



Encyclopedia of Health Communication

PubMed

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Advances in technology, speed of computers, access to the World Wide Web, and the proliferation of information have created a deluge of content in a variety of areas that must be managed and conserved. PubMed is one such information management tool.

PubMed is an online resource developed and maintained by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) at the National Library of Medicine (NLM). It was created specifically as a free Web interface for the MEDLINE database. According to the NCBI Web site, PubMed contains over 23 million citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, life science journals, and online books. PubMed can also be accessed through searches using Google and other search engines and from within other applications such as Endnote. PubMed contains only abstracts with links to available full-text articles through PubMedCentral (PMC); however, it does not include information from meeting abstracts, conference proceedings, dissertations, patents, or Web sites.

What Are MEDLINE and PubMedCentral?

MEDLINE is the National Library of Medicine's premier bibliographic database, containing citations and author abstracts from more than 5,600 journals published in the United States and other countries. Coverage is worldwide, in 39 languages and 60 languages from older journals, but most records (about 90 percent) are from English-language sources or have English abstracts. MEDLINE was introduced in the 1960s but contains over 20 million references dating back to 1946. Diverse topics in biomedicine and health such as microbiology, delivery of health care, nutrition, pharmacology, environmental health, and select health communication topics are included. The categories covered in MEDLINE include anatomy, organisms, diseases, psychiatry, psychology, and the physical sciences.

Two significant journals important to health communication scholars and others are *Health Communication*, which began publishing in 1989, and the *Journal of Health Communication*, started in 1996. Both of these have been indexed in MEDLINE and cited in PubMed. *Health Communication* has 845 citations and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) of "Communication" and "Health;" the *Journal of Health Communication* has 1,079 citations and MeSH of "Communication," "Health Education," "Health Promotion," "Health Services," and "Health." MeSH is the National Library of Medicine's controlled vocabulary thesaurus. Using these subject heading terms help users search for information. In addition, the *Journal of Health Communication* has been cited 82 times in PubMedCentral.

A PubMed fact sheet also indicates that in addition to MEDLINE citations, PubMed contains in-process citations that provide a record for an article before it is indexed, with MeSH, citations that precede the date that a journal was selected for MEDLINE indexing, OLDMEDLINE citations that have not been updated with current vocabulary, and citations to some additional journals that submit full-text articles to PubMedCentral.

PubMedCentral

The counterpart to PubMed is PubMedCentral (PMC), which began in February 2000. It is a full-text archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine. There are 2.8 million full-text articles in PubMedCentral and that number continues to grow. In 2005, PMC was designated as the repository for papers submitted in accordance with the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Public Access Policy, which states, “the public has access to the published results of NIH funded research to help advance science and improve human health,” Other organizations linked to NIH have also established public access policies to allow for inclusion in PMC. Notably, PMC does not contain the complete contents of every journal that is in its archive, and older print journals are digitized (pages scanned) to provide online access. Access to the full-text articles via PMC is free but copyright rules still apply.

PubMed's Intended Audience

The National Library of Medicine leases MEDLINE data to researchers and commercial vendors, but PubMed provides free access to MEDLINE directly from NLM. The target audience for the PubMed Web site includes: academics, clinicians, patients or patient advocates including relatives and friends, researchers, teachers, students from high school to college, journalists, or anyone interested in learning more about biomedical advances and trends. PubMed as a Web interface is designed for use by those with minimal experience in searching biomedical literature and is not just for science librarians or experienced researchers. If one has experience searching in Google, one can create a search in PubMed.

A PubMed/MEDLINE fact sheet describes searching PubMed as easy. By simply entering search topics or MeSH terms, author names, title words, text words or phrases, journal names, or any combination thereof and then clicking search, citations and their associated abstracts are displayed.

Since its inception, PubMed has undergone various stages of redesign to improve search engine protocols and various user interfaces. The best place to learn how to use PubMed and become proficient is through the use of the tutorials included on its Web site at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/disted/pubmedtutorial>. These tutorials use both animation and audio, are detailed and easy to follow, and cover broad topic headers such as: Understanding the Vocabulary, Building the Search, Managing the Results, Saving the Search, and Getting Articles. The tutorials also provide what are known as Quick Tours of subtopics that include but are not limited to the following: References and Filters, Collections and Bibliographies (My NCBI), Advanced Search Builders, and PubMed Filters Sidebar. Other resources are also available for learning how to use PubMed.

Uses and Effects

Health is big business globally and of great social concern to millions worldwide. The physiological and psychosocial aspects of human health include communication. This can be seen by the exponential growth of research pertaining to health communication across various disciplines. The cross-disciplinary nature is evidenced by PubMed search results that contain abstracts for articles related to health communication from peer-reviewed journals other than *Health Communication* or the *Journal of Health Communication*. For example, if one were to search PubMed using the search keywords “health communication campaigns,” results are displayed from journals such as the *Journal of Nutritional Education Behavior, Social Science and Medicine*, the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, and the *Journal of the American Venereal Disease Association*, in addition to *Health Communication* and the *Journal of Health Communication*.

PubMed is a resource designed to help individuals coordinate literature reviews and assemble information pertaining to a chosen topic. To assist with this organization, NCBI and NLM

provide another tool, My NCBI, which requires the user to create an account, which can then be used to store user information and other preferences to provide customized services. The services include the ability to save searches and create collections and bibliographies. Information about this tool and all of its features along with other user topics is available through the PubMed Quick Tour tutorials.

Health communication intersects with the broad subject area covered by PubMed and allows for a greater depth of shared knowledge by health professionals and others engaged in basic research, clinical care, consumer advocacy, health policy development, public health, or related educational activities.

- PubMed
- MEDLINE
- health communication
- National Library of Medicine
- citations
- journals
- subject headings

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See Also:

- [National Institutes of Health](#)
- [National Library of Medicine](#)
- [Online Health Information](#)

Further Readings

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