PROSPERO Guide to Searching

Version 1

BASIC SEARCHING

Enter search term/s in the search box:

🔍		Go	MeSH	Clear filters	Show filters

If two or more words are entered they will automatically be searched as a phrase unless one or more is a Boolean operator described below. For example, *multiple sclerosis* will retrieve records where the phrase appears. This is equivalent to enclosing the phrase in quotation marks. For transparency it is always preferable to enclose phrases in quotation marks to make it clear to others what the intention was and to avoid inadvertently including Boolean operators

SEARCH COMMANDS AND SYNTAX

Wildcards/truncation

Use the wildcard character * at the end of a term to search for multiple endings to a term. E.g., nurs* will retrieve nurse, nurses, nursing etc.

🔍 nurs*	❌	Go	MeSH	Clear filters	Show filters

First | Previous | Next | Last (page 1 of 439)

21947 records found for **nurs***   Show checked records only | Export

Combining search terms

Terms can be combines using the Boolean operators AND, OR and NOT. Parentheses can be used to group related sets of terms.

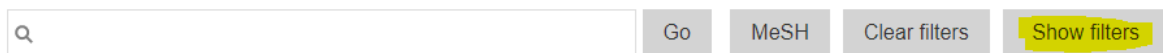| Term	Description
AND	If you combine terms using AND, you will only find documents containing both terms
OR	If you combine terms using OR, you will find documents that contain either term
NOT	If you join words with NOT, you will find documents containing the left term but not the right. Searching for *ulcer NOT stomach* will locate all documents containing the word *ulcer*, except for those which also contain the word *stomach*.

Proximity operators

You can use proximity operators to find terms close to each other in the records.

Users should note that in PROSPERO, word order is respected so *hepatocellular NEAR liver* may return a different number of records *liver NEAR Hepatocellular*.

Term	Description
NEAR	You can also look for documents where two words or phrases are near to each other, by associating them with the linking word NEAR. Use NEAR with a number to indicate proximity (i.e. NEAR3). If no number is used, the search will identify records where both terms are within 6 words of each other.
ADJ	ADJ works in exactly the same way as NEAR
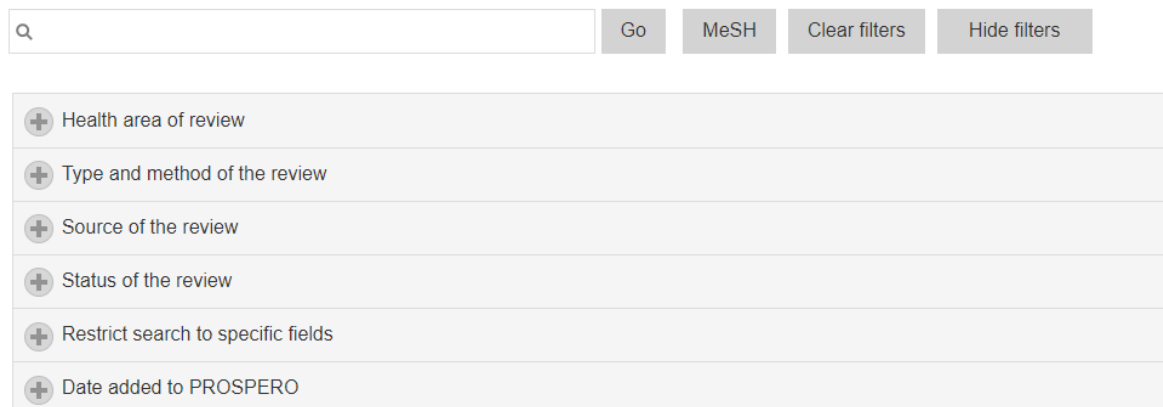
USING BUILT-IN FILTERS

PROSPERO has a number of built-in filters that can be used to refine results on their own or in combination with a search. Access the filters by clicking the *Show filters* button.

🔍		Go	MeSH	Clear filters	Show filters

The Show filters button becomes the Hide filters button, and the available filters are listed as accordion items.

🔍		Go	MeSH	Clear filters	Hide filters

➕ Health area of review

➕ Type and method of the review

➕ Source of the review

➕ Status of the review

➕ Restrict search to specific fields

➕ Date added to PROSPERO

Health area of the review

Restrict your results to one or more health areas by checking the appropriate boxes. All checked boxes are OR'd in the search.

Health area of review

Review authors may add as many Health Area tags as they want. These tags are not currently applied by Cochrane authors so Cochrane Protocols will not be retrieved with this filter.

- ☑ Any health area
- ☐ Alcohol/substance misuse/abuse
- ☐ Blood and immune system
- ☐ Cancer
- ☐ Cardiovascular
- ☐ Care of the elderly
- ☐ Child health
- ☐ Complementary therapies
- ☐ Covid-19
- ☐ Crime and justice

Type or method of the review

Restrict your results to one or more type or method by checking the appropriate boxes. All checked boxes are OR'd in the search.

