



## MEDLINE VIA PUBMED VS CINAHL

Prior to starting a search, it is essential to choose the most appropriate database. For a search related to nursing, Medline and CINAHL are the principal sources.

What are their characteristics?

	Medline via PubMed	CINAHL Complete
<b>Access</b>	Available free of charge : <a href="http://pubmed.gov">pubmed.gov</a>	By subscription at your institution. At MUHC, see the section Quick Links under Resources in the Library portal : <a href="http://muhclibraries.ca">muhclibraries.ca</a>
<b>Field</b>	Biomedical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursing science</li> <li>• Paramedical science</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Behavioural science</li> <li>• Health administration</li> </ul>
<b>Number of periodicals</b>	5600 766 are a subset of nursing science	5400 Including <b>1300 journals with full text</b>
<b>Number of articles</b>	More than 22 million from 1946	More than 3.7 million from 1937
<b>Types of content</b>	Journal articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal articles</li> <li>• Book chapters</li> <li>• Dissertations</li> <li>• Audio-visual material</li> <li>• Conference papers</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Are the articles peer-reviewed?</b>	The majority	Only partly because CINAHL also contains non-scholarly publications, including information for patients.
<b>Descriptors (controlled vocabulary used to describe the content of each document)</b>	Nearly 27000 descriptors called Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)	More than 14000 descriptors. CINAHL descriptors are based on MeSH, to which descriptors specific to nursing and paramedical science are added.
<b>% of articles in English</b>	81%	98.5%
<b>% of articles in French</b>	3%	0.2%

While it is important to be familiar with the different characteristics of CINAHL and Medline, the choice of database must also take into account the question itself as well as the type of information required.

If the question...	Example	Choose :
... is specifically related to nursing and paramedical science	What are the beneficial movements or exercises to help the elderly to preserve their mobility?	CINAHL Complete
... is more generally related to healthcare (ex. etiology of an illness, therapy, etc.)	What are the long-term effects of hormonal contraceptives on the health of non-menopausal women?	MEDLINE via PubMed
... focuses on patients or aims to provide information (in English only) to patients or to their families/caregivers	What to say to patients concerning the long-term effects of hormonal contraceptives?	CINAHL Complete Your subject search + Limit to Publication type: Consumer/Patient Teaching Materials OR Limit to Special Interest: Consumer Health OR Combine with the subject heading "Patient Education" with or without its narrower terms

Of course, in the case of an exhaustive search in the area of nursing and paramedical science, it is absolutely necessary to use both databases.

Whether you are wondering which resource to use or how to do a search, your librarians are available to respond to questions or provide you with any help that you need. [Contact us](#).