Using CINAHL to Find Peer-Reviewed Articles

Lauren McAdams, Reference Librarian/Instructor, Library Liaison for Nursing & Allied Health
What is CINAHL?

CINAHL is an acronym that stands for Cumulative Index for Nursing and Allied Health Literature. It is one of the most important resources for peer-reviewed research in the fields of Nursing & Allied Health. CINAHL is an online database that contains the full text of thousands of scholarly journal articles. The version of CINAHL that BRCC subscribes to is called CINAHL Plus with Full Text. The majority of articles in CINAHL cannot be found through Google. Google only searches free websites. You have paid to access CINAHL as part of your tuition.
How do I access CINAHL?

• Start on the BRCC home page, mybrcc.edu.
• Click on “Quick Links”
• Click on “BRCC Library”
• From the BRCC Library page, click on “Online Databases” on the left side of the screen.
How do I access CINAHL?

Once you are on the Online Databases page, scroll down to the section titled “Individual Databases available through EBSCOhost Databases.”

- CINAHL Plus with Full Text is #12 in this list.
- Click on CINAHL Plus with Full Text to access the database.
How do I access CINAHL?

From the BRCC Library homepage, click “Online Databases.”

Please remember—You can access CINAHL on or off campus.

If you are on campus, you will not need to login.

To access CINAHL off campus, you will need to login using the following:

- Your Lnumber with a capital L (or your Nnumber, etc.) as your user ID
- Your 6-digit birthdate as your PIN.

You can login off campus 24/7, as long as you have an internet connection.
How do I use CINAHL?

- The first screen you see after clicking on the CINAHL link on the Online Databases page will look like this.
- There are search bars at the top where you can put in the terms you want to search for.
- Please look carefully at the limiters at the bottom of the screen.
- If you are doing research for class, I suggest checking the boxes for “Full Text” and “Peer Reviewed.”
- **Peer review** means that an article has been through a process of review and approval by a panel of experts (nurses, doctors, and researchers) before being published. Peer review is used to screen articles submitted to scholarly journals so that you know the research that is published is valid.
How do I use CINAHL?

• Before you begin searching CINAHL, you will need to think carefully about the topic you are researching in order to construct your search.
• For this example, let’s say that your instructor has asked you to write a paper on the relationship between hand washing and infection prevention in health care settings.
• Think about the main elements (or “facets”) of your topic. This will help you identify which terms to use in your search.
• In this case, the main facets of your search are hand washing and infection prevention.
• Because all of the articles in CINAHL are directed toward an audience of healthcare professionals, we can probably leave the “healthcare setting” facet out of our search and still find the articles that we need.
• Since we are looking for articles that are about both hand washing and infection prevention, our search should look something like this:
• Hand washing AND infection prevention
How do I use CINAHL?

- CINAHL will suggest search terms as you type, so for this example, your search will look something like the example shown to the left.
- Remember to check the boxes for “Full Text” and “Peer Reviewed.”
- Click “Search” after you have put in your search terms and selected your search options.
How do I use CINAHL?

• Our initial search has 136 results. That’s a lot of articles!
• However, if you look on the left side of the screen, you will see that the articles in our result list go back to 1988. We don’t need anything that old!
• For health information, it is best not to rely on anything that’s more than 5 years old.
• Fortunately, we can use the tools in CINAHL to limit our results to just articles from the past 5 years.
How do I use CINAHL?

- We can use the tools in CINAHL to limit our results to just articles from the past 5 years.
- Click in the box that shows the oldest article date, 1988, and type in 2011 instead.
- Hit enter, and your results will be updated to include only materials published from 2011-2015.
- You can also use the blue slider bar to change the “Publication date” limiter for your results.
- After limiting our results to only articles published from 2011-2015, we still have 40 results.
How do I use CINAHL?

• When you find an article you’d like to read, click on the title of the article to get an abstract (summary) of the article, as well as more information about the article.

• If you would like to read the article, click on the “PDF Full Text” link, and the article will open on your screen.
How do I use CINAHL?

- The full text of the article will look something like this.

**USE OF A PATIENT HAND HYGIENE PROTOCOL TO REDUCE HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTIONS AND IMPROVE**
How do I use CINAHL?

• Take a look at the tools on the right side of the article screen. Among other things, these tools will allow you to send the article to yourself via email or to create a citation for the article.

• If you use the “Cite” feature, be sure to double-check the citation. The cite feature is not always perfect, but it can still save you time.

After clicking cite, choose the citation format you need. Only a few of those available are shown here.
Questions about CINAHL?

• The example shown here is a very basic search. There are many more advanced techniques that can be used to search CINAHL.
• If you would like to learn more advanced search techniques in CINAHL or would like help finding the articles you need, please contact Lauren McAdams (wadel2@mybrcc.edu or 225-216-8552).
• Please feel free to stop by for individual assistance during Frazier library hours. A librarian will be on duty in the open lab (room 123) on Mondays from 11:00-2:00.
• If you are on the Mid-City campus, please also feel free to stop by the reference desk on the second floor of the library. The librarian on duty will be happy to answer your questions. Or call the reference desk at 216-8555.