

Literature searching using the Cochrane Library



A Keyll Darree Library Guide

What is Cochrane?

The Cochrane Library is available at www.cochranelibrary.com. Cochrane is the best single source of reliable clinical evidence. It will help you find reliable evidence about the effects of health care treatments. If you find a systematic review that answers your question, you will be saved the work of searching databases for journal literature, as well as all the reading involved. So it's worth looking at Cochrane first!

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Databases

The Cochrane Library consists of several databases:

- **Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews** – A systematic review identifies an intervention for a specific disease or other problem in health care, and determines whether or not this intervention works. To do this authors locate, appraise and synthesise evidence from as many relevant scientific studies as possible. They summarise conclusions about effectiveness, and provide a unique collation of the known evidence on a given topic, so that others can easily review the primary studies for any intervention. Systematic reviews differ from other types of review in that they adhere to a strict design in order to make them more comprehensive, thus minimising the chance of bias, and ensuring their reliability. Reviews are of two types: full reviews and protocols. Protocols provide an outline and proposed approach of the systematic review.
- **Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)** – this database includes details of published trials taken from bibliographic databases and other published resources. CENTRAL includes the title of the article, information on where it was published and, in many cases, the abstract.
- **Cochrane Clinical Answers (CCAs)** - CCAs provide a readable, digestible, clinically-focused entry point to rigorous research from Cochrane Reviews. They are designed to be actionable and to inform point-of-care decision-making. Each CCA contains a clinical question, a short answer, and data for the outcomes from the Cochrane Review deemed most relevant to practising healthcare professionals, our target audience.

All the databases have their value, but the systematic reviews are especially useful for most people. When you search or browse, you search across all the databases at once.

Searching for information

You can either browse or search to find relevant material in the Cochrane Library. Browsing is easy and gives you the opportunity to identify other areas that may be of interest.

Browse by Topic | Browse by Cochrane Review Group

Browse by Topic

Browse the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews

a	e	n
Allergy & intolerance	Gastroenterology & hepatology	Neonatal care
b	Genetic disorders	Neurology
Blood disorders	Gynaecology	o
c	h	Orthopaedics & trauma
Cancer	Health & safety at work	p
Child health	Health professional education	Pain & anaesthesia
Complementary & alternative medicine	Heart & circulation	Pregnancy & childbirth
Consumer & communication strategies	i	Public health
d	Infectious disease	f
Dentistry & oral health	k	Rheumatology
Developmental, psychosocial & learning problems	Kidney disease	s
Diagnosis	l	Skin disorders
e	Lungs & airways	t
Ear, nose & throat	m	Tobacco, drugs & alcohol
Effective practice & health systems	Mental health	u
Endocrine & metabolic	Methodology	Urology
Eyes & vision		w
		Wounds

...or Browse by Cochrane Review Group

Podcasts: Cochrane Podcasts: Listen to Cochrane evidence in under five minutes

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Click on the relevant subject area and it will bring up results relating to the topic and options to filter or search in reviews, protocols, trials etc.

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library search interface. At the top, there's a search bar with 'All Text' selected and a search button. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', 'Clinical Answers', 'About', and 'Help'. The main content area displays search results for '169 Cochrane Reviews matching on " in All Text"'. The results are listed in a table with columns for 'Order by', 'Relevancy', and 'Results per page'. The first result is 'Interventions to reduce emigration of health care professionals from low- and middle-income countries' by Blanca Peñaloza, Tomas Pantoja, Gabriel Bastias, Cristian A Herrera, Gabriel Rada, published in 2011. Other results include 'Hospital at home: home-based end-of-life care', 'General health checks in adults for reducing morbidity and mortality from disease', 'Mass media interventions: effects on health services utilisation', and 'Preventing occupational stress in healthcare workers'.

