

Database Syntax Guide

Cochrane Library		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
MeSH descriptor	Subject Heading	Index term added to an article record and (normally) describing the content of the article
:ti	Title word	
:ab	Abstract word	
:kw	Key words (MeSH and other)	
*	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
?	Truncation/wild card	Adds one character
NEAR/ <i>n</i>	NEAR operator	Requires words are adjacent with <i>n</i> words in between – regardless of word order
NEXT	NEXT operator	Requires words are adjacent to each other in the order typed in
"..."	Double quotation mark	Exact phrase searching (phrase searching does not support wildcards or truncation – use NEXT instead)
CSA databases		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
DE=	Descriptor	
TI=	Title word	
AB=	Abstract word	
*	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
EbscoHost databases		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
MH	CINAHL Heading	Index term added to an article record and (normally) describing the content of the article
MH+	Exploded CINAHL Heading	Will include narrower terms to the CINAHL heading being exploded, i.e. those terms underneath in the hierarchy of indexing terms
PT	Publication type	
?	Wildcard	Adds one character
*	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
<i>Nn</i>	Near operator	<i>N5</i> finds the words if they are within five words of one another regardless of word order
<i>Wn</i>	Within operator	<i>W5</i> finds the words if they are within five words of one another and in the order typed in
"..."	Double quotation mark	Exact phrase searching
Web of Science		
AND		Includes both terms

OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
*	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
LILACS (VHL) IAHex and iAH		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
\$ or *	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
"..."	Double quotation mark	Exact phrase searching (Only available in the IAHex interface)
Ovid databases		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
/	Subject Heading	Index term added to an article record and (normally) describing the content of the article
.ab.	Abstract word	
.tw.	Text Word	Word in title or abstract field
.kw.	Keyword	Author keyword (assigned by author)
.fs.	Floating subheading	Subheading of any Subject Heading
.pt.	Publication type	
.sh.	Subject Heading	Index term added to an article record and (normally) describing the content of the article – works only with exact headings
.hw.	Heading word	Word anywhere in the subject heading field
.mp.		Will search in title, abstract and in Subject Heading field
exp	Explode	Will include narrower terms to the Subject Heading being exploded, i.e. those terms underneath in the hierarchy of indexing terms
\$ or *or :	Truncation/wild card	Adds none or more characters
\$n	Truncation/wild card	Adds none to <i>n</i> characters
?	Truncation/wild card	Adds none or one character
adj	Adjacency	Requires words are adjacent to each other in the order typed in
adjn	Adjacency	Requires words are adjacent with <i>n</i> words in between - regardless of word order
"..."	Double quotation mark	Exact phrase searching
POPLINE ('New' interface)		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
*	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
"..."	Double quotation mark	Exact phrase searching
POPLINE ('Old' interface)		
Subject search		Will search in title, abstract and in keyword field

&	AND operator	Includes both terms
/	OR operator	Includes either both, the one or the other term
<i>Wn</i>	WITHIN operator	Requires words are adjacent with <i>n</i> words in between - regardless of word order
*	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
ProQuest databases		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
<i>N/n</i>	Near operator	<i>N/5</i> finds the words if they are within five words of one another regardless of word order
<i>P/n</i>	Precede operator	<i>P/5</i> finds the words if they are within five words of one another and in the order typed in
*		Adds none or more characters
?	Truncation/wild card	Adds one character
"..."	Double quotation mark	Exact phrase searching
WHOLIS		
AND		Includes both terms
OR		Includes either both, the one or the other term
NOT		Use to exclude term(s)
\$	Truncation	Adds none or more characters
?	Truncation	Adds none or one character
<i>NEARn</i>	Near operator	Requires words are adjacent with <i>n</i> words in between - regardless of word order

Suggested citation: Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care (EPOC). [Resource title]. EPOC Resources for review authors, 2017. epoc.cochrane.org/resources/epoc-resources-review-authors (accessed DD Month YYYY)