How to Use Subject Heading Terms in CINAHL

By Anna Do, May 2019

CINAHL Subject Headings are assigned based on article content and help you retrieve more relevant results.

1. Open the CINAHL advanced search page (access from the library homepage). Check the “Suggest Subject Terms” box, then enter your term, then click “Search.”
2. A list of appropriate CINAHL headings, or subject terms, will appear, defaulted to Relevancy Ranked. To the right of the subject terms list is an “Explode” and a “Major Concept” option. “Explode” will search the more specific term(s) under a subject term. “Major Concept” will restrict results to those articles in which your chosen subject is a major focus.

3. When you click a subject heading, you will be redirected to a page of the hierarchical arrangement of subject headings, in which you can search for more specific terms under your subject heading.
4. Click “Back to Term List” to return to your list of subject terms.

5. Check the box of a subject term to view the subheadings, which may be selected to further refine the subject. If a subheading is not selected, all of the subheadings are searched. When you check a subject term, it is added to the Search Term Builder box.
6. To browse for additional terms to add to your search, click the “Browse Additional Terms” link. Your previously selected terms will be retained, enabling you to continue building your search.

7. When you finish making your selections, click “Search Database.”
8. This search will retrieve a relatively small number of targeted citations that has been indexed with MeSH terms. When you are finished with your search, click the “Search History” link to save or edit the search.

For a step-by-step tutorial on how to use MeSH terms in CINAHL, check out this video on YouTube: https://youtu.be/eJJPp9yAloA

For more help visit https://library.mghihp.edu