Searching for evidence using Ovid

1. What is Ovid?

Ovid is a search platform that enables you to search a variety of medical databases.

Databases that you can search with Ovid:

MEDLINE
The largest medical database. Produced by the US National Library of medicine it contains millions of citations from thousands of biomedical and life science journals. It covers *allied health specialties, dentistry, nursing, medicine, pre-clinical sciences.*

Embase
The Excerpta Medica database (Embase), is a major biomedical and pharmaceutical database indexing over 3,500 international journals in the following fields. Although it has a large cross over with MEDLINE, Embase is more European and pharmacology focussed.

AMED
The Allied and Complementary Medicine Database (AMED) is produced by the Health Care Information Service of the British Library. It covers a selection of journals in *complementary medicine, palliative care and several professions allied to medicine*. The database covers the years from 1985 to present.

Emcare
The Emcare database is a database encompassing **nursing** and **allied health** topics*.* It has nearly 5 million records dating back to 1995 and includes a comprehensive scope of international content.

HMIC
The Health Management Information Consortium database is a compilation of data from the database of the Department of Health's Library and Information and from the King's Fund. It includes, articles, books, pamphlets, government reports, and a wide range of grey literature on *health service policy, management and administration, with an emphasis on the British National Health Service; the quality of health services including hospitals, nursing, primary care and public health; the planning, design, construction and maintenance of health service buildings; occupational health; control and regulation of medicines; medical equipment and supplies; and social care and personal social services*.

Social Policy and Practice
Social Policy and Practice represents an important source of evidence-based social science research for policy-makers, practitioners, educators and students working within economic and social development, social administration, social services, and care management.

Note: - to search British Nursing Index (BNI), CINAHL or PsycInfo you will need to use a different interface. Please see the Library and Knowledge Service's **Find the Evidence** webpage for further information and guides at **https://www.knowledge-nw.nhs.uk/find-the-evidence**

2. How do I access Ovid?

- You can access Ovid via the Library and Knowledge Service webpage. This can be found at:
  http://www.knowledge-nw.nhs.uk

  Alternatively, if you are on a Trust computer you can click on our icon on the desktop.

- Then click on the My Resources icon.

- Select **Databases** and click on the Ovid database that you want to search from the list provided **– MEDLINE, Embase, AMED, Emcare, HMIC or Social Policy and Practice**.

- You will now need to log in to your *NHS OpenAthens* account to access OVID.

  (If you don't have an NHS OpenAthens account you can easily register for one by clicking on the **Register** button on the **library homepage**, selecting **Register with NHS OpenAthens** and completing the online form).
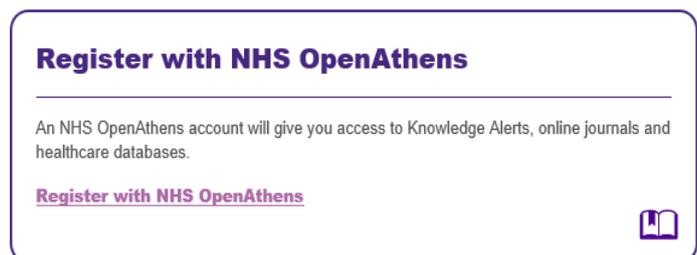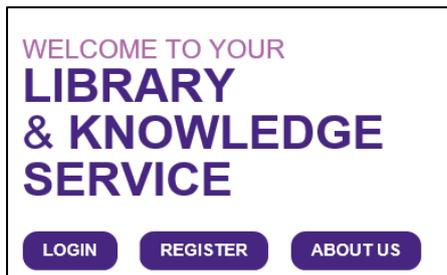

**What is an NHS OpenAthens Account?**
OpenAthens is the brand name of a system that provides access to the online resources that your organisation has purchased such as e-journals and databases.

