# Searching Healthcare databases using Ebscohost /
## A beginner's guide

## Overview

Many journal articles on the subject of healthcare are published every month.  Finding individual journal articles on your particular subject focus can be time consuming.  Healthcare databases can be a quick answer to this problem.  It is far faster and more convenient to search for articles on a topic, across different journal titles using a database, which often uses a systematic search methodology.  This guide will cover searching the Cinahl Plus and Medline databases, which are available using the Ebscohost Interface.

## What is Ebscohost?

Ebscohost is the specialist search tool (interface) that allows you to search databases such as Cinahl Plus, Medline and Amed. St George's Library pay a subscription to Ebsco to be able to use this service and it is only available to St George's, University of London staff and students. Ebscohost will also provide direct links to the full text (the whole article) if available electronically. It will also indicate if a journal is available in print in St George's Library.

## Library

2018/2019

# In this guide

# Using Online Healthcare databases

## Why use a healthcare database?

You can use SGUL Library's search facility, Hunter, to find journal articles on a subject or search topic. Hunter searches through all the journals that the Library subscribes to. It does not search the journals in a particularly systematic way, and it does not search for articles from journals that we do not subscribe to. Healthcare databases allow you to search for articles across different journal titles, from a wider range than the Library subscribes to, and they have specific search methodologies which allow you to carry out an in depth search.

## What do healthcare databases contain?

Databases provide references of the printed and electronic health care journal literature. You will find a range of journal articles describing everything from systematic reviews to case reports, to narrative reviews. Most records contain abstracts, or short summaries of the article and some will give you the full text.

## How are healthcare databases structured?

Databases are collections of records. Each record represents one reference - for example a journal article or report. Every record is made up of a number of elements called fields. Common fields include: author, title, source (publication details) and abstract.

## How do I access healthcare databases and do I need a login?

Databases are available from any PC with an internet connection using your St George's (SGUL) network username and password. You can also use a mobile device.

## Why use Medline?

Medline is one of many online healthcare databases. Produced by the U.S. National Library of Medicine, the Medline database is the largest and best known database of healthcare articles (literature). It describes the contents of approximately 4,600 international journals from 1966 onwards. Medline covers all fields within biomedicine including medical specialties such as cardiology, neurology and paediatrics, clinical and experimental medicine, pharmacology, anatomy and physiology, nursing and allied health.

## Why use Cinahl Plus?

The Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health (Cinahl Plus) database is also US-based, but differs from Medline in that it focuses on subjects related to nursing and allied health. Alongside nursing and midwifery, journals are indexed from the following allied health fields:

Cardiopulmonary Technology          Physical Therapy
Emergency Service                   Physician Assistant
Health Education                    Radiologic Technology
Medical/Laboratory                  Technology Therapy
Medical Assistant                   Social Services in Health Care
Medical Records                     Surgical Technology
Occupational Therapy                Consumer health and biomedicine (selected journals)
Health Sciences Librarianship (selected journals)
In total, more than 1200 journals are regularly indexed.

## Are there any other healthcare databases provided by Ebscohost?

In addition to Medline and Cinahl Plus, EBSCOhost provides access to the following databases.

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**AMED** – Allied Health and Complementary Medicine (UK bias).

## Planning a search

### Consider your topic and appropriate terms

Before starting your search you need to think of what search terms to use.  Break your topic into individual concepts.  For example, a search for articles on *the use of honey to treat wounds* has two concepts - *honey* and *wound care*.   Listing any alternative words for these terms is also potentially useful.

### Writing a search plan

1. Write down your research topic or question in one sentence.  It helps to think about:
   a. What kinds of patients you are interested in, for example: ethnicity, age, gender and disease or condition
   b. What intervention or treatment you are concerned with/investigating, for example: diagnostic test, drug therapy, or surgical procedure
   c. Where is the intervention/treatment happening, for example: outpatients clinic, A&E, or home
   d. What outcomes you are looking for, for example: fewer episodes, less mortality or improvement in function

Try and keep it as simple as possible

2. List the two (or three) major concepts for your topic

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|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |

3. Are there any alternative words (synonyms, broader or narrower terms) you might use for any of these concepts?

|  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |

### Subject Terms and Keywords

The most efficient way of searching is to use the subject terms that are allocated to each article to describe its content to find articles about your subject. In Medline these terms are known as **MeSH** headings (Medical Subject Headings)

As you will see further on in this guide there are ways of discovering the subject terms used by Medline or Cinahl Plus.

Sometimes you will not find any relevant subject heading for your term. This can happen if you are searching using a proper noun e.g. NHS. In this instance, you can perform this search as a text word search where the database looks for your terms in the abstract and title.

## Search Connectors – AND / OR

The best way to search Cinahl Plus, Medline and Amed is to search for each term separately and then combine them together at the end with search connectors.

Search connectors let you combine your search terms in different ways:

**AND** will find documents where both terms appear, for example **stress AND anxiety** will find documents that discuss both. This will narrow your search and give you fewer results
**OR** will find documents where either term appear, for example **stress OR anxiety**. This will broaden your search and give you more results.

Following the principle of searching each item separately, your search could then look like this:
1. honey
2. wounds
3. wound care
4. 2 OR 3
5. 1 AND 4

## Limits

It's useful to think in advance how you want to limit your search such as by age, language, date range or type of document. These limits will be added at the end of your search.

## The 10 Step Search Process

Once you have planned your search you are now ready to carry out your search.
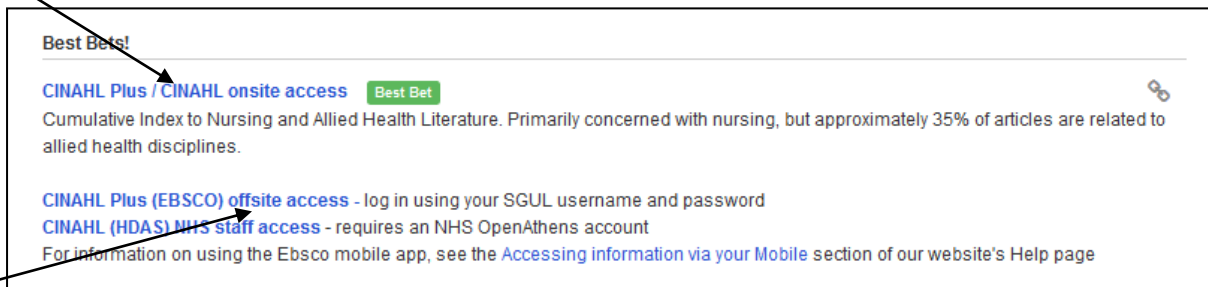Use this 10-step process to guide you.

