



## Search Fields in PubMed

Like all databases, MEDLINE has “records” and “fields.” Each journal article is represented by a record and each record consists of fields to describe the article. Most MEDLINE records contain an author field, a publication date field, a journal name field and a title field. Many contain an abstract field, a Medical Subject Heading field and a Publication Type field.

### Use Search Fields for Precision

MEDLINE searches can be very precise when fields are specified for search terms. You can specify fields in two ways:

1. Use the Advanced Search screen, and select a field from the dropdown menu:

Search by Author, Journal, Publication Date, and more

Fill in any or all of the fields below, as needed.

All of these (AND)     Any of these (OR)

Author [v] Alcabes P [Index]

Title [v] tuberculosis [Index]

2. Specify fields in the Query Box by using “tags” in square brackets [ ] following the terms to which they apply. For example, the search **alcabes p[AU] AND tuberculosis[TI]** will retrieve articles written by *P. Alcabes* with the word *tuberculosis* in the article title.

PubMed.gov  
U.S. National Library of Medicine  
National Institutes of Health

Search: PubMed [v]

alcabes p[AU] AND tuberculosis[TI] [Search] [Clear]

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### Use Search Fields for Powerful Subject Searches

The title field [TI] is especially useful in subject searching.

1. Use the title field to do subject searches in areas that **do not have Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)**. For example, there is no MeSH to express the concept *near death experiences*. However, it is possible to do focused subject searches on this topic by searching for **near death experiences** in the title field.
2. Retrieve citations in PubMed that are **too new to have been indexed with MeSH**—as well as those citations already indexed by searching for your terms in the title field and combining them (using OR) with terms in the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) field. This search is more focused than an unqualified keyword search, but it includes the most recent research and reviews.

For example, **tuberculosis[TI] OR tuberculosis[MeSH]** will retrieve article citations with the word *tuberculosis* in the title—as well as articles indexed with the MeSH term *Tuberculosis*.

Note: Specifying fields in the Query Box by using search tags allows for more complicated combinations of terms using AND and OR – for example **alcabes[AU] AND (tuberculosis[TI] OR tuberculosis[MESH])**. Using the dropdown menus, you only combine terms using one or the other – AND to find all of the terms, OR to find any of them.

### Using Truncation and Synonyms to Expand Field Searches

When a field is specified for a search phrase, PubMed turns off *automatic term mapping*, its MeSH translation tool. To compensate for this, search for variants of a word or phrase by incorporating synonyms and by using PubMed’s truncation symbol \* (an asterisk).

For example, the search **heart attack[TI]** will not look for articles indexed with the MeSH *Myocardial Infarction*. Nor will it look for citations to articles with the title words *heart attacks*, *myocardial infarct*, *myocardial infarction* or *myocardial infarctions*. To retrieve articles with all these variants of the concept heart attack, search using truncation and synonyms, e.g., **heart attack\*[TI] OR myocardial infarct\*[TI]**.

# Frequently Used Search Fields

Field Name	Field Tag	Features and Examples
<b>Affiliation</b>	[AD]	Institutional affiliation and address of the first author. <i>Sinai[AD] AND new york[AD]</i> , for example, would retrieve Mount Sinai authors.
<b>Author Name</b>	[AU]	The proper format to search for an author name is: last name followed by a space (no comma) and up to the first two initials. You may also omit the initials. To search for articles by Bernard L. Herz, for example, enter <i>Herz BL[AU]</i> .
<b>First Author</b>	[1AU]	The first personal author name in a citation.
<b>Issue</b>	[IP]	The number of the journal issue in which the article is published.
<b>Journal Title</b>	[JOUR]	The journal title abbreviation, full journal name, or ISSN number. For example, <i>Cell[JOUR]</i> .
<b>Language</b>	[LA]	The language in which the article was published. Example: <i>Chinese[LA]</i> .
<b>MeSH Term</b>	[MESH] or [MH]	Medical Subject Headings, taken from the controlled vocabulary of biomedical index terms used to describe the content of each article in MEDLINE. Use PubMed's MeSH Browser to find appropriate terms.
<b>MeSH Major Topic</b>	[MAJR]	A MeSH Term that is one of the main topics addressed in the journal article. Use PubMed's MeSH Browser to find appropriate terms.
<b>Page Number</b>	[PG]	Enter only the first page number of the article. The citation will display the article's full pagination, but only the first page number is searchable
<b>Publication Date</b>	[PDAT] or [DP]	The date the article was published. Search dates or date ranges using the format YYYY/MM/DD[PDAT], e.g. 1998/03/06[PDAT]. The month and day are optional, e.g. 1998[PDAT]. To enter a date range, insert a colon between each date, e.g. 1997:2001[PDAT].
<b>Publication Type</b>	[PT]	The type of journal article, e.g. Review, Clinical Trial, Letter, etc.
<b>Subheadings</b>	[SH]	Subheadings are used <i>with</i> MeSH terms to help describe a particular aspect of a subject. For example, the drug therapy of asthma is displayed as <i>asthma/drug therapy</i> . The subheading field allows users to "free float" subheadings, e.g. <i>hypertension[MH] AND toxicity[SH]</i> . See PubMed's Help feature for a complete list of subheadings.
<b>Substance Name</b>	[NM]	The name of a chemical or protein discussed in the article. Synonyms to the Supplementary Concept Substance Name will automatically map when qualified with [NM]. This field was implemented in the mid-1980s. Many chemical names are searchable as MeSH terms before that date.
<b>Text Word</b>	[TW]	Includes all words and numbers in the title and abstract as well as MeSH terms, subheadings, and chemical substance names.
<b>Title Words</b>	[TI]	Words and numbers included in the title of a citation.
<b>Title/Abstract Words</b>	[TIAB]	Words and numbers included in the title and abstract of a citation.
<b>Volume</b>	[VI]	The number of the journal volume in which an article is published.