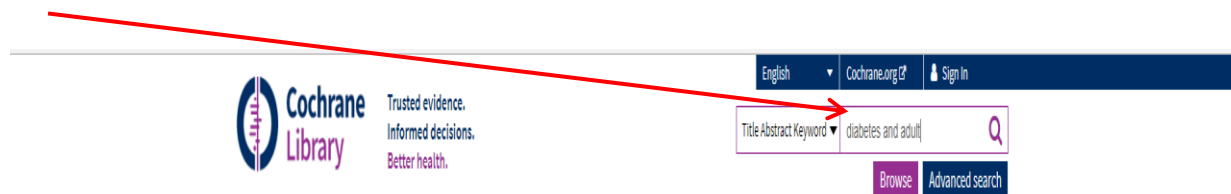
You can also browse the Cochrane review group to get a feel of subject areas covered.

The screenshot shows the 'Browse by Cochrane Review Group' page. The page lists various subject areas under the heading 'Browse the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews'. The subject areas are organized into columns and include: Acute Respiratory Infections, Airways, Anaesthesia, Critical, and Emergency Care, Back and Neck, Bone, Joint and Muscle Trauma, Breast Cancer, Childhood Cancer, Colorectal Cancer, Common Mental Disorders, Consumers and Communication, Cystic Fibrosis and Genetic Disorders, Dementia and Cognitive Improvement, Developmental, Psychosocial and Learning Problems, Drugs and Alcohol, Effective Practice and Organisation of Care, ENT, Epilepsy, Eyes and Vision, Fertility Regulation, Gynaecological, Neuro-oncology and Ovarian Cancer, Gynaecology and Fertility, Haematological Malignancies, Heart, Hepato-Biliary, HIV/AIDS, Hypertension, Incontinence, Infectious Diseases, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Injuries, Kidney and Transplant, Lung Cancer, Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders, Methodology, Movement Disorders, Multiple Sclerosis and Rare Diseases of the CNS, Musculoskeletal, Neonatal, Neuromuscular, Oral Health, Pain, Palliative and Supportive Care, Pregnancy and Childbirth, Public Health, Schizophrenia, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Skin, Stroke, Tobacco Addiction, Upper GI and Pancreatic Diseases, Urology, Vascular, Work, and Wounds. There is also a small image of a woman wearing a headset, with a caption: 'Podcasts: Cochrane Podcasts: Listen to Cochrane evidence in under five minutes'.

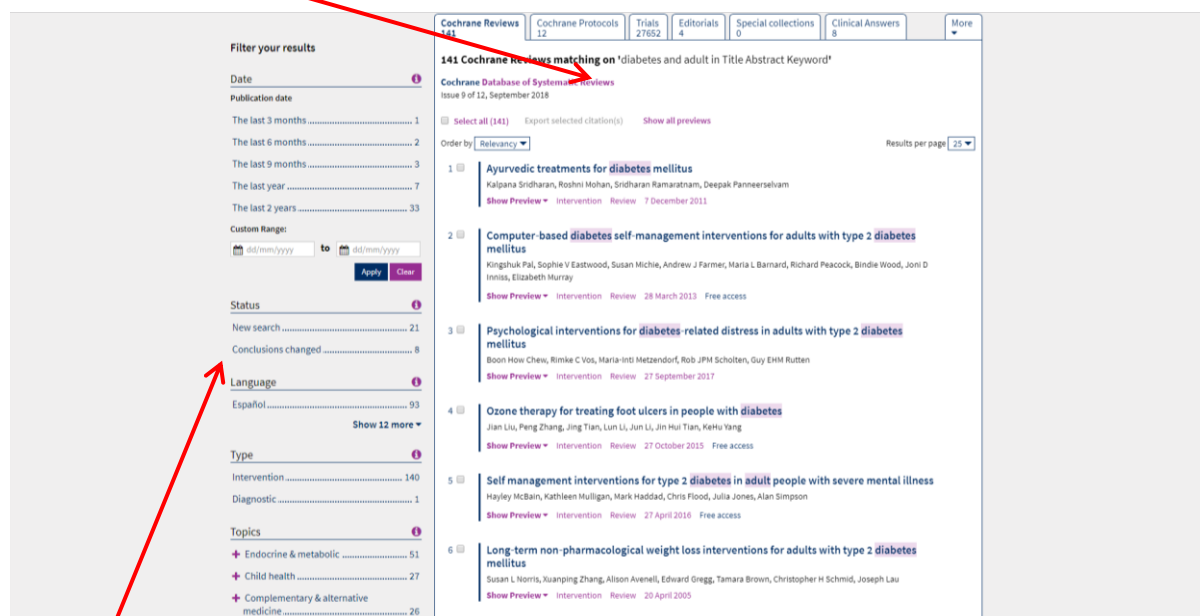
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Simple search