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1. Carry out a subject heading search for each term in your first concept

2. If you don't find a relevant subject heading carry out text word searches looking for your terms in the title or abstract

3. Use OR to combine all your subject headings or text words together for your first concept

4. Repeat steps 1-3 for the remaining terms related to your second or third concept etc.

5. Use **AND** to combine your **OR**ed searches together

6. Review some of the retrieved results to assess their relevance

7. If necessary, revise your search strategy and repeat your searches

8. Limit your results, if necessary

9. Select or mark the most relevant records from the search

10. Print, save or email your results

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# Searching Cinahl Plus

The Cinahl Plus database will enable you to identify **journal articles** about a chosen topic. Cinahl Plus will provide mainly abstracts (summaries of the articles) and links to some full-text journal articles online. A few articles which are not available online may also be available on the shelves in the Library.

## Connecting to Cinahl Plus

1. Go to the Library website at http://library.sgul.ac.uk
2. Click on the **Databases** box
3. Click on your subject area from the drop-down list of **All Specialties** above the A-Z list (e.g. Allied Health; Nursing & Midwifery)
4. If you are using an SGUL computer or SGUL laptop, click on the **onsite access** link to Cinahl Plus

**Best Bets!**

**CINAHL Plus / CINAHL onsite access**  Best Bet

Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature. Primarily concerned with nursing, but approximately 35% of articles are related to allied health disciplines.

**CINAHL Plus (EBSCO) offsite access** - log in using your SGUL username and password
**CINAHL (HDAS) NHS staff access** - requires an NHS OpenAthens account
For information on using the Ebsco mobile app, see the Accessing information via your Mobile section of our website's Help page

5. If you are offsite/using your own computer, you will need to click on the link to **offsite access**, and log in with your SGUL username and password

You can also connect to any of the databases from Hunter, by selecting the link to **Databases A-Z** from the top of the screen.
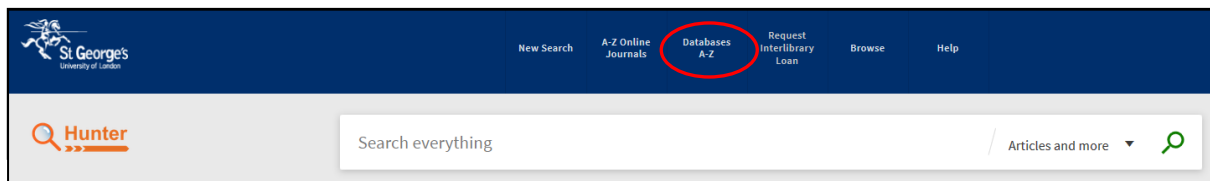
## Searching the database for the topic 'using honey to treat wounds'

Think about your topic and identify the main concepts/keywords/phrases. You will need to search for each concept/keyword/phrase individually.

Using the example topic above, search for your first concept/keyword which is honey

1. Click in the white search box and type honey
2. Make sure that the **Suggest Subject Terms** box has a tick in it
3. Click on **Search**
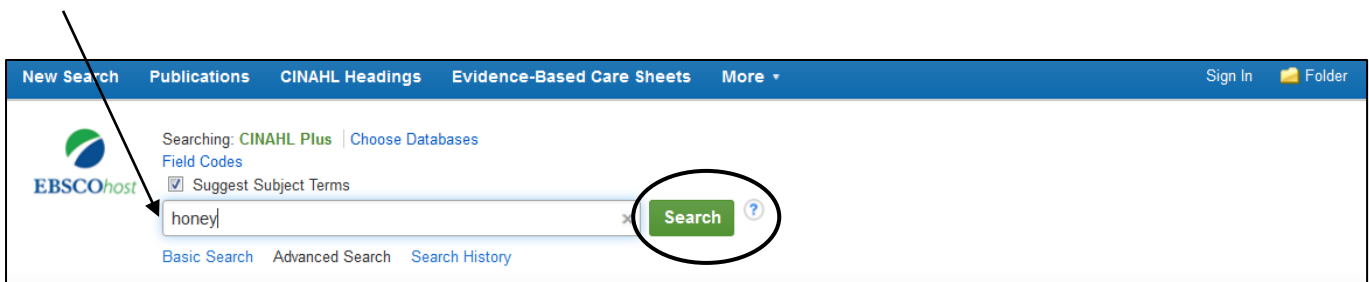
4. Cinahl Plus finds a match from a list of Subject Terms – honey
5. Select honey by clicking in the box next to it
6. Search Cinahl Plus for this term by clicking on the green **Search database** button
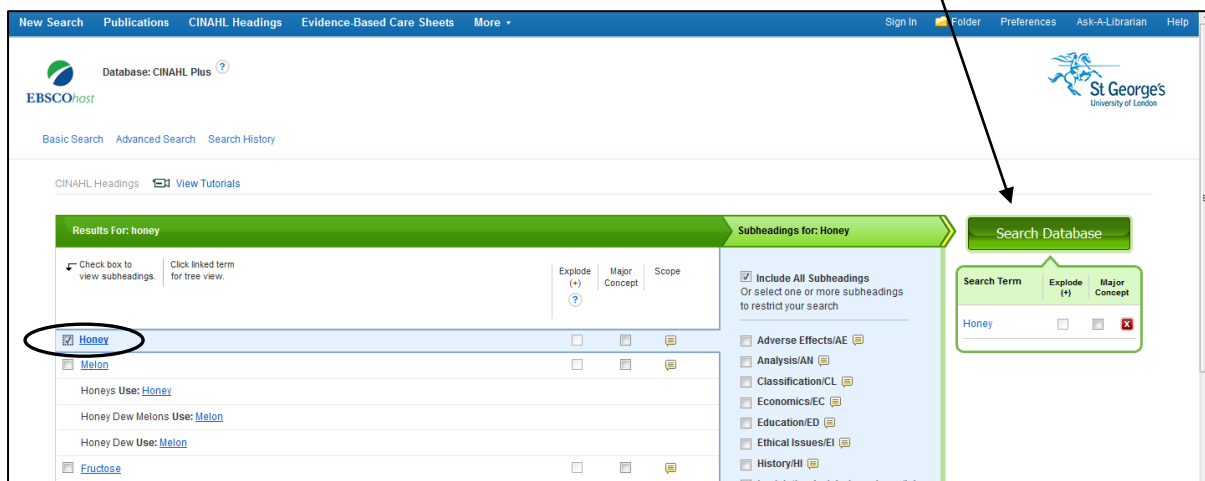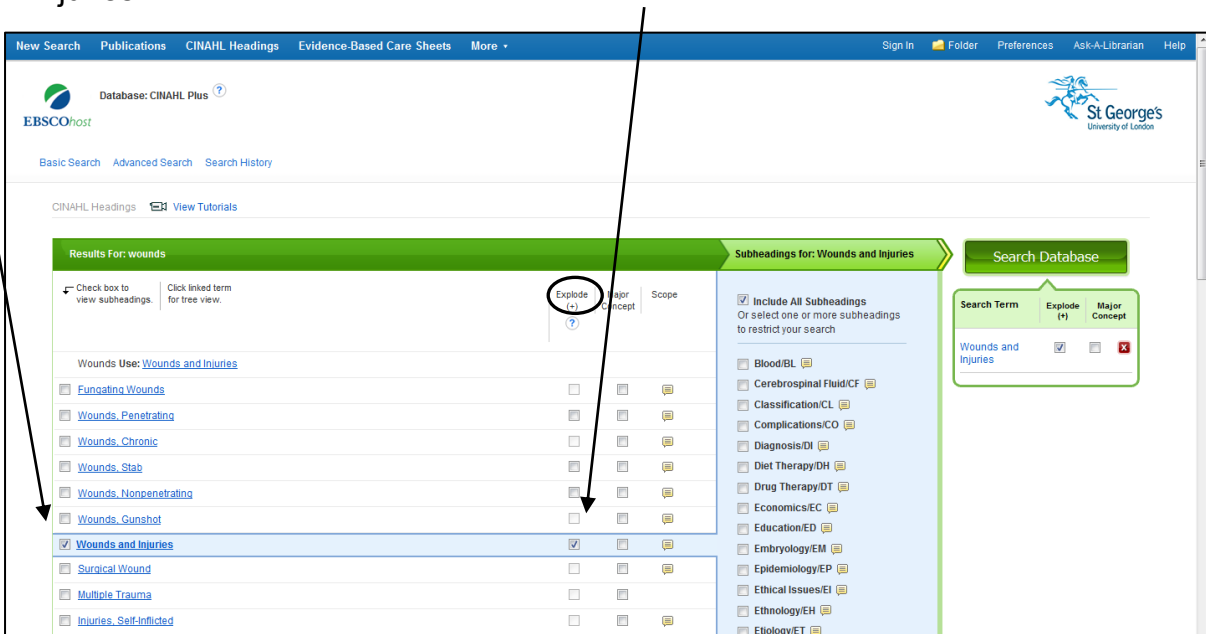


