

## Optimal search strategy for clinical trials in the Latin American and Caribbean Health Science Literature Database (LILACS database): Update

The initial publications<sup>1</sup> of the optimal search strategy that was elaborated combining headings with text word in three languages, adapting the interface of the LILACS, was based on the optimal search strategy for MEDLINE recommended by Cochrane Collaboration<sup>2</sup> for identification of clinical trials in electronic databases. An improvement and update to this search strategy is now presented. The Updated version of this search strategy will be found on the website of the Brazilian Cochrane Centre (<http://www.epm.br/cochrane>).

In the Table, we present the updated optimal search strategy to be used with LILACS/CD-ROM, 32nd edition, September 1998. The strategy is divided into the following three stages as defined in Dickersen<sup>2</sup> et al. and replicated in the Cochrane Handbook: stage one (sets 1 to 9) includes terms with high precision; stage two (sets 10 to 28) includes terms with moderate precision; and stage three (sets 29 to 39) includes terms with low precision but with optimal browser sensitivity. The main differences from the old version are that the "Ab" and "Ti" expressions have both been changed into the "Tw" expression in the search line-coding.

Meanwhile, there are two items of good news:

a) the CD-ROM version of the LILACS database has a Windows interface that solves the problems of the DOS interface;

**Table - Optimal search strategy for RCT/CCT in the LILACS Bireme interface, 32nd edition**

---

#1	Pt RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL
#2	Pt CONTROLLED CLINICAL TRIAL
#3	Mh RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS
#4	Mh RANDOM ALLOCATION
#5	Mh DOUBLE-BLIND METHOD
#6	Mh SINGLE-BLIND METHOD
#7	#1 OR #2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5 OR #6
#8	Ct ANIMAL AND NOT (Ct HUMAN and Ct ANIMAL)
#9	#7 AND NOT #8
#10	Pt CLINICAL TRIAL
#11	Ex E05.318.760.535\$ <explode Mh CLINICAL TRIALS>
#12	Tw clin\$ AND (Tw trial\$ OR Tw ensa\$ OR Tw estud\$ OR Tw experim\$ OR Tw investiga\$)
#13	Tw singl\$ OR Tw simple\$ OR Tw doubl\$ OR Tw doble\$ OR Tw duplo\$ OR Tw trebl\$ OR Tw trip\$
#14	Tw blind\$ OR Tw cego\$ OR Tw ciego\$ OR Tw mask\$ OR Tw mascar\$
#15	#18 #13 AND #14
#16	Mh PLACEBOS
#17	Tw placebo\$
#18	Tw random\$ OR Tw randon\$ OR Tw casual\$ OR Tw acaso\$ OR Tw azar OR Tw aleator\$
#19	Mh RESEARCH DESIGN
#20	#10 OR #11 OR #12 OR #15 OR #16 OR #17 OR #18 OR #19
#21	Ct ANIMAL AND NOT (Ct HUMAN and Ct ANIMAL)
#22	#20 AND NOT #21
#23	#22 AND NOT #9
#24	Ct COMPARATIVE STUDY
#25	Ex E05.337\$ <explode Mh EVALUATION STUDIES>
#26	Mh FOLLOW-UP STUDIES
#27	Mh PROSPECTIVE STUDIES
#28	Tw control\$ OR Tw prospectiv\$ OR Tw volunt\$ OR Tw volunteer\$
#29	#24 OR #25 OR #26 OR #27 OR #28
#30	Ct ANIMAL AND NOT (Ct HUMAN and Ct ANIMAL)
#31	#29 AND NOT #30
#32	#31 AND NOT (#9 OR #23)
#33	#9 OR #23OR #32

---

- Upper case denotes controlled vocabulary.
- Lower case denotes free-text terms.

b) the Lilacs database is free on the BIREME website (<http://www.bireme.br>) together with the other databases of BIREME Publishing, but available only in Portuguese and Spanish languages. These features will help to facilitate access to Latin American and Caribbean Health Science Literature.

## REFERENCES

1. Castro AA, Clark OAC, Atallah AN. Optimal search strategy for clinical trials in the Latin American and Caribbean Health Science Literature Database (LILACS). *Rev Paul Med* 1997;115(3):1423-6.
2. Dickersin K, Larson K. Establishing and maintaining an international register of RCTs. In: *Cochrane Collaboration Handbook*. Oxford: The Cochrane Collaboration, 1997 [updated September 1997]. Available in: *The Cochrane Library* [database on disk and CDROM]. Oxford: Update Software, 1997; Issue 3. Updated quarterly. Available from: BMJ Publishing Group, London.
3. Castro AA, Atallah AN, Clark OA. Locating and appraising systematic reviews [letter; comment]. *Ann Intern Med* 1998;128(4):322-3. Comment on: *Ann Intern Med* 1997;126(7):532-8.

**Aldemar Araujo Castro** - MD, MChir. Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brazil.

**Otávio Augusto Câmara Clark** - MD. Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil.

**Álvaro Nagib Atallah** - MD, PhD. Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brazil.

**Conflict of interest:** Not declared.