3. Creating an Ovid Account

- You will need your own Ovid account in order to be able to save your search and your search results.
- To create your Ovid account, click on *My Account* on the top right of the Ovid search page.
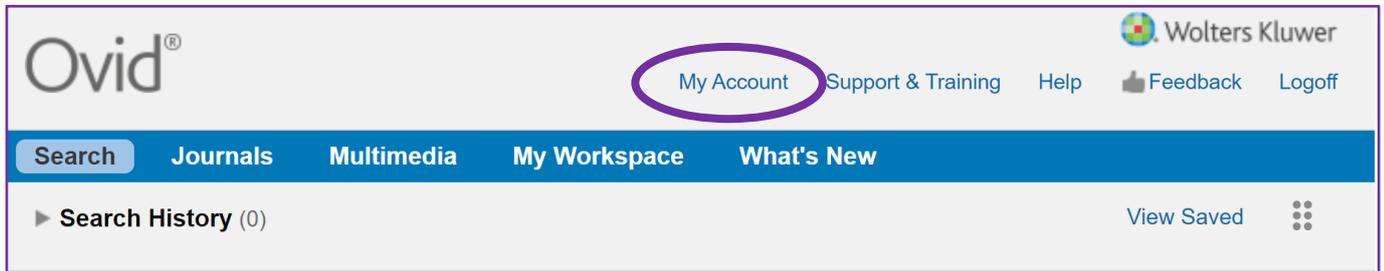
- And then select **Create Account** on the right of the screen.
- If you already have an Ovid account you can log in at the page, entering your account name and password in the relevant boxes and then click on *Login.*
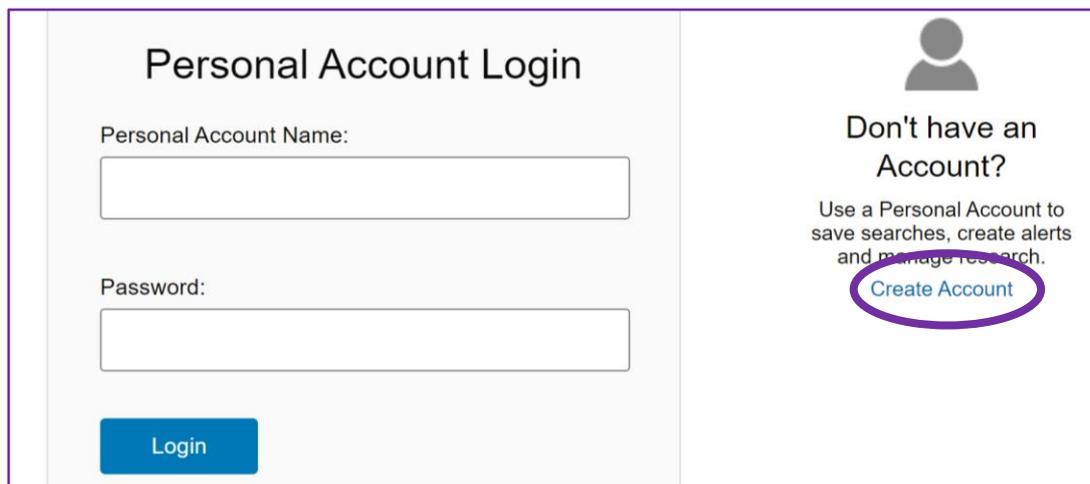
4. Questions and Concepts

It is important that you have a clear idea of your question before you start to search – what you get out of a database search is only as good as the question you put in. Consider what your main topics are and try to frame it as a question. **PICO** is a framework that can help with this. Think about the:

Population you are interested in (age group, gender, people with a particular condition?)
Intervention (what is the treatment or test being used?)
Comparison – if any (do you want to compare this treatment to another?)
Outcome (what is the outcome of interest? Patient mortality, reduction of symptoms, improved quality of life, reduced pain?)

> **Example:** In patients with osteoarthritis of the knee is hydrotherapy more effective than traditional physiotherapy in relieving pain?
> P: Osteoarthritis and knee
> I: Hydrotherapy
> C: Physiotherapy
> O: Pain relief

If PICO does not work for your question, other frameworks are available:
https://medhealth.leeds.ac.uk/info/639/information_specialists/1500/search_concept_tools

Once you have thought of your question and search terms, consider what synonyms and alternative spellings or brand names there might be for your terms. You will need to search for these too.

Example: aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid, ASA.

