

Responsible Literature Searching Guidelines*

1. Responsible literature searching requires locating primary literature, preferably from peer reviewed journals, and critical evaluation of the information contained in the primary literature to answer the research inquiry or clinical question.
2. Responsible literature searching requires knowledge of the structure, function and limitations of each HSL Online Resource and knowledge of other biomedical resources available for online literature searching.
3. Responsible literature searching requires knowledge of common structural elements shared by bibliographic databases and application of the appropriate search methods to retrieve the relevant primary literature.
4. Because of their unique coverage and indexing of the primary literature, it is necessary to search the major bibliographic databases to complete a responsible literature search.
5. When completing a responsible drug or chemical information literature search, consideration should be given to consulting electronic and print tertiary sources and to search the appropriate drug, chemistry and pharmaceutical databases.
6. Evidence-based health care resources (EBHC) assist in identifying studies that provide strong scientific evidence. Consideration should be given to using EBHC resources in conjunction with the major bibliographic databases when completing a responsible literature search.
7. When completing a responsible interdisciplinary search, it may be beneficial to consult discipline-specific databases.
8. Responsible literature searching may include use of discipline-specific Internet resources or mediated databases available through commercial information services.
9. Cited reference and related article searching are useful tools in completing a responsible literature search, and should be used in conjunction with keyword and controlled vocabulary searching.
10. Alerting services are effective current awareness tools and assist in updating a responsible literature search.
11. Responsible literature searching for harmful exposures from medical interventions, particularly in the area of drug safety, requires knowledge of tertiary literature, as well as search techniques to retrieve and locate primary literature from the major biomedical and drug information resources and databases.

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12. HSLs reference librarians are knowledgeable about database vocabulary and structure, and can assist in completing a responsible literature search in any biomedical database.
13. A responsible literature search should document the sources searched and the search methods used in the literature review.

*Copied with permission. Health Sciences Library System. University of Pittsburgh.

Responsible Literature Searching Guidelines. Responsible Literature Searching. Health Sciences Library System. University of Pittsburgh. Internet-Based Studies in Education and Research. University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences eLearning Environment.
http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/services/instruction/responsible_literature_searching

Responsible Literature Searching and Guidelines adapted and revised by the Weill Cornell Medical Library, NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center.
<http://library2.med.cornell.edu/Tutorials/RLS/>