Overview: When should I use this database?

**Embase** has over 25 million records, including articles from 7,600 peer-reviewed journal titles. Sixty topic areas are covered, including 30 core clinical and pharmacology topics that represent over 70% of Embase content. The database has more of an international focus than PubMed/Medline, and also has greater coverage for pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

**Note:** this tip sheet is for the Embase.com version of the database, *not* the Ovid version.

Before you start searching, keep in mind . . .

Plan to save your search in a document, citation management software (Endnote, Refworks, etc.), and/or the database

- By saving your search, your strategy will be reproducible for another time and properly documented.
- Explore options for [citation management here](#), and find tips on how to export results.
- To save searches in Embase create an account by clicking on the “Register” link located at the top right of the page header. Save searches after logging in by clicking on the “Set email alert” link at the top of the search results.

Keywords

**How to Find & Use**

- Keyword terms can be single words or phrases.
- Use quotes around all phrases to ensure that the phrase is search instead of each word individually. We recommend using single quotes `'` in Embase (e.g. ‘public health’), but double quotes also work.
- Note: searches will automatically map to an Emtree heading when keywords are searched without field tags. You must select “TURN OFF MAPPING” to prevent this from happening.

Controlled Vocabularies — How to Find & Use

**Locate Controlled Vocabulary (Emtree)**

- Similar to MeSH in PubMed, Embase has a controlled vocabulary called Emtree. The Emtree database offers a comprehensive vocabulary to describe the content of biomedical data. Terms are arranged hierarchically by subject categories with more specific terms arranged beneath broader terms.
- In total, it contains approximately 26,000 terms and more than 270,000 synonyms which are updated annually to reflect changes in medicine and medical terminology. Terms include chemical names, trade names, device names and laboratory/research codes mapped to generic names for more than 30,000 drugs and chemicals.
Combining Searches Using Boolean Operators

- A comprehensive and systematic search includes both controlled vocabulary and keyword terms (i.e. free text, natural language, synonyms).

- Boolean operators are used to combine search terms. In Embase, you can use the operators AND, OR, and NOT.

- Boolean operators MUST be used as upper case (AND, OR, NOT).
  - **OR**—use OR between similar keywords, like synonyms, acronyms, and variations in spelling within the same idea or concept
  - **AND**—use AND to link ideas and concepts where you want to see both ideas or concepts in your search results
  - **NOT**—used to exclude specific keywords from the search, however, you will want to use NOT with caution because you may end up missing something important.

- To apply the Boolean operators, use either the “Quick Search” (Embase homepage) or the “Advanced Search” feature (4th tab from the right located above the search box on the Embase homepage).

Applying Filters

- On the left side of the results are options to filter your search by Sources, Drugs, Diseases, Devices, etc. under the header “Results Filters.” Click the arrow next to each filter to see the available options.

- Warning: filters such as species, ages, text availability, and subject discipline may unnecessarily exclude articles you want to see. When you apply these filters, you are using controlled vocabulary or database indexing to exclude articles. This is not always a reliable method of excluding articles.
Applying Filters (continued)

- To exclude a term not featured in the side column of filters (for example, animal studies), use the following code:

  ('animal'/exp NOT 'human'/exp)

- Add this to the rest of your search strategy using the NOT Boolean operator.

Field Tags

- To locate field limits (such as title, abstract), go to the "Advanced Search" page and click on the link for “fields” located in small print beneath the search box. Default is "all fields," but by entering a search term and then clicking on one of these limits (for example, clicking "Abstract :ab") will add it to the search builder.

- The Embase field tags that most closely resemble [TW] in PubMed are: abstract, title, keyword. For example: 'vaccine':ab,ti,kw

- To search Title/abstract only use “:ab,ti.” For example: 'vaccine':ab,ti . This tag can also involve multiple search terms. For example: (opioid* OR narcotic*):ti,ab

- Other commands include:
  - 'term':ti (Title)
  - 'term':ab (Abstract)
  - 'Smith A':au (Author)
  - 'term':ad (Author Address/Affiliation)
  - 'term':jt (Journal Title)

- A comprehensive list of field tags, including those for drugs and devices, can be found by clicking here.

Proximity

- Embase allows for proximity operators to search for terms within a certain number of words from each other. There are two types of proximity searching: NEAR/n and NEXT/n

- NEAR/n searches for terms within the specified number of words from each other, in either direction. (therapy NEAR/5 sleep) looks for the word therapy within 5 words of sleep.

- NEXT/n searches for terms within the specified number of words from each other, in the order the words are typed. For example, therapy NEXT/5 sleep would find “therapy for improved sleep,” but it would not find “sleep therapy”
Embase Search Tips

Wildcards/Truncation

In Embase you can use a * at the root of a word to find multiple endings. For example:

- *arthroplast* will return arthroplasty, arthroplasties, arthroplastic, arthroplastics, etc.
- *mobili* will return mobility, mobilization, mobilisation, mobilize, etc.

- You can also use a ? as a wildcard to search for letter variants within a word (e.g. wom?n finds women and woman)
- In Embase you can use truncation and phrase searching at the same time. e.g. "early childhood mobili*
- You can use truncation and quotation marks at the same time. For example, the search “sleep therap*” will return “sleep therapy” and sleep therapies

Accessing Full Text

In Embase, the FIND IT icon (above) will often appear within a citation. Clicking on the icon will take you to an external page that will show a listing of full-text options. If the full text is not available, you will see a heading that says, "Request a copy from Interlibrary Loan." Click on "Welch Medical Library Borrowers" link to request the article free of charge (only available for Hopkins students, faculty, and staff).

More Information

- General principles on searching in any database
- Define your question and write it down (PICO) http://browse.welch.jhmi.edu/ld.php?content_id=35628358
  - Embase Support Center: Searching