5. Opening the Search History

BEFORE you start your search, click on **_Search History_** to open it.
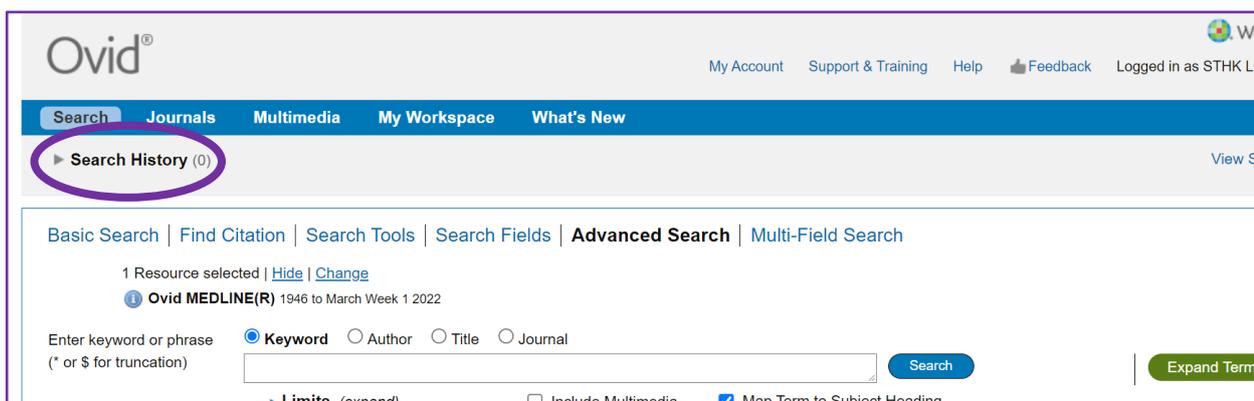
6. Carrying out a Thesaurus Search

A thesaurus is a list of terms (known as subject or MeSH headings) that are used to label articles in a database. When you search using the thesaurus you will find all the articles on the same topic no matter what text words you use.

For example: There are many possible phrases that could be used to search for articles on _heart attacks_, but the MEDLINE subject heading for this condition is **myocardial infarction**. If you were to carry out a thesaurus search on MEDLINE for this subject heading you would find all the articles on this subject regardless of whether they contain the phrase myocardial infarction, heart attack or cardiac arrest etc.

- Check that **map term to subject heading** is selected.

- To carry out a thesaurus search, first type your term into the search box and then click on **Search**.

- You will then be shown a list of headings that most closely match your search term. Sometimes this list can be quite long, other times there might only be one term that matches your search. If there is no close match there will be no headings listed – try to think of another term for your subject and try again. **If you cannot find a relevant thesaurus term – carry out a text word search instead.**

- Click on the heading that most closely matches the subject you are searching.

- You will then be taken to a page that shows more detail about the thesaurus term you selected. For example, on the page below we can see the hierarchy of the various related thesaurus headings. **Heart disease** is the broader term, that we could select if we wanted to also include articles that covered heart disease more generally. We can also see narrower terms which we can select to look at more specific types of heart failure.

You can see how many results you will get by searching each term and if you are not sure if a thesaurus heading is the correct one, you can find out more by clicking on the ⓘ symbol to see the **scope notes**.

Explode and Focus:

Explode allows you to expand your search to include additional, more specific terms.
Focus will limit your search to only those articles in which the thesaurus term is the main subject of the article.

Subject Heading	Hits	Explode	Focus	Scope Note
☑ Heart Failure	132384	☑	☐	ⓘ
☐ Cardio-Renal Syndrome	856	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐ Dyspnea, Paroxysmal	356	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐ Edema, Cardiac	814	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐ Heart Failure, Diastolic	828	☐	☐	ⓘ

For example:
Selecting explode for the thesaurus heading Heart Failure will find all 132384 articles about heart failure in general, as well as all the articles under the headings *Cardio-Renal Syndrome; Dyspnea, Paroxysmal; Edema, Cardiac; Heart Failure, Distolic; Heart Failure, Systolic*.

Note that you can use the Focus and Explode options at the same time.

Once you are happy with the various options that you have selected, click on **Continue**.

