

What is a Search Filter

Health professionals use evidence to help them provide patient care. However, there can be many challenges in finding relevant literature and evidence. Effective searching requires a detailed understanding of the technical issues associated with indexing, search construction and the characteristics of different databases. Search filters can help as they embed the technical aspects of searching.

A search filter is an experimentally tested search strategy designed to retrieve literature on a particular topic from all the articles held in a bibliographic database. Search filters are developed using the best available research evidence about effective searching and follow a rigorous methodology. They are not only fast and easy to use but trustworthy in terms of what they find.

CareSearch has developed four search filters:

- palliative care search filter;
- heart failure search filter;
- lung cancer search filter; and
- residential aged care search filter.

Many health professionals may not have access to or use bibliographic databases that require registration and payment. PubMed is an open access online bibliographic database that holds over 22 million items. It is free to search for citations and has a proportion of articles that can be read in full without charge.

By translating search filters for use in the PubMed database, it is possible to create searches that are held as hyperlinks. By clicking on a hyperlink, a search is sent to be run in the PubMed database.

As new articles are added to the PubMed database, the search filter will check to see if they are relevant. This means that your search is continuously current.

The four CareSearch search filters have PubMed versions. This means you just have to click on the hyperlink to start your search.

Each of these search filters has also been combined with topic searches such as breathlessness or depression to give you more searching choices. A free full text option and a high level evidence option mean that you can choose only to read articles on RCTs and systematic reviews or only articles you can read in their entirety without charge (ie, free full text).

The search filters and the PubMed searches are free to use and available now in the Finding Evidence section of the CareSearch website.

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