

Formulating a Search Strategy

Step 1: Think About the Best Way to Search

- A. What is your PICOT question? **In patients with substance abuse, does using a recovery coach compared to not using a recovery decrease the incidence of relapse and return hospital visits.**
- B. Begin by listing keywords in the first column. Use words that describe the population, intervention, and outcome. Use words that you think will assist you in finding “the best evidence” on your topic. After you have listed your keywords, use the blanks to the right of your key words to list synonyms (other words) that can be used to say the same thing as the keywords.

Keywords

Synonyms

P: **substance abusers** OR **substance abuse** OR _____

I: **recovery coach** ; **recovery** OR **prevention** OR _____

C: _____; _____ OR _____ OR _____

O: **sobriety** _____; **recurrence** or
relapse _____ OR _____ OR _____

Step 2: Plan Your First Search

1. What limiters should you use in the search? (Date range, language, or any other limiting criteria)

_____ **2013-2018** _____, _____ **English** _____, _____

Step 3: Begin Your Search

After you have thought about your topic and planned search, log into CINAHL to begin your search. Use the keywords and limiters you identified in Steps 1 and 2.

- A. Describe the *exact* search terms and limiters you used.

**Substance abuse And recovery coach And nurs* And relapse or
recurrence**

2013-2018, English

How many results did you get? 11 Too few results? Too many results? **Only two related to topic in PICOT question**

- B. Look at the *detailed* article citations and identify subject headings that are common across the relevant abstracts and article citations. What is the most common CINAHL heading you see? substance use disorders

Step 4: Refine your CINAHL search: incorporate the common CINAHL headings you identified in 3 B with the keywords you have been using from Step 1. At this stage you may want to change your limiters depending on your results.

- A. Describe the exact CINAHL headings and keywords used in this refined search:
nurs* And relapse or recurrence And substance abuse And prevention
keywords/headings substance use disorders, prevention, recurrence, nurs*
-

- B. What limiters did you use in the search? 2013-2018, English,

Step 5: Using the same database, refine your search again. If you have had too many results, try *narrowing* you population or setting. If you have too few results, consider ways to *expand* your topic.

- A. What keywords, synonyms, and CIHAHL Headings were used in this even more refined search? emergency room ; substance abuse relapse prevention
- B. What limiters did you use in this search? 2013-2018, English, _____
- C. How many results do you have now? 1

- D. Consider the following: Are the results relevant? Current? Of good quality? Appropriate for the EBP project assignment? Read the abstract and then read the full-text. If needed, adjust your search more. Consider searching another database (Medline/ PubMed) to see what other evidence may be available in a different source. Make sure to continue recording your steps.

Article was published in July of 2018, so information is current and relevant. It is from a peer-reviewed nursing journal. Some headings – substance use disorder, U.S. Abstract – emergency room, relapse prevention

Step 6: Search Another Database

Search another database using the keywords, synonyms, phrases, CINAHL Headings and limiters you used in STEP 5.

- A. What other database did you search?

_____ **PubMed** _____

- B. How many results did you get? _____ **65** _____ Too few results? Too many results?

Too many results, filters and search terms need to be changed

- C. Think about the following (do not write out answer): How do these results compare to the results you obtained from CINAHL? Are the results relevant? Current? Of good quality? Appropriate for the EBP Project Assignment? If needed continue to adjust your search more. Make sure you continue recording your steps.