Tree for **Heart Failure**				Database: **Ovid MED**
Combine with: OR ▾ [Continue] [Contexts]				
Scroll down for highlighted search term.				
Select Term(s)	Subject Heading	Hits	Explode	Focus	Scope
[+] ☐ Anatomy (Non MeSH)		0	☐	☐	ⓘ

Subheadings:

You will now be given the option to restrict your search to specific **subheadings**. You can choose one or more sub heading at a time. Select the subheadings you want by clicking in the box to the left of the heading. If you don't want to restrict your search in this way you do not need to select any.

Once you have selected the headings you require, click on **Continue**.

Subheadings for: **Heart Failure**

Combine with: OR ▾ [Continue]

☐ **Include All Subheadings (132384)**
-- or choose one or more of these subheadings --

ⓘ ☐ /bl - Blood (9101)   ⓘ ☐ /lj - Legislation & Jurisprudence (1)
ⓘ ☐ /cf - Cerebrospinal Fluid (4)   ⓘ ☐ /me - Metabolism (9114)
ⓘ ☐ /ci - Chemically Induced (2537)   ⓘ ☐ /mi - Microbiology (123)
ⓘ ☐ /ch - Chemistry (3)   ⓘ ☐ /mo - Mortality (14223)
ⓘ ☐ /cl - Classification (824)   ⓘ ☐ /nu - Nursing (1329)
ⓘ ☐ /co - Complications (15989)   ⓘ ☐ /ps - Parasitology (55)
ⓘ ☐ /cn - Congenital (140)   ⓘ ☐ /pa - Pathology (6088)

Ovid will now run your search and you can see the number of results in your **search history**.

7. Carrying out a Text Word Search

This is also sometimes referred to as a keyword search or free text search. Type in the term you are looking for and Ovid will look for records that include that term. It uses the *exact* term that you type in, so it is important to consider if there are alternate terms you should also be searching for. Consider if your term has alternative spellings (anaesthetic, anesthetic) or synonyms (stroke, cerebrovascular accident) or abbreviations (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ADHD) or brand names (ibuprofen, neurofen).

To carry out a text word search, type the term you are looking for into the **search box** and then click **Search** as you did before for your thesaurus search.

This time select the **search as keyword** option and then click on **continue**.

Ovid will now run the search and a new search line will be added to your **search history**.

- Note that Ovid defaults to **.mp** for keyword searches. This stands for **multi purpose** search and means that Ovid will search in *the Title, Original Title, Abstract, Subject Heading, Name of Substance*, and *Registry Word* fields.

  If you would prefer to search in the *title, author* or *journal title* fields you can specify this before you search

<u>**Truncation**</u>

You can use *truncation* to help the database find various forms of a word/term.

Ovid allows you to use * or $ for truncation

For example: entering the term *prevent$* (with the $ or * at the end) into the search box will retrieve results containing *prevents, preventative, prevention, preventing* etc.

And entering the term *wom*n* will retrieve results containing both *woman* and *women.*

*will work both at the end of a word and in the middle of a word. $ can only be used at the end of a word.

8. Combining your searches

To retrieve relevant articles you will need to link your various searches together. This is done by using **AND** or **OR** (known as Boolean searching).

OR searching broadens a search by looking for either	**AND** searching narrows a search by only looking for both terms in combination
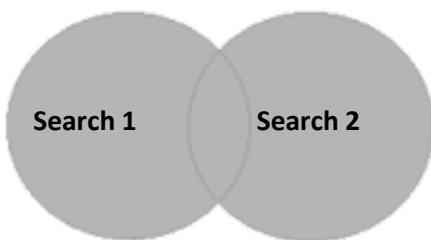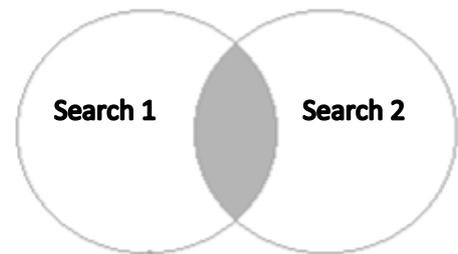
For example. In the search below, we have searched using the thesaurus heading *anaemia, sickle cell* (search 1) and we carried out a keyword search for *penicillin* (search 2).

We can combine them using *OR*, by clicking in the box next to the search lines to be combined and then selecting the **OR** option.

This gives us a new set of search results in our **search history** (search 3), with 88, 414 articles found.