Use the search box at the top right of the screen. Enter “free-text” terms (i.e. words that you think of) and click on the magnifying glass. e.g. **diabetes and adult**



This will then bring up a list of search results relating to the chosen key words. The Cochrane Reviews will come up first and you can select to review results in other databases such as Protocols and Trials.



The left hand side gives you the option to filter further by date, status, language, type and topics.

Browse the results and click on the title to see the full-text. This is how your record will look. Click on view PDF and select **full** to retrieve the complete review.

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The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Cochrane Library logo and the tagline 'Trusted evidence. Informed decisions. Better health.' Below this, there are tabs for 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', 'Clinical Answers', 'About', and 'Help'. The main content area displays the title of the review: 'Psychological interventions for diabetes-related distress in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus'. It also shows the authors: 'Boon How Chew | Rimke C Vos | Maria-Inti Metzendorf | Rob JPM Scholten | Guy EHM Rutten'. A sidebar on the right contains a 'View PDF' dropdown menu with options like 'Full', 'Standard', 'Summary', 'Abstract', 'Plain language summary', 'Authors' conclusions', 'Summary of findings', 'Background', 'Objectives', 'Methods', 'Results', 'Discussion', 'Appendices', 'Information', 'Authors', 'History', 'Keywords', 'Translation notes', 'References', 'Characteristics of studies', 'Data and analyses', 'Figures and tables', and 'Download statistical data'.

Below is the opening page of a review. Notice the size of the review – this one is 491 pages long!
Always check before printing!

The screenshot shows a PDF viewer displaying the first page of the review. The page features the Cochrane Library logo and the title 'Psychological interventions for diabetes-related distress in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Review)'. The authors listed are 'Chew BH, Vos RC, Metzendorf MI, Scholten RJPM, Rutten GEHM'. A red arrow points to the page number '1 / 491' in the top right corner of the PDF viewer. The page also includes a footer with the Cochrane Library logo, the title, authors, and the website URL 'www.cochrane.org'.

All reviews have the same style content. Notice the plain language summary – written with a straight forward approach.

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FILE:///C:/Users/NPG/BU/Downloads/Chev_et_al_2017-Cochrane_Database_of_Systematic_Reviews.pdf 2 / 491

/C:/CochraneCMS/TeXRendering/1755462.dvi

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Psychological interventions for diabetes-related distress in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Review)