7. A set of results of article references about honey will be displayed
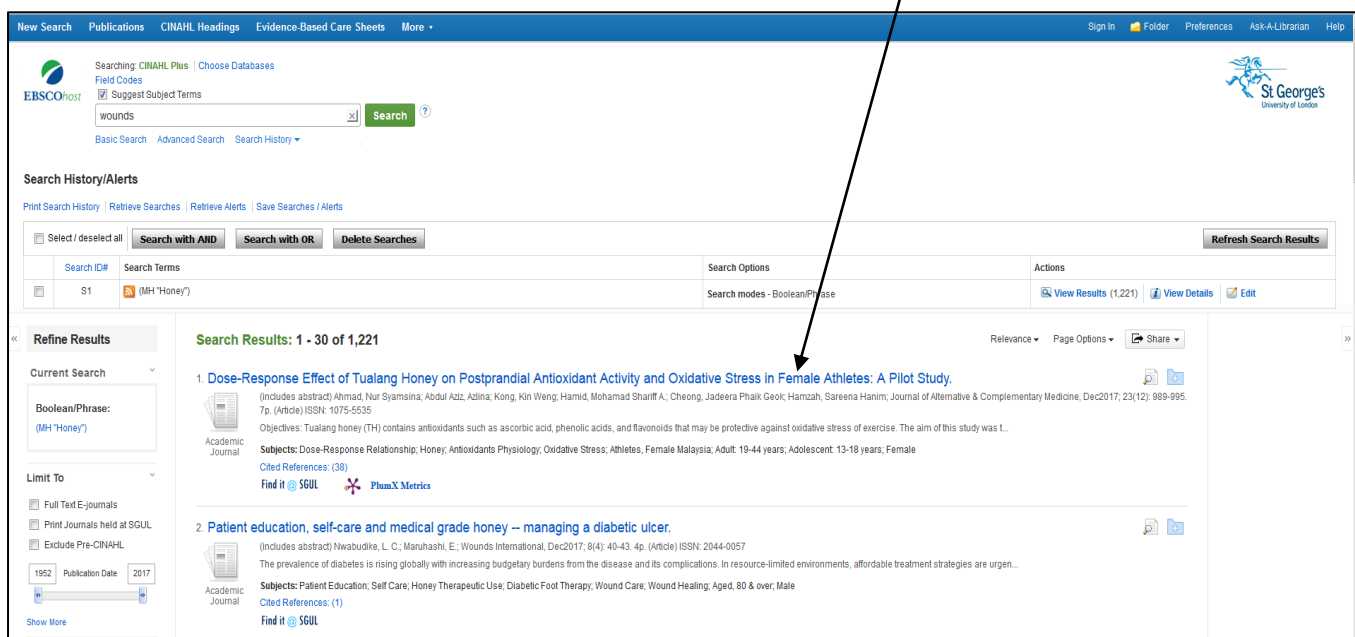


8. To begin searching for the second concept – wounds – type this new concept/keyword into the search box and click Search
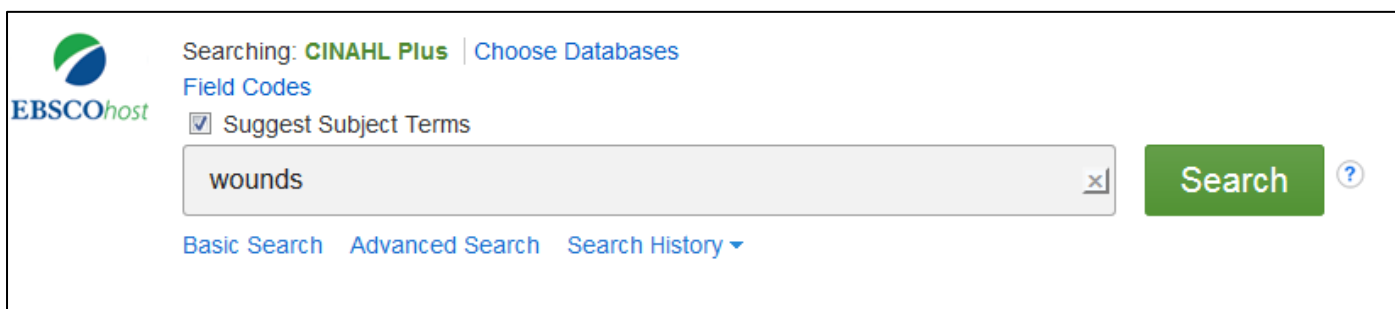
9. Cinahl Plus suggests a match to wounds and injuries
10. Select Wounds and Injuries by clicking in the box next to it
11. Also tick the explode option to include all of the more specific terms for 'Wounds and Injuries'



**If you do not tick the Explode option you may miss some useful articles**

12. Search the database for wounds and injuries by clicking on the green Search database button
13. A set of results of article references about wounds and injuries will be displayed
14. To combine these searches for honey, and wounds and injuries, tick the sets of results you want to combine and click on the **Search with AND** button
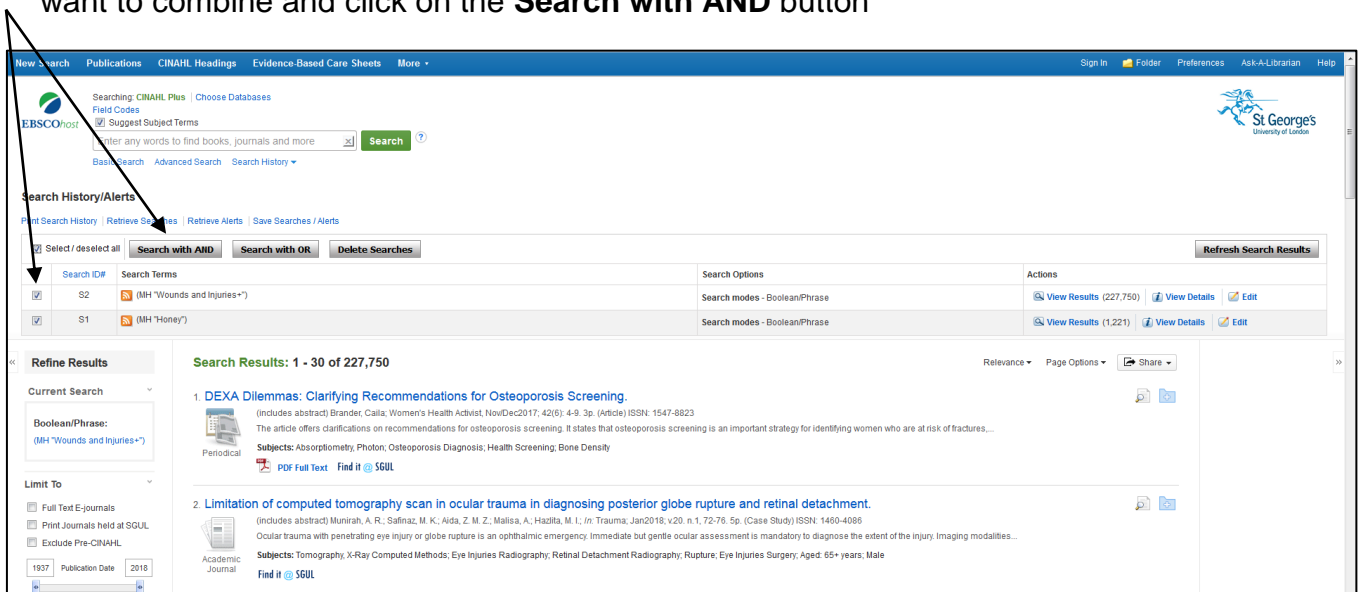


15. A set of results for both honey, **AND** wounds and injuries, will be displayed below your search history on the next screen

Cinahl Plus contains references and abstracts of journal articles, rather than the full text. Its search facility is not restricted to searching only the journals that we subscribe to, so you will retrieve some results that are not immediately available in full text. To find out if we have the full text of any of the articles, click on the **Find it @ SGUL** icon. This will open a new screen which will either have the link to the full text, or a screen which gives you the option to order the article, for which there is a charge. In general, the majority of articles will be available to SGUL students in full text because they are from journals that we subscribe to, or are published in freely available journals.