▼ Search History (3)				View S
# ▲ Searches	Results	Type	Actions	
1 Anemia, Sickle Cell/	22701	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
2 penicillin.mp.	65941	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
3 1 or 2	88414	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	

If we were to combine the two searches using **AND** we get only 228 results.

▼ Search History (3)				View Sav
# ▲ Searches	Results	Type	Actions	
1 Anemia, Sickle Cell/	22701	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
2 penicillin.mp.	65941	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	
3 1 and 2	228	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	

Note: If you can't see all your search lines displayed – click on **expand**.

▼ Search History (7)					View Saved
# ▲ Searches	Results	Type	Actions	Annotations	
4 Penicillins/	40757	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	🗩	Expand
5 penicillin.mp.	65941	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	🗩	
6 4 or 5	78480	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	🗩	
7 3 and 6	270	Advanced	Display Results More ▼	🗩	

10

9. Limits

If you are getting too many results, you can apply *limits* to narrow your search further. You can apply limits such as **Language**, **Dates** or **Age Group** to ensure the articles you retrieve are more likely to be relevant.

To limit your search, select the search line that you want to apply the limit to and then click on the limits button underneath the search box.

You will now be able to see your limit options. Select the options you require and click on search.

This will give you a new search line in your search history. By limiting our search to English Language only and articles published since 2010 we have gone from 270 results (line 7) to 79 results (line 8).

10. Saving your Search strategy

You may want to save your search strategy. This is a good idea if it is a search you might want to rerun at a later date or if you need a record of the search strategy to include in the write up of your search.

To save your search history select the save all option.

You will then be prompted to create a name for your search. You can choose to save as a permanent search or temporary (which is deleted after 24 hours). You can also use this option to create an **Alert**.

Click on **Save** to save your search.
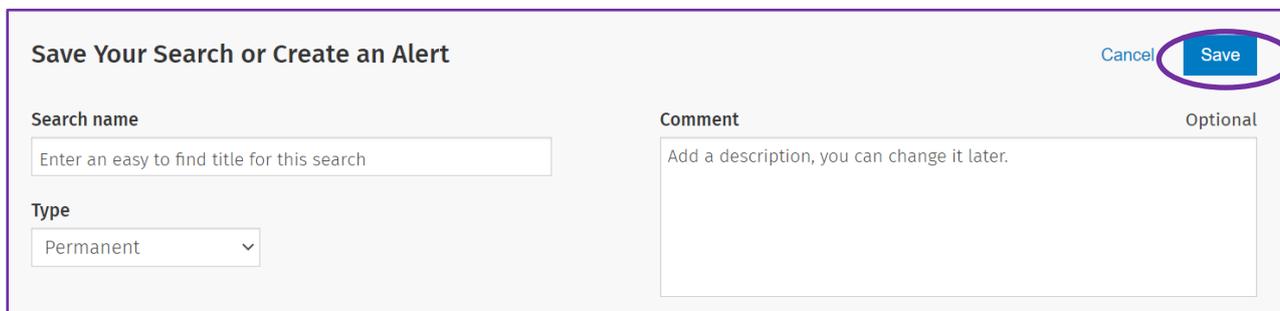
To view your saved searches, go to **My Workspace** and then select **My Searches & Alerts**.
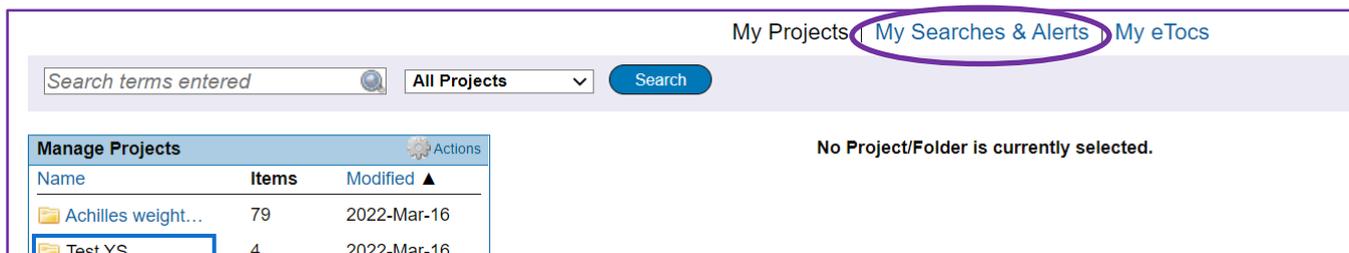
From here you can email the search history to yourself, edit the search history, or view it using the icons on the right.

