

Search Strategies for Specific Study Types

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Study Type	Definition	Suggested Resources	Tips for Searching
Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)	A randomized controlled trial (RCT) is a research study in which participants are randomly allocated into an experimental or a control group and followed over time for the variables/outcomes of interest.	Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CCTR)	Cochrane Library: search or browse by topic
		MEDLINE (PubMed or Ovid)	<p>PubMed Use the "Therapy" filter under Clinical Queries, or "AND" <i>randomized controlled trial</i> into your search. This will pick up 'Randomized Controlled Trials' as a MeSH term and 'Randomized Controlled Trial' as a publication type.</p> <p>Ovid Search for your topic as usual. Click on "Limits">publication types>randomized controlled trial or click on "Limits">clinical queries>therapy</p>
Cohort Studies	A cohort study is a research study that compares two groups (cohorts) of patients, one that received the exposure of interest and one that did not, and follows these cohorts forward for the outcome of interest.	MEDLINE (PubMed or Ovid)	<p>PubMed "And" <i>cohort study</i> into your search. This will pick up the MeSH term 'Cohort Studies' and the more specific MeSH terms 'Follow Up Studies', 'Longitudinal Studies', and 'Prospective Studies' under it.</p> <p>Ovid Search for your topic as usual. Type: <i>cohort studies</i> [make sure to explode] or type: <i>exp cohort studies</i>. This will pick up the MeSH term 'Cohort Studies' and the more specific MeSH terms 'Follow Up Studies', 'Longitudinal Studies', and 'Prospective Studies' under it. "And" the sets together.</p>
Case-controlled studies Case series / reports	<p>A case-controlled study is a research study which identifies patients with the outcome of interest (cases) and patients without the same outcome (controls), and looks back to see if they had the exposure of interest.</p> <p>A case series is a report on a series of patients with an outcome of interest. No control group is involved</p> <p>A case report is a report of a patient with an exposure of an outcome of interest.</p>	MEDLINE (PubMed or Ovid)	<p>PubMed "AND" <i>case control study</i> into your search. This will pick up the MeSH term 'Case-Control Studies' and the more specific MeSH term 'Retrospective Studies' under it.</p> <p>"AND" <i>case report</i> into your search. This will pick up 'Case Reports' as a publication type.</p> <p>Ovid Search for your topic as usual. Type: <i>case control study</i> [make sure to explode] or type: <i>exp case-control studies</i>. . This will pick up the MeSH term 'Case-Control Studies' and the more specific MeSH term 'Retrospective Studies' under it. "And" the sets together.</p> <p>Search for your topic as usual. Click on "Limits">publication types>case reports</p>