

Literature searching – a list of useful databases

Review Databases (open access)

These databases contain free summaries (bibliographic records) of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. To access the corresponding full-text article, check to see if your organisation has access rights, i.e. a subscription to the journal where the review has been published. Some full-text articles may also be freely available through the open access publishing route (try Google Scholar).

Using review articles can be a useful starting point, a focussed way into the vast array of research literature.

- **Cochrane Library (CDSR)**
<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/>
[N.B. This database includes free, full-text access to Cochrane Reviews]
- **NIHR Journals Library – Health Technology Assessment**
<https://www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk/HTA/#/>
- **Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD) Databases** (archived)
<https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/crdweb/Homepage.asp>
- **DoPHER** (Database of Promoting Health Effectiveness Reviews)
<https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/webdatabases4/Intro.aspx?ID=9>
- **Epistemonikos**
<https://www.epistemonikos.org/>
- **Health Evidence**
<https://www.healthevidence.org/>

There are many different types of research review, this article provides a useful overview.

Sutton A, Clowes M, Preston L, Booth A. Meeting the review family: exploring review types and associated information retrieval requirements. *Health information and Libraries Journal*. 2019;36(3):202-222. doi: 10.1111/hir.12276. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31541534/>

Other bibliographic databases

Listed below are some of the major bibliographic databases for medicine, public health and the social sciences. They are key to unlocking the research literature (published predominantly as journal articles). The type of article can range from a review, primary research study, background article, opinion piece, editorial, comment etc.

The majority of these databases require a subscription (even to access the summary record) but please don't let this deter you, check to see if your organisation has access rights.

- **PubMed** (free) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>
- **MEDLINE** (Ovid platform) – biomedicine, clinical medicine, healthcare, public health, nursing. Nearly every literature review should include a search of MEDLINE!
[N.B. PubMed and MEDLINE are effectively the same database. Accessing MEDLINE via Ovid requires a subscription, but the interface offers greater search functionality than PubMed]
- **Embase** (Ovid or Elsevier platform) – useful for biomedicine, clinical medicine (especially pharmacology), but also contains research information on public health, healthcare policy & management etc
- **PsycINFO** (Ovid Platform) – psychology/psychiatry database
- **Web of Science** (Science Citation Index/Social Science Citation Index) – broad multidisciplinary database
- **SCOPUS** (Elsevier) – broad multidisciplinary database

- **Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL)** (EBSCOhost)
- **Sociological Abstracts** (ProQuest)
- **International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS)** (ProQuest)
- **Social Care Online** (Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)) (free) – UK’s largest database of information and research on social care and social work
- **Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)** (ProQuest)
- **British Education Index (BEI)** (ProQuest)

N.B. Check to see if your organisation has a complete list of research databases. The library and information services often organise these by discipline, making it easier to browse and ensure you are searching the most appropriate resource.