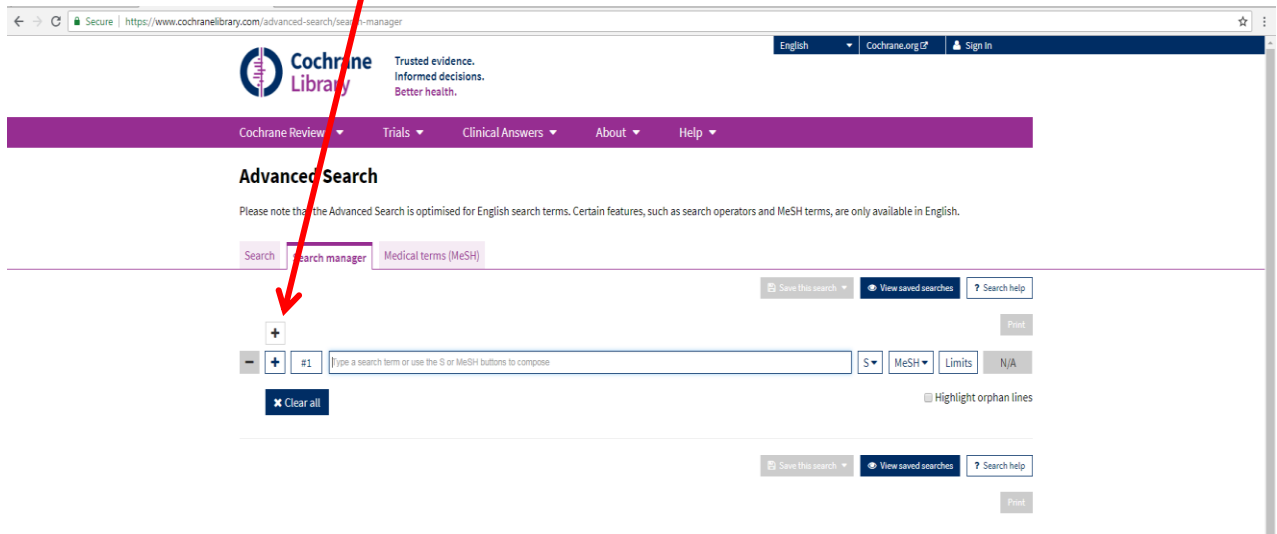
Advanced search

Selecting the advanced search button allows you to undertake a more detailed or complex search. This search form gives you more flexibility in formulating your search. You can use the drop-down menus to limit your search terms to different fields eg. The title

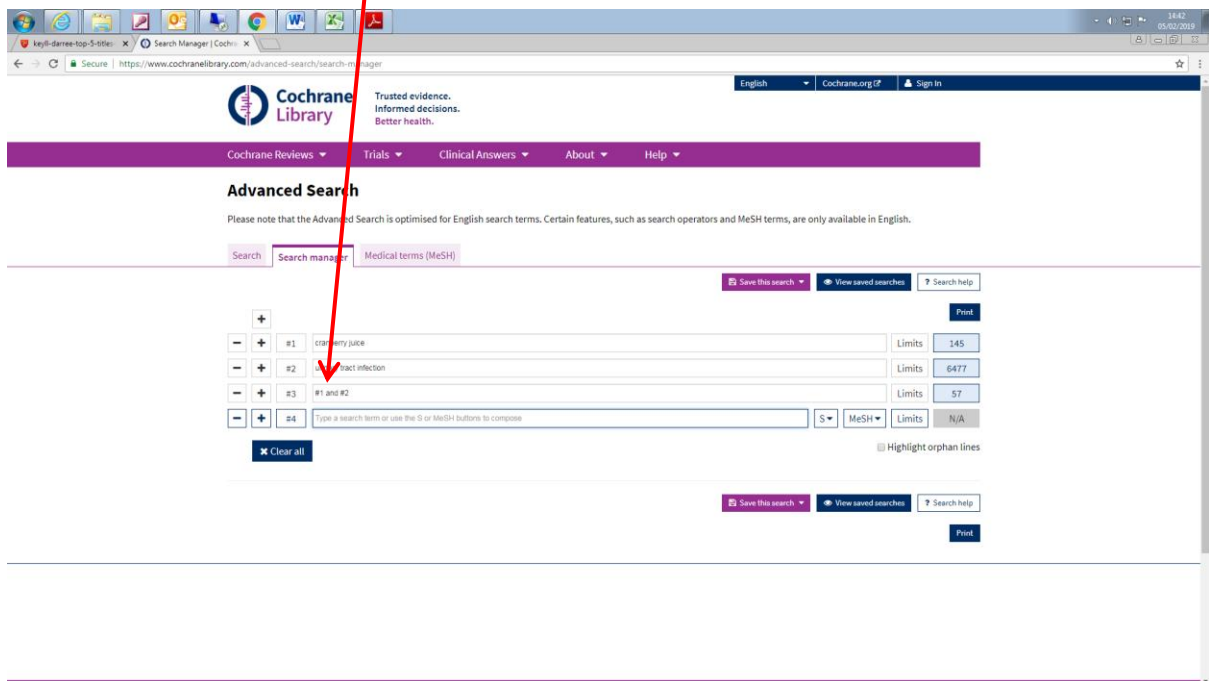
The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library Advanced Search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Cochrane Library' logo and 'Trusted evidence. Informed decisions. Better health.' Below that, a purple navigation bar contains 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', 'Clinical Answers', 'About', and 'Help'. The main heading is 'Advanced Search' with a note: 'Please note that the Advanced Search is optimised for English search terms. Certain features, such as search operators and MeSH terms, are only available in English.' There are three tabs: 'Search', 'Search manager', and 'Medical Subject (MeSH)'. A search input field is present with a red arrow pointing to a dropdown menu currently set to 'Title Abstract Keyword'. The dropdown menu is open, showing a list of search fields: 'Title Abstract Keyword', 'Record Title', 'Abstract', 'Author', 'Keyword', 'All Text', 'Publication Type', 'Source', 'DOI', and 'Accession Number'. Below the search field are buttons for 'Search limits', 'Send to search manager', and 'Run search'. At the bottom, there's a purple footer bar with 'Cochrane' logo and navigation links: 'About Cochrane', 'Publications', 'Community', 'Contact Us', 'Browse Publications', 'Browse by Subject', 'Advertisers & Agents', 'Contact Us', 'Help & Support', and 'Terms & Conditions'.