1. Scroll down your list of results to see the Find it @ SGUL icon underneath the references
2. Click on **Find it @ SGUL** to view the options for full text
3. If the article is from a journal that we subscribe to, a screen will display and show a link to the full text (from KB+ JISC Collections Elsevier, in this example)
4. Click on the link and the full text of the article will load in a new window

5. You may need to select a link to the PDF version of the article in this new window, if you do not see it immediately
6. When you are using an offsite computer, you



will be asked for your SGUL username and password. If you experience any issues with this, please view the Helpsheets by linking from the Help box on the Library homepage, or contact the Library for help

If the article is not available in full text, you will see the following screen. When you sign in to Hunt

## Refining your search results

Once you have searched for references to journal articles by subject, there are various options for refining your search further, if needed.
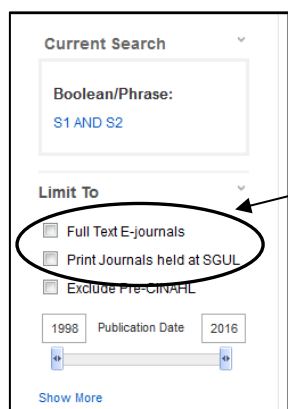


1.   To limit your searches to articles that St George's Library has subscribed to, tick the box next to **Full Text E-Journals**.  This will reduce the number of search results however all articles should be available in full text using the **Find it @ SGUL** link.  Ticking the **Print journals held at SGUL** option should also add any results where the journals are on the Library shelves.