Or you can copy the search history or run the search again using the options at the top of the screen.
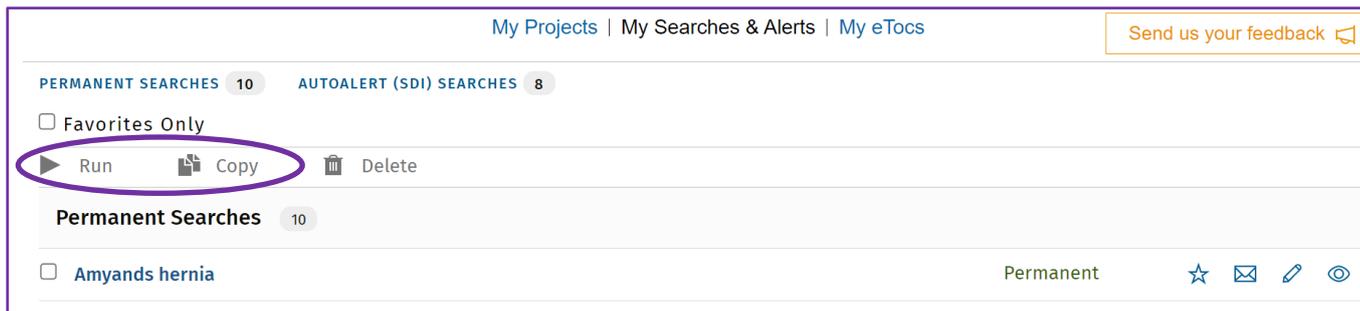
11. Results

When you are happy that you have completed all of your search you can look at the results that you have found. The results will contain the citations for all the articles that Ovid has found. You can **view** the results*, export* them and **save** them in a range of different formats.

To view your results. Click on **Display Results** for the relevant search line and then scroll down the page where all the results for your selected search line will be displayed.

There are a number of options available to you at this point. You can opt to view just the title, the title and citation or the title, citation and abstract. You can also choose how many results you would like per page.

You will see a **Get Full Text** option next to each article for instant access to the PDF or to a form to request it from the library. You may prefer to save your results to review at a later time.

To save results, you can select the records that you are interested in by clicking in the box next to the title – or if you prefer, you can also tick **All** to select all the results. If there is more than one page of results you can move onto the next page by clicking on **Next.**

Saving results to My Projects:

Once you have selected all the results that are of interest to you, you will want to create a **Project** to save them in to.

- Click on My Projects
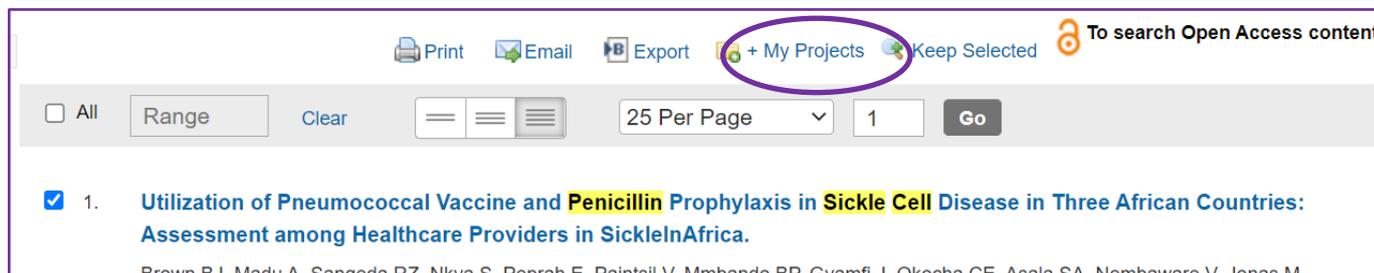
- You will then be asked if you want to add it to an existing project (you can choose from a dropdown list of projects you have already created) or if you want to create a new project.

- Create a name for your project and you can also add a description if you wish.