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Using the Search Manager enables you to create and save complex multi-line searches. You can insert lines by clicking on the + button:



Type in multiple searches and combine using your Boolean logic **and** or **not**. With Cochrane you have to type in the # **no** to combine



Note: Search strategies can be saved but you will need to register and then sign into the Cochrane Library.

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When viewing results pay particular attention to what they actually are: e.g. Cochrane review, other reviews, trials etc. Search Manager allows you to build up a search history:

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Search Manager interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Search', 'Search manager', and 'Medical terms (MeSH)'. Below these, there are buttons for 'Save this search', 'View saved searches', and 'Search help'. The main search area contains a list of search terms: #1 'cranberry juice' (Limits: 145), #2 'urinary tract infection' (Limits: 6477), #3 '#1 and #2' (Limits: 57), and #4 'Type a search term or use MeSH or MeSH buttons to compose' (Limits: N/A). A red arrow points from the '#3' search term to the 'Cochrane Reviews' tab in the results section. The results section shows '12 Cochrane Reviews matching on "#3 - #1 and #2"'. The first result is 'Cranberries for preventing urinary tract infections' by Ruth G. Jepson, Gabrielle Williams, and Jonathan C. Craig, published on 17 October 2012. The second result is 'Cranberries for treating urinary tract infections' by Ruth G. Jepson, Lara Milhaljevic, and Jonathan C. Craig, published on 26 October 1998. The interface also includes a 'Filter your results' section on the left with options for 'Date' and 'Publication date'.

Mesh Search

For experienced users, the MeSH browser offers various features to allow users to customize their search and to add MeSH searches to Search Manager to create complex searches.

Searching MeSH index terms is the most comprehensive way of finding relevant items. MeSH stands for Medical Subject Headings. It is a thesaurus of index terms and allows you to search for articles that are indexed with your term and therefore very relevant.

To do a MeSH Search, click the link on the advanced search page and then Medical Terms (MeSH).

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A search box will appear. Enter a term that you want to look up and click **Look Up**.

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Advanced Search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', 'Clinical Answers', 'About', and 'Help'. Below this is the 'Advanced Search' section, which includes a search box containing 'Psoriasis' and a 'Look up' button. A red arrow points to the 'Look up' button. Below the search box, there is a 'Definition' section for 'Psoriasis'. To the left, there are 'Thesaurus Matches' and 'Phrase Matches' sections. In the center, there is a 'MeSH Trees' section showing a hierarchical tree structure for 'Psoriasis'. A red arrow points to the 'MeSH Trees' section. To the right, there is a 'Search Results' section showing '2817' results for 'Psoriasis' and '14' results for 'Cochrane Reviews'. There are buttons for 'Add to search manager', 'Save search', and 'View results'.

