

NHS Evidence

Introductory guide to searching

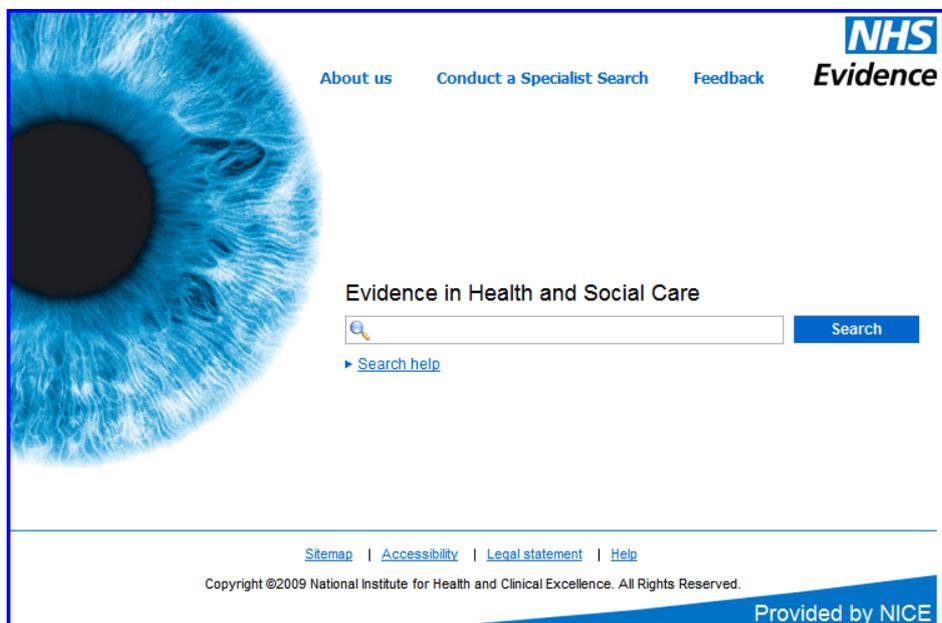
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Background

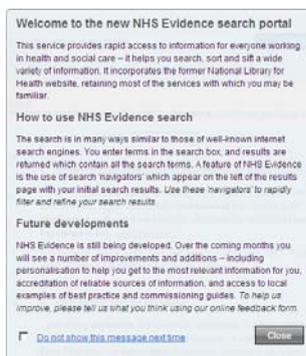
The principle aim of the NHS Evidence service is to provide easy access to a comprehensive evidence base for everyone in health and social care who takes decisions about treatments or the use of resources – including clinicians, public health professionals, commissioners and service managers – thus improving health and patient care. It will build on NICE’s significant international reputation for developing high quality evidence-based guidance. It provides access to a range of information types, including primary research literature, practical implementation tools, guidelines and policy documents.

NHS Evidence sorts, sifts and prioritises a vast range of resources. The NHS Evidence home page shown below can be found at www.evidence.nhs.uk



Welcome to the new NHS Evidence

The first time you search the NHS Evidence portal you will be presented with the following welcome text. Tick the checkbox “*Do not show this message next time*” then click **Close** if you do not wish to see this on future visits.



Welcome to the new NHS Evidence search portal

This service provides rapid access to information for everyone working in health and social care – it helps you search, sort and sift a wide variety of information. It incorporates the former National Library for Health website, retaining most of the services with which you may be familiar.

