator is adj#.

Updating a Search:

When you need to update a search that you have previously performed, best practice is to use database commands that *capture the records entered into the database* after the date of the last search run where such commands are available. Due to a lag between an items publication and its inclusion in the database, entry date is not always the same as publication date, making it a less precise search option that should only be used in cases where the database is not able to distinguish between the two. In Ovid MedLine, the command for updating a search is limit (search #) to ed=YYYMMDD.

Database Quirks:

- If your search term includes the word use, you must put quotations around it – "use" - or the full search line or it will not run the search
- You have to be in the Search Fields search box to run text word and proximity searching; use Advanced Search for Mesh terms.