- Click on **Add Items** to add your selected results to your project.
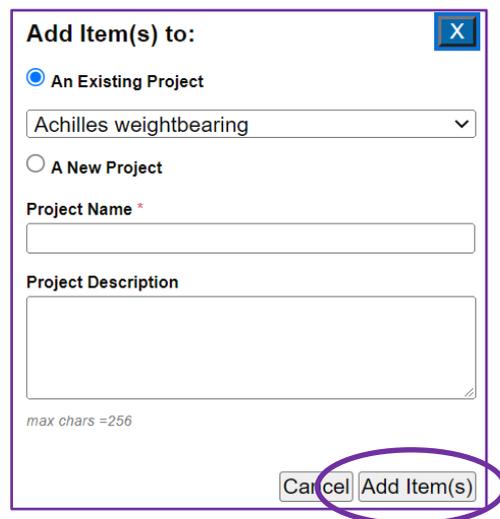
- You can now either return to your search by selecting **Close Window** or you can select **Go to My Projects** to look at your saved results and export them.
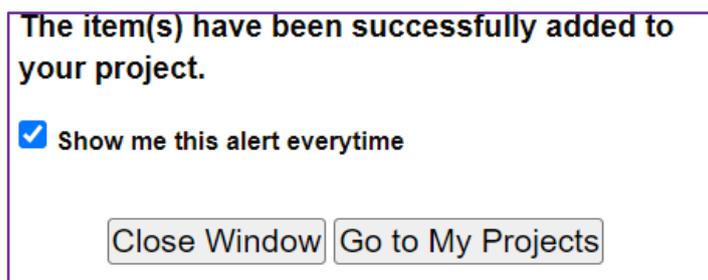
Exporting your results:

If you select **Go to My Projects** you will be taken straight to your **My Project Page**. If you want to access your 'My Projects' page at a later time, you will need to select **My Workspace** at the top of your screen.
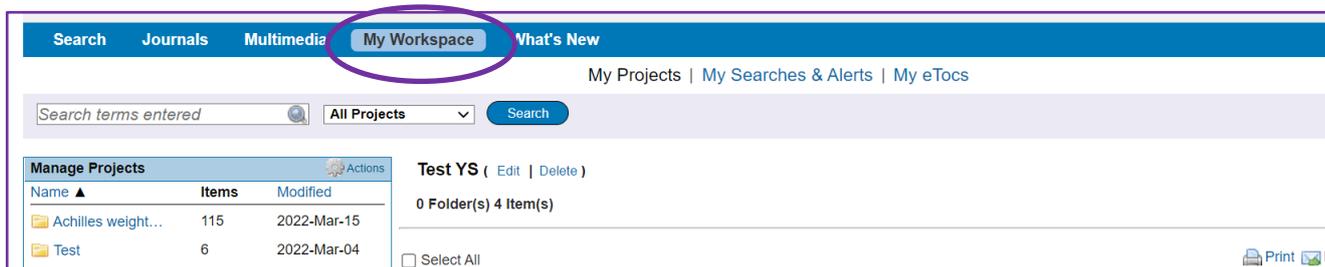
Select the project you wish to use from the **My Projects** Menu on the left of the screen and then select the items you want to export. You can choose **Select all** if you want to export all the results in that project.

And then you can choose to print, email or export your results.

When exporting you can choose which file *format* you want to export in (word, pdf, RIS and many others) and you can also select what *fields* you would like to include and what *citation style* you prefer. When you have made your choices, click on **Export** and your file will be created.

We also recommend that you untick the URL option and include only the option to export as Link to External Resolver.

12. Alerts

When saving your search history you are given the option to save it as an Auto Alert (SDI)

If you choose this option, you will then be able to set up an **Alert**. You can set up a schedule for the alert, deciding how often you want it to run, how you would like the alert to be delivered, and specify the email address you want the alert to be sent to (if you want to receive the alert via email).

13.   Changing databases

Once you have completed your search, saved your search history and saved your results – you may wish to repeat the search on a different Ovid database.