How to use NHS Evidence search

The search is in many ways similar to those of well-known internet search engines. You enter terms in the search box, and results are returned which contain all the search terms. A feature of NHS Evidence is the use of search 'navigators' which appear on the left of the results page with your initial search results. *Use these 'navigators' to rapidly filter and refine your search results.*

Future developments

NHS Evidence is still being developed. Over the coming months you will see a number of improvements and additions – including personalisation to help you get to the most relevant information for you, accreditation of reliable sources of information, and access to local examples of best practice and commissioning guides. *To help us improve, please tell us what you think using our online feedback form.*

NHS Evidence home page

www.evidence.nhs.uk

The home page has been designed to be clear and intuitive. It contains a number of drop-down menus that are worth exploring. Note particularly the **About Us** and **Conduct a Specialist Search** drop-down menus, shown below:

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| About us | Conduct a Spe |
| About NHS Evidence | |
| Selecting information sources | |
| Sources by interest area | |
| Specialist Collections | |
| Accrediting guidance | |
| How the search works | |
| Contact us | |

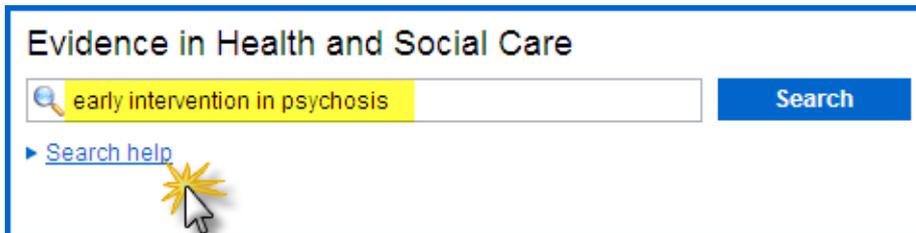
About Us includes information on Selecting Information **Sources, Sources by interest area, Specialist Collections, Accreditation, How the search works** and a **Contact us** link. The sources have been sorted into six areas of interest: Clinical, Commissioning, Drugs and Technologies, Education and Learning tools, Public Health and Social Care. These areas are also used when search results are displayed. See **Searching** below.

| |
|--|
| Conduct a Specialist Search |
| Books and Journals |
| Search specialist databases (HDAS) |
| Search Specialist Collections |
| Login to Athens |

Conduct a Specialist Search has a link to Search Specialist Databases HDAS (**Healthcare Database advanced search**), a link to the **Athens authentication system** and to the **Specialist collections** (formerly known as Specialist Libraries).

Searching

Choose your main search terms and enter them into the search box. Simply enter words and phrases to get search results based on your entry, e.g. *early intervention in psychosis* as shown below. NHS Evidence will automatically identify the main terms in your search and return results based on these. In the example used, the main terms are shown highlighted in the results, with the word “in” being ignored:



The screenshot shows a search box with the text "early intervention in psychosis" and a "Search" button. Below the search box is a link for "Search help" with a mouse cursor pointing to it.

Search help

Clicking on [▶ Search help](#) beneath the main search box will link you to the additional search tips reproduced below:

Searching

NHS Evidence provides a simple search of many sources of clinical and social care information. The search can be freely accessed without the need for logging in, and the full text of the search results can be also be freely obtained in most cases.

The search will be in many ways familiar to users of well-known internet search engines. You enter terms in the search box, and results are returned which contain all the search terms.

Boolean operators (AND, OR and NOT)

By default the terms are combined with AND. For example a search for **bell's palsy** will actually be performing the following search **bells AND palsy** and so will find documents containing both words wherever they occur.

You can use the OR operator to find alternative terms. For example, search for ("allergic rhinitis" OR hayfever OR "hay fever").

You can also narrow your search to exclude words by using the NOT operator, for example: NSAIDS **NOT** aspirin.

Searching phrases

To search for an exact phrase just put quotation marks around the phrase. For example, searching for "bell's palsy" will return only those documents where that exact phrase appears.

Wildcard (asterisk*)

You can use a wildcard to find all variations of a word: for example **surg*** will find **surgeon**, **surgery** and **surgical**. If you don't use the asterisk and search only on **surg**, you will only pick up resources that use the abbreviation **surg**. e.g.

[Guideline 43 References](#)...clinical follow up. Int J Oral Maxillofac **Surg** 1989; 18: 277-80. [Back] ...adults: a 10 year longitudinal study. Oral **Surg** Oral Med Oral Pathol1989; 68: 9-13...Research Group study. Br J Oral Maxillofac **Surg** 1992; 30: 78-82. [Back] ...

