



Hints & Extras in PubMed

Turning Things Off

Automatic Truncation of Author's Names

Automatic functions, such as automatic truncation of author's names, is usually helpful, especially when you're searching an author who is inconsistent about the way he/she signs them. For example, entering **Farquar J** to search for an author with the initials JB will allow you to retrieve for your author whether or not articles are signed using middle initial, Junior, Senior, or 3rd. In addition to this, you will also retrieve articles by Farquar JL, Farquar JC, and so on. Retrieval from a few extra authors may not be a problem, but when you're searching an author with a more common last name, you may want to turn off this truncation. To search for **JA Jones**, when you're not sure that she uses her middle initial consistently, consider using quotes to turn off automatic truncation.

"jones j" [au] OR jones ja [au]

Automatic Explosion of MeSH Terms

When you enter a broad term, PubMed automatically explodes it if it is a MeSH Term. This means that you automatically retrieve for more specific terms that are indented under your term. Usually this is what you want to do, but if you ever want to turn off this automatic explosion, enter it and qualify with **[mh:noexp]**.

Automatic Explosion of Subheadings

PubMed automatically explodes subheadings. This means that if you search using the subheading **adverse effects**, PubMed searches **the Adverse Effects group of subheadings** (adverse effects, poisoning, and toxicity). To turn this off and use only the adverse effects subheading, qualify the subheading with **[sh:noexp]**.

Note: The online Help section provides a listing of subheading groups.

You may turn off the automatic explosion only when you free-float the subheading. The subheading in the example below is therapy (th). Unless you use noexp, therapy automatically explodes to include diet and drug therapy, nursing, prevention and control, radiotherapy, rehabilitation, surgery and transplantation.

Hypertension AND th [sh:noexp]

But you may turn off the explosion of both the MeSH Term and the attached subheading.

Hypertension/th [mh:noexp]

Phrase Searching

PubMed does not perform adjacency searching. However, many phrases are recognized by the MeSH Translation Table used in PubMed's Automatic Term Mapping (ATM) feature. For example, if you enter **fever of unknown origin**, PubMed recognizes this phrase as a MeSH concept. If a phrase is not recognized you can instruct PubMed to bypass ATM and search for a phrase by entering the phrase in double quotes (e.g. "kidney allograft"); use a search tag (e.g. kidney allograft[tw]; use a hyphen; truncate (e.g. kidney allograft*). For more details see the PubMed Help.