

# Searching the literature



# Introduction

- What is PubMed?
  - A database of articles published in > 5000 biomedical journals.
  - Maintained by the National Library of Medicine, USA
- [www.pubmed.gov](http://www.pubmed.gov)
- [www.pubmed.com](http://www.pubmed.com)
- Access: Free

# How does it work?

- Articles are submitted by publishers.
- Each article is divided into certain FIELDS like author, title, abstract
- Information for each article is stored using a FIELD TAG. For example AU (author), TI (title) and AB (abstract)

# Common Field Tags [ ]

FIELD SEARCHED	TAG
Affiliation	[AD]
Author	[AU]
Journal	[TA]
Language	[LA]
Place of Publication	[PL]
Publication Date	[DP]
Publication Type	[PT]
Text Words	[TW]
Title	[TI]
Title/Abstract	[TIAB]



---

# Example of a Medline record

# How are articles retrieved?

- User specifies KEYWORDS in SEARCH BAR
- Words are matched to stored records
- Use of FIELD TAGS makes it possible to selectively search specific FIELDS like Title or Author.

# Search Strategy

- Intelligent use of a combination of **KEYWORDS, FIELD TAGS, WILD CARDS** and **CONNECTORS** to perform a search
- A good search strategy
  - Maximizes the yield of relevant articles
  - Eliminates irrelevant articles
  - Takes the least possible time

# Components of a search strategy

- KEYWORDS Sarcoidosis lung
  - FIELD TAGS [ti], [au], [la]
  - WILD CARDS \*  
tuberc\*  
tubercle,  
tuberculosis, tubercular
  - CONNECTORS AND  
OR  
NOT
- Always UPPER CASE



# Steps in creating a Search strategy

1. Define precisely, on paper, what you want to find articles on – the question to be answered
2. Create a crude search strategy
3. Refine the strategy
4. Run the search in Pubmed
5. Again refine the strategy based on results obtained from the search

# Sample Search strategy

- The Question:

What work has been done in **India** in the last **five years** on **diabetic retinopathy**?

- Search Strategy:

DIAB\* [TIAB] AND RETIN\* [TIAB] AND  
INDIA [AD] AND 2007:2012 [DP]