2.   Please be aware that these options may not cover some resources from free electronic journals.

3.   When you have made your selections, the results will automatically update.

### Further options



4.  Use the sliding scale to restrict your search by publication year. Choose the year that you want to start with (e.g. 2010) by moving the sliding scale to the right.  When you have made your selections, the results will automatically update

5. To view all of the available options, click on the link to **Show More**. When you select this link, you will see a new screen which will enable you to refine your results using a wide range of options

6. Near the bottom there are more options.  The most useful of these are **Age**, and **Gender**

## Restricting your search to UK journals

1. If you wish to restrict your search to journals published in the UK, select the **Geography** link.  The top 6 countries with the most results from your search will be listed.  The countries shown will vary depending on the search you have done

2.   If the relevant link is not shown, click on the link to **Show More** (at the bottom of the screen, underneath the list of countries) and you will see and be able to select all the country options that are available for your particular search

3.   Alternatively, you can search by using country as a concept/keyword.  Type the name of the country (e.g. UK) into the search box.  In Cinahl Plus, the closest option to UK that you will be offered as a subject term is UK and Ireland.  You will need to select the Explode option to make sure you include e.g. Scotland, England, and Wales in this option.  In Medline, the closest subject term you will be offered is Great Britain.  The Explode option also applies, as above

4.   You will need to add this search to the search you have already done, by using the **Search with AND** option, as before

## Printing and saving your results

1. To print, email or save a list of results, click on the icon on the far right of any reference that you wish to save/print/email. You need to do this for each reference that you want
2. Once you have selected a reference to save, the icon should change

This icon indicates a reference that has been selected to print/save/email



This icon indicates a reference to save (the icon is unchanged)



3. If you know that you wish to select all of the references on a page of results (up to 30 references at a time) select the link to **Share** on the right hand side immediately above your search results

4. Select the first link that appears on the list of options

5. Selected references will be put in a folder. To view the folder, click on the **Folder** option at the top of the screen

6. Use the icons on the right hand side to print, save or email
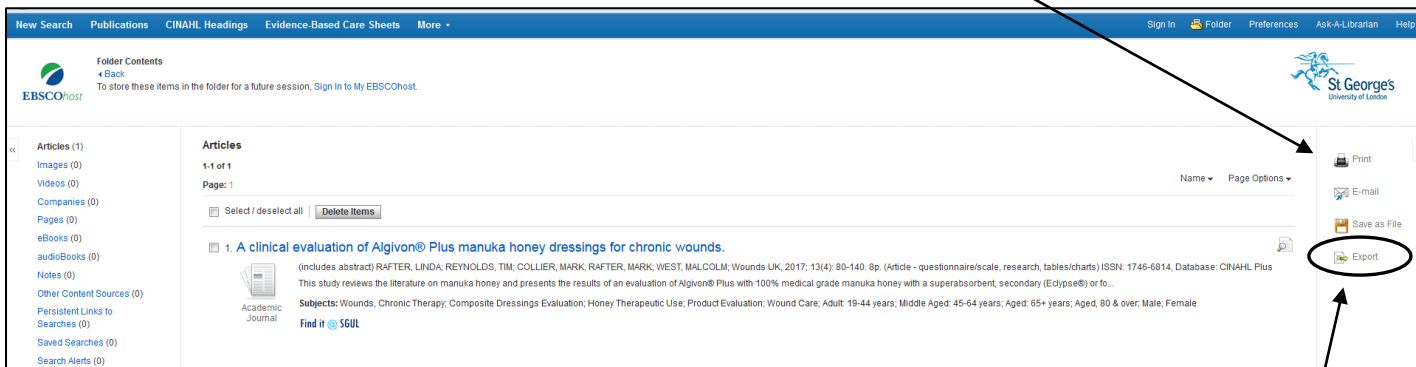


7. Using the **Export** option allows you to send your results to reference management software such as Refworks, Reference Manager or EndNote

## Starting a new search

Go back to the search screen by clicking on the link to **Back** if you are in the folder view.
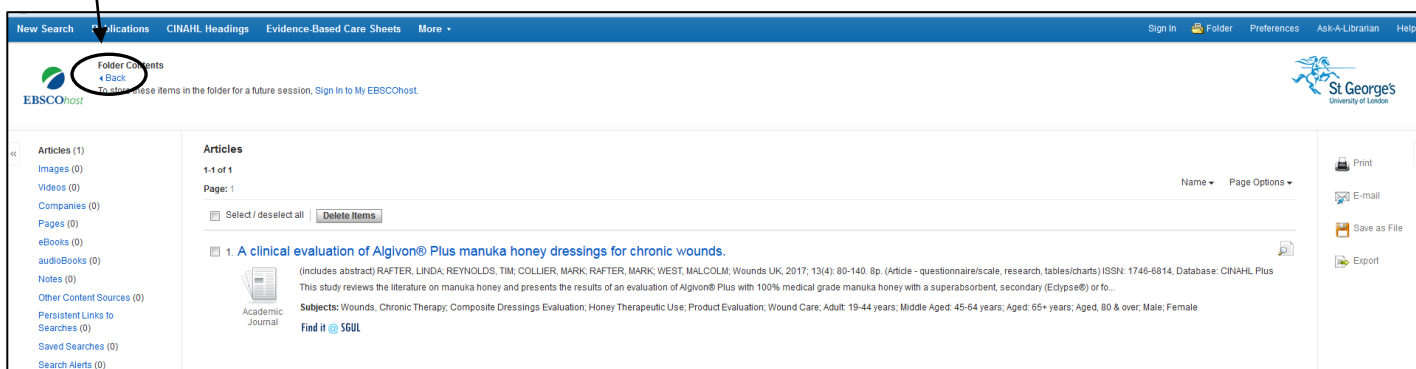


You can now enter new search terms. Your new terms will appear above the previous search terms you have used. You can delete your previous search terms by ticking the sets of results that you want to delete, and clicking on the **Delete Searches** button.
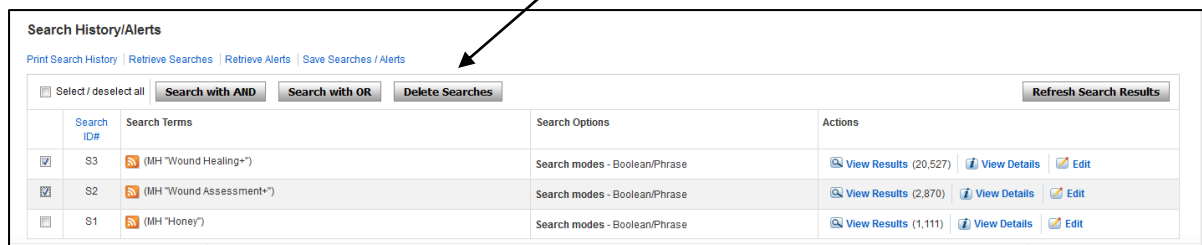
# Some more Advanced tips

## Using textwords/keywords

There may be occasions when there isn't a subject term which fits your search.  In this case you can use text words, when the database will search records for the words you type in to the search box.  This bypasses "subject" searching and has advantages and disadvantages.  If you use text words it is very important that you think of alternative terms for your subject and also use the correct spelling (English and American).