A tree structure will appear as above. This shows the term you entered within its indexing hierarchy. Click view results.

You can see by the hierarchical structure that it is one of the Skin Diseases, Papulosquamous. Psoriasis itself has a narrower term: Arthritis, Psoriatic. Because the most specific index term possible is always assigned, an article about psoriatic arthritis will be indexed with the term Arthritis, Psoriatic and NOT Psoriasis. For this reason, you should always include the narrower terms in your search, if there are any by selecting **Explode all trees**:

This is a close-up of the 'MeSH Trees' section. It shows the 'MeSH term - Psoriasis' and three radio button options: 'Explode all trees' (selected), 'Single MeSH term (unexploded)', and 'Explode selected trees'. A blue 'Select' button is located at the bottom right. A red arrow points to the 'Explode all trees' option.

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If you type a word into the MeSH and there is not a MeSH term that matches it you will get suggestions as below:

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library Advanced Search interface. The search bar contains 'Knee Arthroscopy'. The 'Thesaurus Matches' section is expanded, showing a list of suggestions. A red arrow points to the word 'Knee' in the list. The 'MeSH Trees' section is empty, and the 'Search Results' section shows 0 results.

Thesaurus Matches	MeSH Trees	Search Results
Exact Term Match	No Tree available	There are 0 results for your search on
Phrase Matches		- Explode all trees
Any Word Match		Add to search manager
Knee		Trials: 0
Synonyms:		Cochrane Reviews: 0
Knee Prosthesis		Save search View results
Synonyms: Prosthesis, Knee; Knee Prosthesis; Prosthesis, Knee		
Knee Injuries		
Synonyms: Injuries, Knee; Injury, Knee; Knee Injury		
Knee Dislocation		

Persevere and scroll down the suggested list. Sometimes your topic will appear further down the list phrased slightly differently.

The screenshot shows the same Cochrane Library Advanced Search interface, but the search bar now contains 'Knee Arthroplasty'. The 'Thesaurus Matches' section is expanded, showing a list of suggestions. A red arrow points to the word 'Arthroplasty, Replacement, Knee' in the list. The 'MeSH Trees' section is empty, and the 'Search Results' section shows 0 results.

Thesaurus Matches	MeSH Trees	Search Results
Patella	No Tree available	There are 0 results for your search on
Synonyms: Knee Caps; Knee Caps; Kneecaps; Kneecaps; Patellas		- Explode all trees
Arthroplasty, Replacement, Knee		Add to search manager
Synonyms: Arthroplasty, Replacement, Partial Knee; Knee Replacement; Arthroplasty; Arthroplasty, Total Knee; Replacement Arthroplasty, Knee; Arthroplasty, Knee Replacement; Arthroplasties, Knee; Total Knee Arthroplasties, Replacement, Knee; Total Knee Arthroplasty; Replacement, Total Knee; Knee Replacement; Arthroplasty, Total; Knee Replacement, Total; Replacement Arthroplasties, Knee; Total Knee Replacement; Knee Replacement, Unicompartental; Knee Arthroplasty, Unicompartental; Partial Knee Replacement; Partial Knee Arthroplasty; Unicompartental Knee Replacement; Unicompartental Knee Replacement; Knee Arthroplasty, Partial; Arthroplasty, Unicompartental Knee; Unicompartental		Trials: 0
		Cochrane Reviews: 0
		Save search View results

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Saving records

Once you have done a search on selected topic select the result(s) you wish to save by ticking the box(es) on the left. Then click on **Export Selected citation(s)**

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library search results for 'diabetes'. The search results are displayed in a list format. The first four results are selected with checkboxes. The 'Export selected citation(s)' link is visible above the list. A red arrow points from the text above to the 'Export selected citation(s)' link. Another red arrow points from the text above to the checkboxes of the selected results.

