

The **Cochrane Library** is a premier source of evidence-based medical information, presented in seven databases:

**Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews** – full-text reviews and protocols written specifically for the database

**Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness (DARE)** – structured abstracts of effectiveness reviews

**Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (Central)** – bibliographic records of all known controlled trials in healthcare

**Cochrane Methodology Register (CMR)** – bibliographic records on the methodology of systematic reviews

**Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews (CDMR)** – reviews and protocols of the methodology of systematic reviews

**Health Technology Assessment Database (HTA)** – bibliographic records on health technology assessment

**NHS Economic Evaluation Database (NHS EED)** – structured abstracts of economic evaluations

Access: Available only from computers with the IP address ranges of the LSU Health Sciences Center -Shreveport campus. From the Library homepage, select **DATABASES**, then **Cochrane Library**, and you will arrive at the main search page:

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library homepage within a browser window. The address bar displays <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/mrwhome/106568753/HOME>. The page features the Wiley InterScience logo and navigation links such as 'My Profile' and 'Log In'. A search bar is prominently displayed with the text 'SEARCH IN THIS TITLE' and 'The Cochrane Library'. Below the search bar, there are links for 'Cochrane Advanced Search', 'MeSH Search', 'Search History', 'Saved Searches', and 'Search Tips'. A 'SEARCH ALL CONTENT' button is also visible. The main content area highlights 'The Cochrane Library 2005, Issue 1' with options to 'Recommend to Your Librarian' or 'Save Title to My Profile'. A 'Database Home' section at the bottom provides links for 'How to Order', 'Do you already have access?', 'User Guides', 'Demo', 'New Reviews', and 'Updated Reviews'.

To **browse** through any of the databases, go to **BROWSE** in the upper middle of the screen, and select the database. For all except Clinical Trials (CENTRAL), you can browse the titles by letter of the alphabet. Clinical Trials can be searched via the search boxes.

## Searching the Databases

Type your search phrase into the box on the right. The default is to search title, abstract or keywords, but you can search other fields such as the author or all text by changing the pull-down menu. You can also select **Advanced Search**, **MeSH Search**, **Search History**, or **Saved Searches** if you choose. After making your selections, click **Go**. All databases will be searched at once. Search results for Cochrane Reviews will be shown, but you can pull up records from one of the other databases if you choose.

### Search Rules:

Capitalization is ignored.

The only stop words are the operators AND, OR, NOT, NEXT and NEAR. All other words, including such common ones as “the” and “in”, can be matched in searches.

The asterisk (\*) is used for truncation – initial, internal or ending. For example, *\*surgery* will locate documents containing *radiosurgery* and *cryosurgery*; *hyp\*tension* will retrieve *hypertension* and *hypotension*; and *nerv\** will find *nerve* and *nervous*.

You may enter OR between the words to select records containing any of the words in the string. For example, the search *lung or heart* will retrieve all records containing either *lung*, *heart*, or both. A comma may be substituted for OR.

The operator AND is used to retrieve records with all the words linked by the operator. For example, *lung and heart* will find only those records with both words, but not necessarily together or in that order.

When parentheses are used, the search engine first looks at the words inside the parentheses and then at the words outside them. For example, *(lung or heart) and disease* will retrieve a different number of items from *lung or (heart and disease)*.

The operator NOT can be used to retrieve records that contain one term but not the other. For example, *myocardial not ischemia* will not retrieve any records with the term *ischemia*.

The operator NEAR retrieves items with the linked words appearing within six words of each other in either order. To change the number of words in proximity (to any number *n*), use NEAR/*n*. Example: *heart near/3 disease*. To retrieve words next to each other in any order, use the operator NEXT. Example: *heart next disease*. To retrieve a phrase in a particular order, surround it with quotation marks. Example: “*heart disease*”.

When you enter two or more words not separated by stop words or parentheses, the search engine treats them as joined together by *and*. For example, *stroke unit* is interpreted the same as *stroke and unit*.

### For More Powerful Searches:

Click the link **Advanced Search** beneath the search box to construct a search with more terms in different fields and to limit your retrieval by date range, database or record status. After a search has run, click **Edit Search** to revise the search strategy.

Click the link **MeSH Search** beneath the search box to use the indexing power of MEDLINE’s Medical Subject Headings. This controlled vocabulary enables you to retrieve all citations indexed under a given concept or cluster of concepts regardless of whether they contain the actual words.

This takes you to a search window where you can search for MeSH terms by using the **Thesaurus** button, see how they relate to other terms in the hierarchical tree by clicking **Go to MeSH Trees**, and get an explanation for the term by selecting **Definition**. Once you have selected the term you want, you may add subheadings by clicking the down arrow for *Qualifiers* and then selecting the ones you consider the most appropriate. You then check the box(s) to *Explode All* (to search the term and all the terms under it in the hierarchical tree), to *Explode selected trees*, or to *Search this term only*. Then click **Go**.

**CAUTION:** The methodology databases have not been indexed for MeSH. If you want your search to cover these as well as the others, you should do text word searches in addition to any MeSH searches.

The **Search History** link beneath the search box will take you to a screen showing each of your earlier searches. Because each search gets a different retrieval in each database, this screen shows only the overall totals for each of the searches. You can pull up the results for any of your previous searches. You can also combine search statements by typing # in front of your search number. Example: #1 or #2. **NOTE:** Combining searches with OR allows you to combine MeSH searches and keyword searches.

*Last updated: September 2006*