**Example – Health Action Zones**

1. Enter the term **Health action zones**
2. Select **Search as Keyword** from the foot of the list of suggested terms, then click on the green **Search Database** button near the top of the screen.
3. Enter the term **Health action zone**, without the 's'
4. Compare the number of results you retrieve.

**The following can affect the results of your text word searches**

- English/American spelling: labour/labor
- Word order: labour management/management of labour
- Synonyms: house/home/residence
- Words with several meanings: lead, pine, mint
- Word endings: measure/measures/measurement

## Truncation

This can be useful if you are doing a text word search. By using the * symbol at the end of the stem of a word, the database will look for words beginning with that stem. This is very useful for including plurals in the search. e.g. computer* will find articles containing the words computer, computers, computerisation etc.

*Using the * symbol for your previous search on health action zone(s) would have retrieved ALL the articles from the two searches, rather than having to search them separately.*

## Using the Explode option

Some Subject Terms can be 'Exploded'.  This means that they cover a broad subject, and have therefore been subdivided into more specific terms.  The Subject Term **Wounds and Injuries** has been further subdivided into a number of terms, for example: **wound infection**; **wounds, penetrating**; **wounds, nonpenetrating**; **surgical wound** (some but not all are listed below).

When you choose the **Explode** option you search for the general term Wounds and Injuries, and also include all the more specific terms. You should always choose the Explode option so that you do not miss out any information – if you do not use Explode in the previous example you will find significantly fewer results.
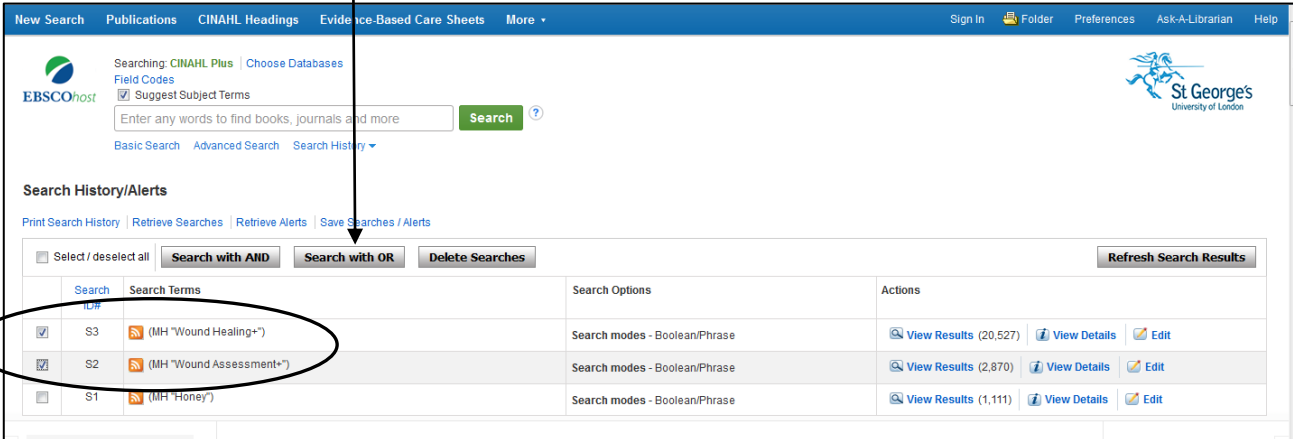
## The Major Concept option

Search Terms also have a **Major Concept** option. This is where the search term you are searching for is considered to be of substantial importance to the article. This will improve the relevance of the articles you retrieve, but it will also reduce the number. If you have a subject about which you have found many articles then selecting major concept is a useful way of reducing your results but if you only have a few articles then you may reduce the number of articles too much. The **Major Concept** option is to the right of the relevant **Explode** option.

## Using OR as well as AND to combine terms

If you have used several different searches to find articles on a particular concept you may wish to combine them using **OR**.

In our example of honey for wound healing you may carry out a search on

1. "wounds and injuries"
2. another on "wound healing"
3. it would be appropriate to put these in a single set by combining them using **OR** – select these searches and click on the **Search with OR** button to do this.
   This would enable you to search for items which contain **EITHER** the term **"wounds and injuries" OR** the term **"wound healing"**.