This will then give you the option to save the citation to reference management software (you can save it to Refworks) or download.

The screenshot shows the 'Export selected citation(s)' dialog box. It displays 4 citation(s) selected for download. The 'Save citation to:' section has three options: CiteULike, Mendeley, and RefWorks. The 'Select the format you require from the list below' section has five options: Plain text, RIS (EndNote), RIS (Reference Manager), RIS (ProCite), and BibTeX. A preview of the citation format is shown, including fields like ID, AU, and TI. A red arrow points from the text above to the 'RefWorks' option. Another red arrow points from the text above to the 'Download' button.

Remember, if you want to save searches you will need to be logged into Cochrane Library.

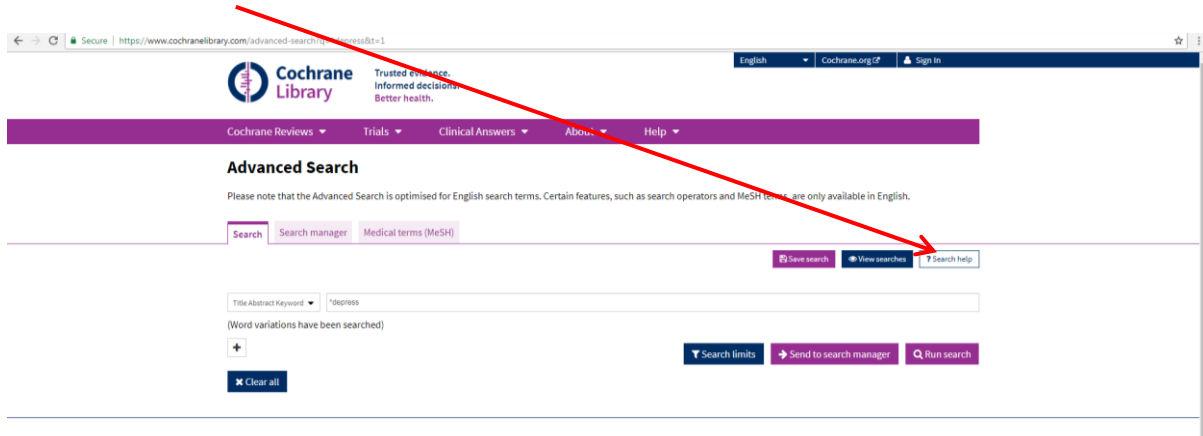
Search Tips

- If you want to search a phrase, you must enter it with quotes, e.g. **“colon cancer”**, otherwise the words will be searched as colon AND cancer, which will give many irrelevant results.
- Plurals are automatically searched, so searching **child** will also find **children**.
- You can truncate terms by using *, e.g. **depress*** will find depression, depressive, depressed, etc. You can truncate at either end of a word or in the middle, e.g. ***depress*** also finds antidepressants.

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- Some alternative spellings are automatically searched (e.g. tumor/tumour), but to be certain of catching them, use internal truncation, e.g. **isch*mic** to find ischaemic or ischemic.
- Use brackets to control the order in which the search executes, if you are using a combination of AND and OR, e.g. **magnesium AND (eclampsia OR perinatal asphyxia)**.
- NEAR can be used instead of AND to narrow your search. e.g. **smoking NEAR pregnancy** will find the two words within 6 words of each other in either order, so it is more specific than using AND. NEAR/n will find the words within n words of each other in either order, e.g. NEAR/4.

Click on search help box for further tips and advice on how to get the most from searching the Cochrane Library



If you have registered with Cochrane on the home page you will be allowed to save your searches to retrieve at a later stage. Once you have saved and named a search, it is listed within your My Profile area. You can choose to re-run the search at any time, or use the search to set an e-mail alert profile so that you will be notified as soon as an article matching the search is published online.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide, and if you have any further questions then please get in touch with us at librarykeylldarree@gov.im or on 642993.

We'd also love your feedback on this training, please spare 2 minutes to fill out our [Online Training Feedback Survey](#)

Reviewed: February 2019

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