Searching in PsycINFO (Ovid)

PsycINFO is a database that contains psychological literature. PsycINFO is searched using a combination of subject headings and keywords.

PsycINFO searches are conducted line-by-line, with each concept searched separately and then combined with Boolean operators (AND and OR).

The following searches aim to find an article comparing two approaches to treating depression - antidepressants and cognitive behaviour therapy. These terms will be searched separately to ensure you get the most relevant results.

1. Type your first keyword into the search box. Make sure the **'Map Term to Subject Heading'** box is checked. This will tell the database to automatically search for a matching MeSH term to use.

| Advanced Search | Basic Search | Find Citation | Search Tools | Search Fields | Multi-Field Search |

1 resource selected   Hide   Change
ⓘ APA PsycInfo 1806 to July Week 1 2023

◉ Keyword   ○ Author   ○ Title   ○ Journal

depression

[🔍 Search] [Term Finder ↗]

☐ Include Multimedia   ☑ Map Term to Subject Heading

Limits ⌃

☐ Peer Reviewed Journal   ☐ All Journals   ☐ Latest Update
☐ Human   ☐ English Language   ☐ Abstracts

Publication Year [- ⌄] - [- ⌄]

[Additional Limits] [Edit Limits]

2. The next page contains a list of subject headings. In the example below, "Depression (Emotion)" is the subject heading and depression.mp is the keyword.

Select	Subject Heading	Auto Explode	Focus	Scope
☐	Atypical Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Beck Depression Inventory	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Cortical Spreading Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☑	"Depression (Emotion)"	☑	☐	ⓘ
☐	Depression Screening	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Endogenous Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Late Life Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	"Long-term Depression (Neuronal)"	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Major Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Postpartum Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Reactive Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Recurrent Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	Treatment Resistant Depression	☐	☐	ⓘ
☐	depression.mp. *search as Keyword*			

3. Before selecting a subject heading, click the 'Scope' icon (ⓘ). This will give you the definition of the subject heading to ensure you're using it correctly.

4. Click on the subject heading to see where it falls in the hierarchy. This will show you if there's a more specific term you could be using instead. PsycINFO automatically selects all the subject headings that appear in the hierarchy underneath the heading you select. The screenshot below is the hierarchy for the subject heading 'Major Depression'.

☑ Major Depression				149747
	[Used For]			
			Agitated Depression	
			Depressive Reaction (Neurotic)	
			Dysphoria	
			Melancholia	
			Neurotic Depressive Reaction	
			Psychotic Depressive Reaction	
			Unipolar Depression	
	[Broader Terms]			
		☐	Affective Disorders	15939
	[Narrower Terms]			
		☐	Anaclitic Depression	68
		☐	Dysthymic Disorder	1526
		☐	Endogenous Depression	1253
		☐	Late Life Depression	973
		☐	Postpartum Depression	5953
		☐	Reactive Depression	308
		☐	Recurrent Depression	1009
		☐	Treatment Resistant Depression	3003
	[Related Terms]			
		☐	Atypical Depression	225
		☐	Bipolar Disorder [+NT]	30508

5. Uncheck the 'Auto Explode' box to stop the database from automatically selecting all headings underneath a term, or if the subject heading does not include any child headings.

6. Click 'Continue' to add the subject heading to your search history.

Search History (1) ∧						View Saved ✛
☐ # ▲ Searches		Results	Type	Actions		Annotations
☐ 1 "Depression (Emotion)"/		26987	Advanced	Display Results	More ∨	💬
Save Remove Combine with: AND OR						

Now, we'll search for our concept as a keyword.

1. Instead of selecting the subject heading when you search for 'depression', click the box next to 'depression.mp. *search as Keyword*' and click **'Continue'**. The search history below contains both a subject heading ("Depression (Emotion)"**/**) and a keyword (depression**.mp.**).

☐	1	"Depression (Emotion)"/	26987	Advanced
☐	2	depression.mp.	385157	Advanced

2. Search for all possible synonyms for each concept, then check the boxes next to them. Click OR to search for all the terms at once. Your search history will look like this:

1	"Depression (Emotion)"/	26987
2	depression.mp.	385157
3	Major Depression/	149747
4	1 or 2 or 3	385157

3. Repeat this process for all of your search concepts, then combine each OR line with AND. Below is the completed search history for this area of research. Lines 4, 7, and 11 are combinations of each concept. Line 12 searches these combinations to find all articles that include a search term from each concept.

1	"Depression (Emotion)"/	26987
2	depression.mp.	385157
3	Major Depression/	149747
4	1 or 2 or 3	385157
5	exp Antidepressant Drugs/	41493
6	antidepress*.mp.	53369
7	exp Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors/	14245
8	serotonin reuptake inhibitor*.mp.	10888
9	SSRI.mp.	4552
10	5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9	67052
11	exp Cognitive Behavior Therapy/	26959
12	cognitive behavio* therap*.mp.	36528
13	CBT.mp.	17451
14	11 or 12 or 13	40905
15	4 and 10 and 14	1439

Advanced search syntax

The table below contains the advanced search syntax that can be incorporated into a PsycINFO search to improve its accuracy and increase the number of results.

Note: in this table, ***n*** stands for a number, not the letter n. To use these operators, replace the ***n*** with the number of letters or numbers you'd like in between terms.

Syntax	Symbol	Example	Function
Truncation	*	depress*	Finds 'alternate endings' to a word
Mandated wildcard	#	wom#n	Replaces 1 letter
Optional wildcard	?	p?ediatric	Replaces 0-1 letters
Nesting	(...)	behavio?r AND (depression OR anxiety)	Group similar terms in a search
Proximity	**adj*n***	disturb* adj3 sleep	Find a word within a specified number of words (in any order)
Nested proximity	**(a or b) adj*n* (c or d)**	(breast OR skin) adj3 (cancer* OR neoplasm* OR tumo?r* OR malignan*)	Find terms combined with OR within a specified number of words from another group of words combined with OR.