To do this, select the change option located just above the search box.
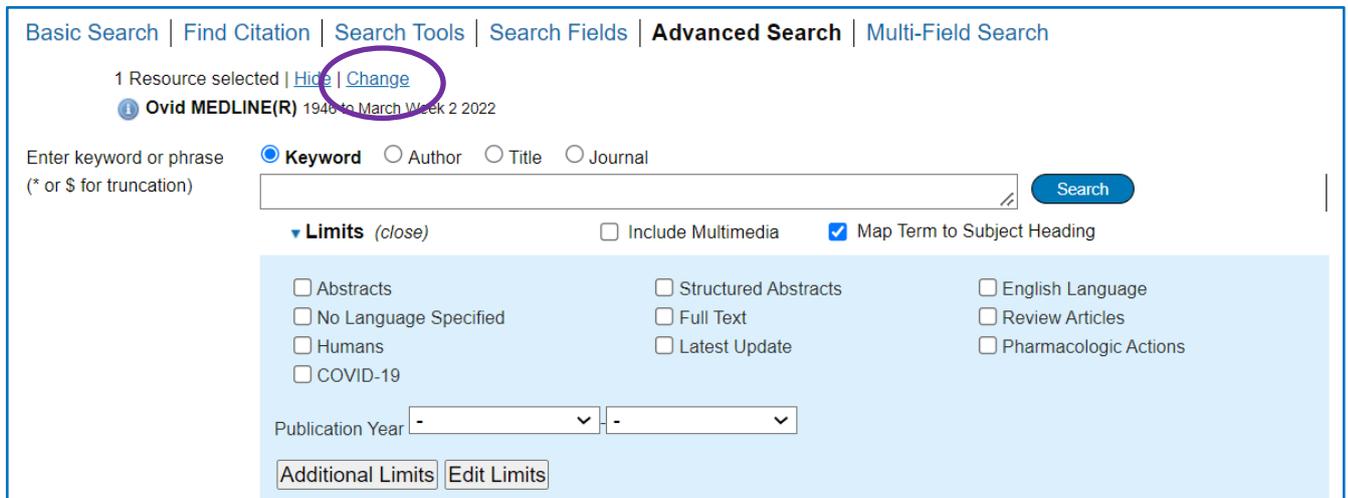
You can now select a new database to search.

You will be given the option to Run Search which will rerun your previous search in the new database that you have chosen. However, because thesaurus terms vary from one database to the other, doing this may cause problems with your new search. It is best to create your new search from scratch, by clicking on **OK** instead.

Your new search will now be carried out in the database you selected
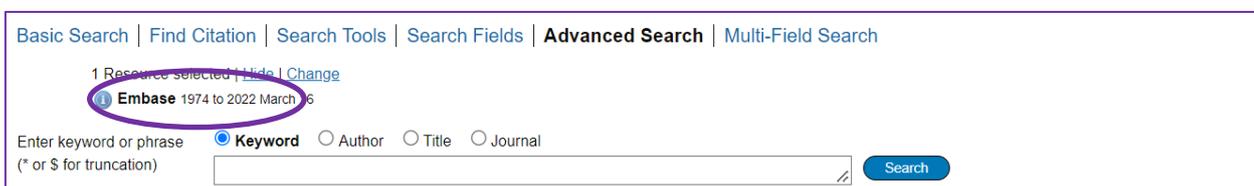
14.   Further resources

This workbook is designed to demonstrate and explain how to carry out a successful basic search using the OVID database. However, further resources are available if you wish to go into more detail about how OVID works or how to search for literature in general.

We have links to a number of guides and video tutorials on our website here: https://www.knowledge-nw.nhs.uk/evidence-searching

Framing your questions (PICO and other search strategies). The following website looks at search strategies in more detail.
- http://guides.nyu.edu/c.php?g=276561&p=1847897

The Library and Knowledge Service also has a number of books available on how to carry out a literature search, including:

- *"Doing a Literature Review in Health and Social Care",* by H. Aveyard. Published by Open University Press (2014) ISBN: 9780335263073

If you would like any further help with OVID we can help provide training. Visit our website to request an Assisted Search session or contact us to arrange a group training session either in the library, at your location or virtually via MS Teams.

If you don't have time to carry out an evidence search for yourself (and the search isn't part of an assignment or coursework) we can carry out the search for you. To request an Evidence Search fill in our online form here: https://www.knowledge-nw.nhs.uk/request-an-evidence-search