## Setting up an account in Ebscohost

The first time you save a search you will need to set up an account in MyEbscohost. Select **Sign in**, next to the Folder option.
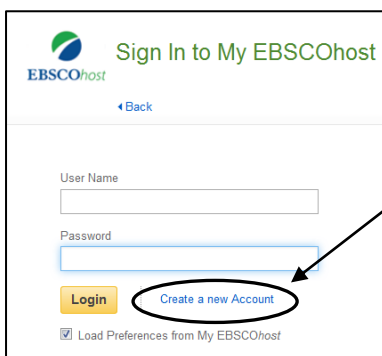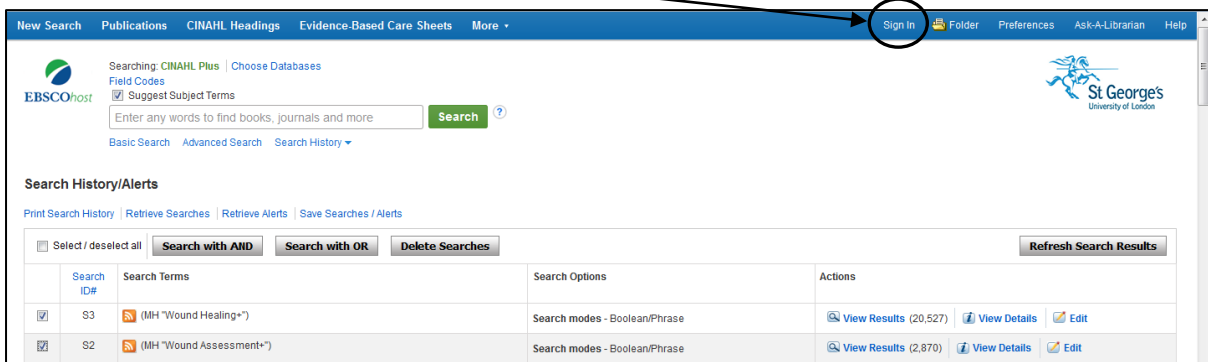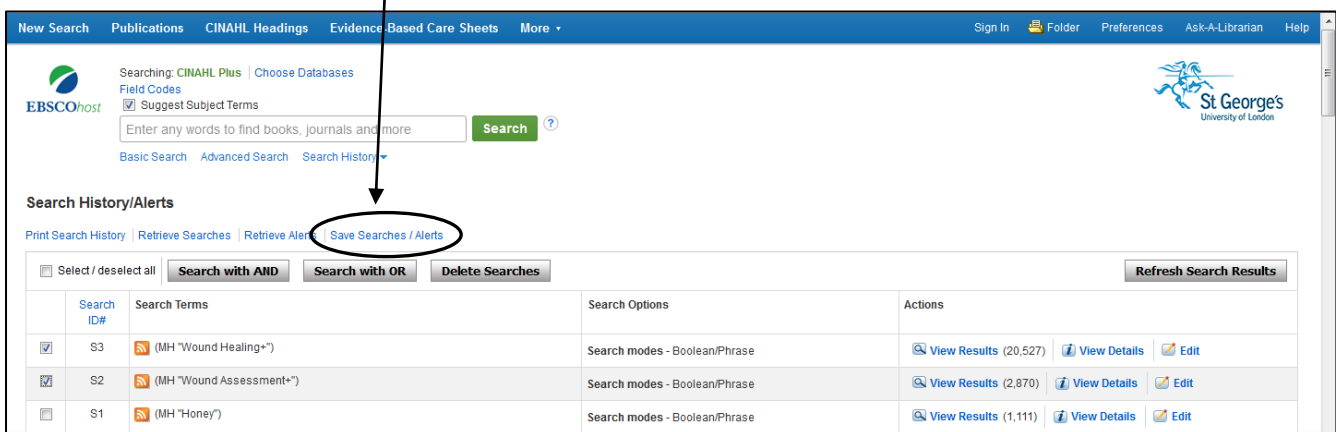


Click on the **Create a new Account** link.



Follow the on screen instructions on the next screen to set up an account. Once you have set this up you will be able to log in the next time you wish to use your account.

## Saving your search strategy

When you have completed your search you may wish to save it for later. Click on the **Save Searches/Alerts** link above your search history.



Log in to your Ebscohost account if you are not already logged in. Once you have logged in you will see a screen with various options.
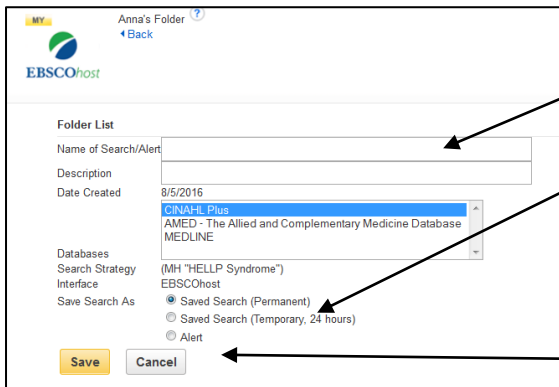
To save your search you need to

1. Name your search

2. Save it as a permanent search

3. You can also set up an alert. This means that you will be sent the references of any new articles that match your search, every time the database (e.g. Cinahl Plus) is updated

4. For an alert, your search must therefore be fairly specific, to avoid being sent many articles each week (don't set up an alert for e.g. 'heart attack' or 'nursing')

## Viewing saved searches and alerts

To view any searches or alerts that you have previously set up, click on the link to **Retrieve Searches** or **Retrieve Alerts** above your search history, as appropriate.
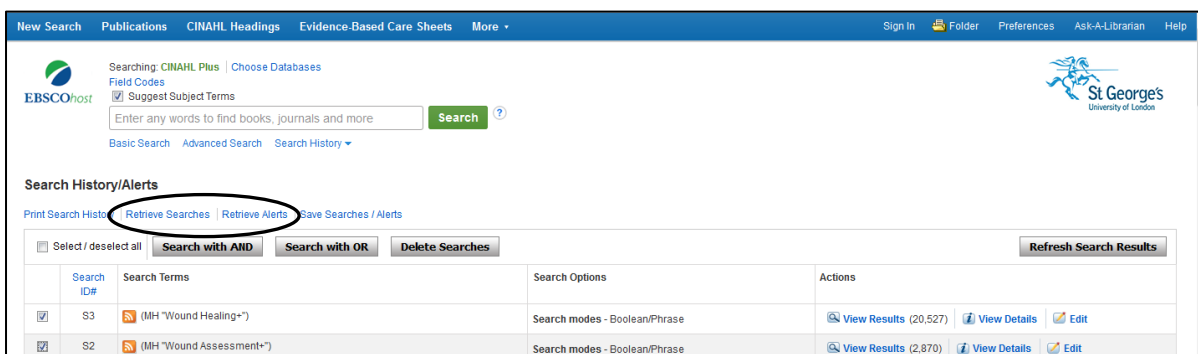
## Creating and sending a 'persistent link' to a search

When you have completed a search, you can add a 'persistent link' to this search. This link can be e-mailed to yourself or someone else or you can save it (you will need to have created an account within MyEbscohost to save it). This will allow you to view the results of your search by clicking on the link. You will not see the search strategy, just the last line of your search, and the list of results in Ebscohost. To create a persistent link:

1. Click on the link to **Share** on the right hand side immediately above your search results
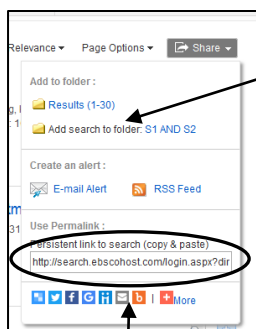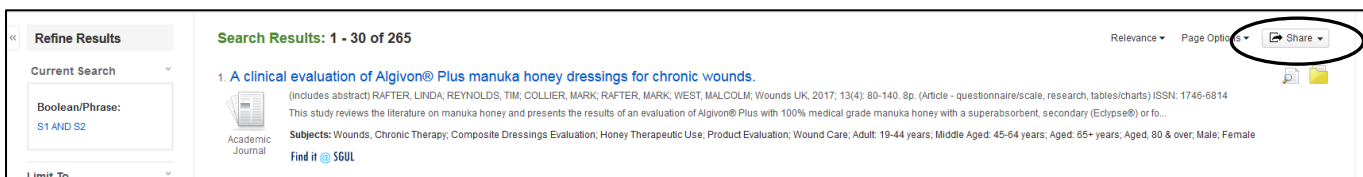
2. Select the link **Add Search to folder** from the pop-up box that appears
3. Make a note of the name of the search that you save
4. View your folder – click on the link to **Folder** near the top right of the screen – this is the same folder as when you save a search or set up an alert
5. The search that you just saved will be displayed on screen
6. You will see the option to email your search strategy to yourself, or save it to a file, on the right hand side

7. You can also copy and paste the persistent link directly into an email to send to yourself or someone else

## Switch to a different database in Ebscohost

1. Click on the link to **Choose Databases** at the top of the screen
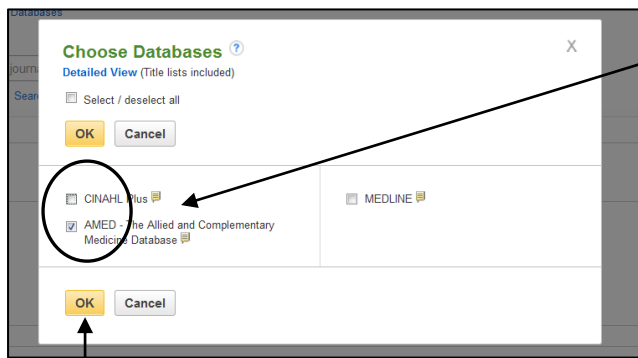




2. A pop-up box will appear on screen with a selection of databases
3. Select the database you want by putting a tick in the box next to it
4. Remove the tick in the box next to Cinahl Plus (or any other database you have been using) so that you are only searching in the new database you have selected
5. Click on the **OK** button and you will see the search screen for your new database

The Ebscohost system remembers the previous searches you have been doing so when you search you will not start at number 1. You do have the option to delete your previous searches.

To use a different resource that is not available from Ebscohost (e.g. Maternity & Infant Care, or PsycInfo) go back to the Library homepage, click on the Databases box and choose your subject area, as before, or use the A-Z list.

## Locating the journals you need

You should find that your search results provide links and information using the **Find it @ SGUL** icon which indicates whether the full text is available through St. George's Library – mainly electronically, occasionally in print format.

You can also use Hunter to find the full text of references in electronic journals that SGUL subscribes to. To search Hunter for a specific article, type the full title of the article into the Hunter search box, select **Articles and More** from the drop down menu and click on **Search**.
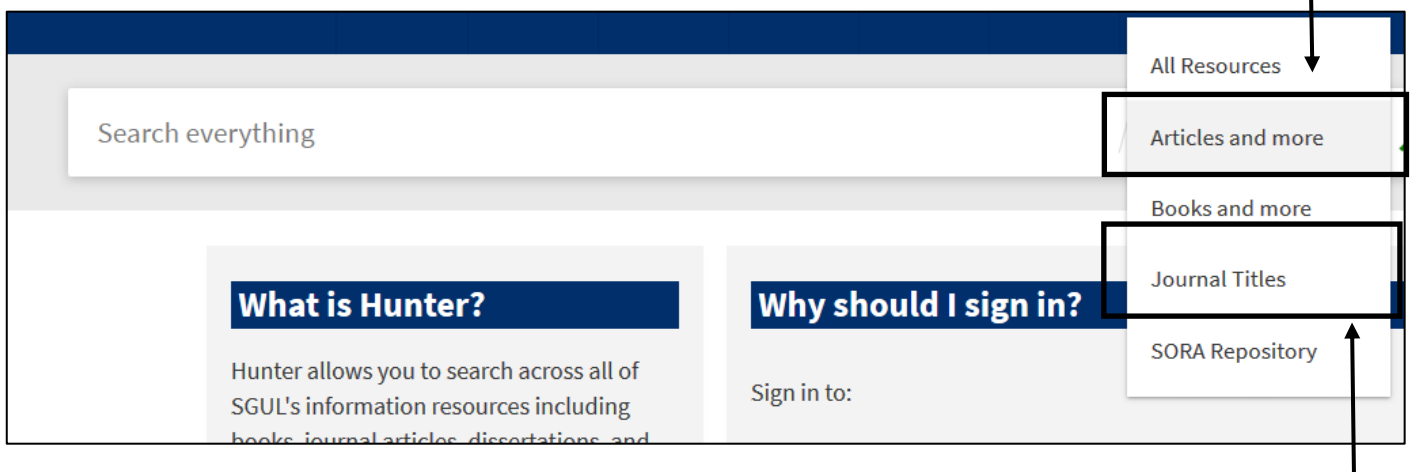
You can also use Hunter to check if we subscribe to a particular journal.  This will find both the electronic journal titles, and our small current print collection, which is on the Library shelves in the silent study area.  To do this, type the journal title, e.g. British Journal of Nursing, into the Hunter search box, select **Journal Titles** from the drop down menu and click on Search.

## What if you need an article that we don't have in full text?

Please note that the Library does not subscribe to every journal referenced on Medline, Cinahl Plus or Amed. The Researchers link on our Library website http://library.sgul.ac.uk/researchers has a link to Visiting other Libraries which lists access schemes and other searchable Library catalogues in London.

We also provide an interlibrary loans service, for which there is a charge. For more information, please see the Interlibrary loans section at http://library.sgul.ac.uk/resources/interlibrary-loans.

## Further help and support

For more help, email liaison@sgul.ac.uk, or book on one of our Ebscohost training sessions, which are advertised on the Library website in the Help section.