Type and method of the review

- ☑ Any review type or method
- ☐ Diagnostic
- ☐ Epidemiologic
- ☐ Intervention
- ☐ Prevention
- ☐ Prognostic
- ☐ Service Delivery
- ☐ Systematic review
- ☐ Meta-analysis
- ☐ Individual patient data (IPD) meta-analysis
- ☐ Prospective meta-analysis (PMA)
- ☐ Pre-clinical review
- ☐ Methodology

Source of the review

PROSPERO contains protocols from different sources. You can restrict the protocols you are interested in by selecting from this filter.

Status of the review

Restrict search results by reviews with a particular status. All checked boxes are OR'd in the search.

Restrict to specific fields

Field codes can be entered directly into the search line to restrict by field. Separate the terms from the field code with a colon For example:

("multiple sclerosis" OR ms):TI

Will restrict the search to the *Title* (TI) field. Note that the restriction applies only to the preceding term so use parentheses to indicate which terms should be restricted. Terms can be combined with a comma. Commas-combined fields are OR'd, so the search below would restrict to finding *multiple sclerosis OR ms* in either the *Title* (TI) or *Condition studied* (CS) fields.

("multiple sclerosis" OR ms):TI,CS

All fields are listed in the drop-down filter and can be chosen by selecting from the list.

Date added to PROSPERO

Restrict search results to records that were added to PROSPERO within a specified date range.

MeSH SEARCHING

Click on the MeSH search button to open the MeSH browser.

The CRD MeSH browser will open and prompt for the term you are searching for. Enter the term and click either *Permute* or *Stem*. *Permute* will return all MeSH Terms that contain the term you entered anywhere in the MeSH Term or MeSH Entry Term, *Stem* will return all MeSH Terms that start with the term you entered. For example, entering multiple sclerosis and clicking Permute shows this:

Use these screens to search using the MeSH thesaurus.

Find terms in the index by choosing **Permute** to find all terms that contain that text in any position, or **Stem** to find terms that begin with that text. Select the term(s) you want to search for and click Go to initiate the search. To see a term in the context of the MeSH trees or to restrict searching to subheadings (qualifiers) click **Trees...** from the index. You can then select subheadings and control explosion.

Text [Multiple Sclerosis]   [Permute]   [Stem]   [Trees]

Select term and search now [Go]

○ **Multiple Sclerosis**

   or MS (Multiple Sclerosis)
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Acute Fulminating

○ **Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Progressive**

   or Chronic Progressive Multiple Sclerosis
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Primary Progressive
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Progressive Relapsing
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Remittent Progressive
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Secondary Progressive
   or Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis
   or Progressive Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis
   or Remittent Progressive Multiple Sclerosis
   or Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis

○ **Multiple Sclerosis, Relapsing-Remitting**

   or Acute Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Acute Relapsing
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Relapsing Remitting
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Remitting-Relapsing
   or Relapsing Remitting Multiple Sclerosis

If you see the term you want and also want to explode that term in all trees then simply select it from the list and click *Go* to perform the search.

Select term and search now [Go]

⦿ **Multiple Sclerosis**

   or MS (Multiple Sclerosis)
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Acute Fulminating

○ **Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Progressive**

   or Chronic Progressive Multiple Sclerosis
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Primary Progressive
   or Multiple Sclerosis, Progressive Relapsing

You can also explore the MeSH Trees that the term belongs to by selecting the term and clicking *Tree*. The whole MeSH Tree will be displayed and you can choose to explode in individual trees as well as adding MeSH Qualifiers to the search.

VIEWING RESULTS

Results are displayed below the search box, 50 to a page. The columns displayed are: *Date registered, Title, Type of record* (i.e. Clinical, Animal or Cochrane Protocol) and *Review Status*. Columns can be sorted using the up/down arrows.

SEARCH HISTORY

All search lines are saved in your search history. You can access your search history by clicking the link on the search page.

Click to **show your search history and hide search results.** Open the **Filters** panel to find records with specific characteristics (e.g. all reviews about cancer or all diagnostic reviews etc). See our **Guide to Searching** for more details.

Combine search history lines using standard Boolean operators either in the search box or by selecting lines in the search history and clicking one of the Boolean menu options. For example, the example below

Select all | Unselect all | Clear history | **Combine checked lines with** AND | OR | NOT

	Line	Search for	Hits
☑	#1	hepatocellular	1424
☑	#2	liver	7304

Will combine lines 1 and 2 of the search with the Boolean AND operator. The equivalent textual search could be typed into the search box as:

#1 and #2

Select all | Unselect all | Clear history | **Combine checked lines with** AND | OR | NOT

	Line	Search for	Hits
☐	#1	hepatocellular	1424
☐	#2	liver	7304
☐	#3	#1 AND #2	1192