

## **How to refine your search results in CINAHL (if you get too many or too few results).**

Once you have completed your search in CINAHL you may need to refine your search further in order to get the best results. To do this you can:

- Use the limits in CINAHL.
- Check and refine the keywords and Boolean operators you have used in your search strategy.

### **If you have too many results:**

- Check that you have used the correct Boolean operators – using OR brings back more results whereas using AND brings back fewer results (see the guide on using Boolean operators for more information).
- Consider using phrase searching – for example, search for “skin cancer” rather than skin cancer. This will bring back fewer results as phrase searching only brings back results where the keywords appear side by side in the order you have written them (see the guide on advanced searching for more information).
- Think whether your keywords can be more specific. For example, jogging is a more specific term than a broader keyword such as exercise, but it may be more relevant to your research.
- Decide if adding another concept onto your search, such as a setting (e.g. hospital) or an age range, would be useful.
- Look at the limits in CINAHL – could they help make your search more specific?

### **How to use the limits in CINAHL to reduce results:**

If you have too many results and you want to reduce them to make them more relevant, you can refine your search by using the limits in CINAHL. These include:

- Publication date.
- Source Type.
- Language.

The limits are displayed in the left hand column, next to your search results.

You can use the date slider to specify a date range, for example the last 10 years. Your results will automatically update and the limiter you have applied will be listed in your search history and in the limiter menu.

Search Results: 1 - 50 of 548

**Refine Results**

Current Search

Boolean/Phrase:  
S4 AND S8 AND S12

Limit To

Full Text

References Available

Abstract Available

1985 Publication Date 2019

Show More

Search Results: 1 - 50 of 297

**Refine Results**

Current Search

Boolean/Phrase:  
S4 AND S8 AND S12

**Limiters**

Published Date: 20090101-20191231

Limit To

Full Text

References Available

Abstract Available

2009 Publication Date 2019

There are other limits which are listed in the left hand menu or you can click on the **show more** link to see the full range of limits available.

**Research Article** is a useful limiter in CINAHL, this will limit your results to articles which have been indexed as research. This includes systematic reviews and literature reviews as well as quantitative and qualitative research. Once you have chosen your limits, click on search to apply them. Be aware of using too many limits as you may lose relevant results.

Limit To

Full Text

References Available

Abstract Available

1985 Publication Date 2019

Show More

Source Types >

Subject: Major Heading >

Publication >

Publisher >

Language >

Age >

Gender >

Geography >

Search Options

Reset Search

Search Modes and Expanders

Search modes ?

Boolean/Phrase

Find all my search terms

Find any of my search terms

Apply related words

Also search within the full text of the articles

Apply equivalent subjects

Limit your results

Full Text

Abstract Available

Author

English Language

**Research Article**

Search Only Pre-CINAHL

CE Module

Meta-Synthesis

References Available

Published Date

Month Year -

Month Year

Publication

Peer Reviewed

Exclude Pre-CINAHL

Exclude MEDLINE records

Evidence-Based Practice

Clinical Queries

All

Therapy - High Sensitivity

Therapy - High Specificity

Therapy - Best Balance

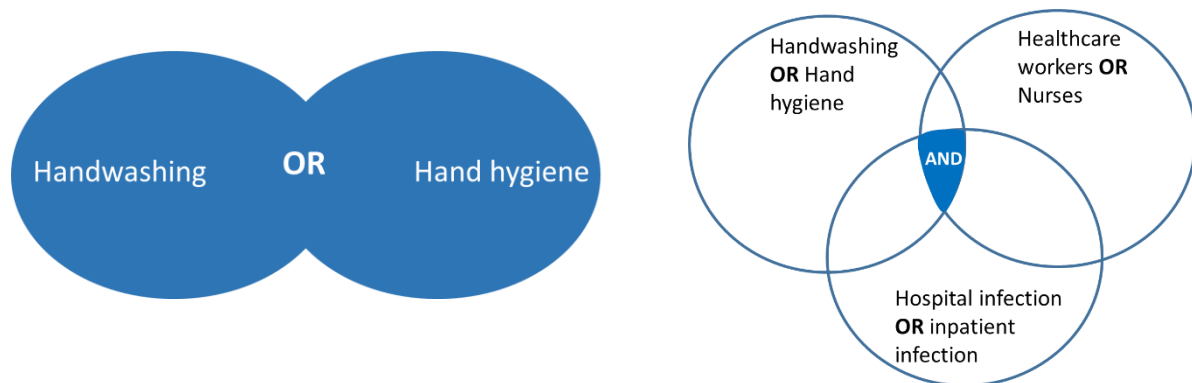
### If you have too few results:

- Check your spellings – CINAHL does not autocorrect.
- Check that you have used the correct Boolean operators - using OR brings back more results whereas using AND brings back fewer results (see the guide on using Boolean operators for more information).
- Make sure you have used synonyms/alternative keywords for your research terms.
- Think about using wider terms to describe your keywords. If you have used a specific term such as jogging, you could broaden it out by using a wider term such as aerobic exercise or exercise.
- Consider removing any limits (such as a date range) or additional concepts (such as a setting).

### Checking and refining your keywords and Boolean operators.

As well as using the limits in CINAHL, look carefully at your search strategy as this can also help refine your results.

You could look in a dictionary, medical encyclopaedia or thesaurus to find other ways to describe your terms (synonyms). Remember, synonyms should be combined with OR and different concepts should be combined with AND.



It is also important to consider how words are spelled – for example, is there more than one way to spell the keyword (pediatric / paediatric), or could the word be written as one word as well as with a hyphen (wellbeing / well-being).

Explaining your thoughts to someone else can also help you to come up with new ideas and concepts.

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