Note that 'stemming' (word variations – see below) is applied where appropriate so you do not have to use a wildcard to search for a plural form as well.

Spelling

As well as the normal English language dictionary search terms will also be checked against our medical dictionary for accuracy. Should a term be slightly misspelled you will be offered suggestions for correct spelling.

Word variations (stemming)

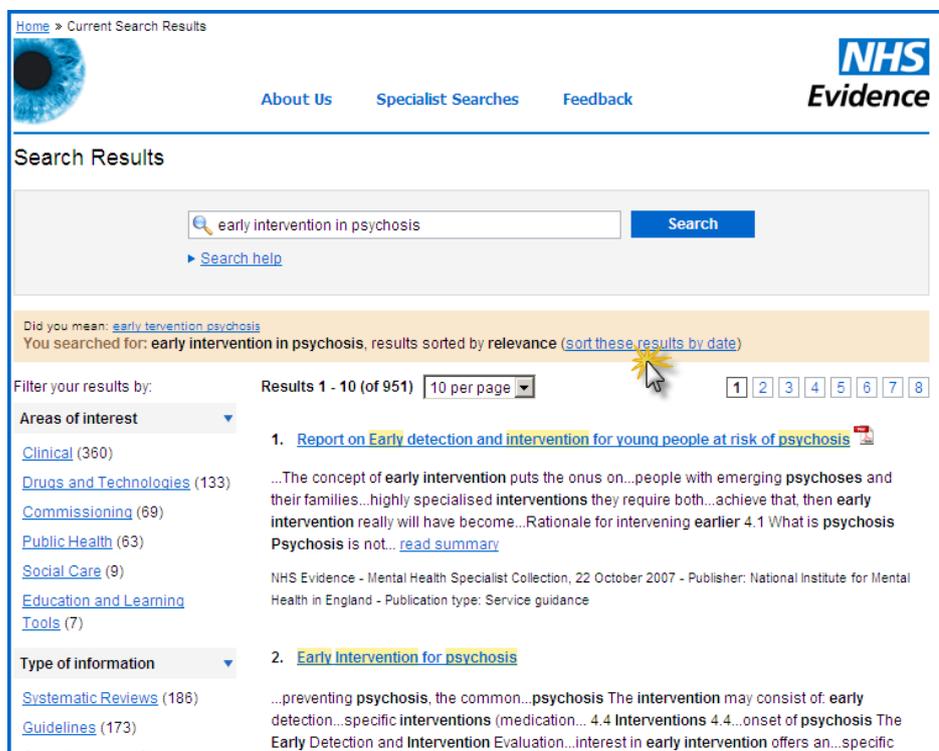
When appropriate our search engine will automatically search for words that are similar to some or all of your search terms. For example, if you search for “strategies” our search engine will also search for related variations such as “strategy”. Any variants of your terms that were searched for will be highlighted in the snippet of text accompanying each result.

Capitalisation

Our searches are not case sensitive. Therefore regardless of whether you use upper case, lower case or a combination of both our search engine will automatically search for all versions. This also applies to the Boolean operators.

Viewing and refining your results

When you run a search the Search Results page is displayed. The title of each result is a link to the full text article on the source site. Many articles also have a link called Read Summary which allows you to read an abstract before going to the full text.



The screenshot shows the NHS Evidence search results page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home > Current Search Results', 'About Us', 'Specialist Searches', 'Feedback', and the NHS Evidence logo. Below this is the 'Search Results' section, which includes a search bar containing 'early intervention in psychosis' and a 'Search' button. A 'Search help' link is also present. A yellow banner below the search bar indicates a spelling correction: 'Did you mean: [early intervention psychosis](#). You searched for: **early intervention in psychosis**, results sorted by relevance ([sort these results by date](#)). Below the banner, there are filters for 'Areas of interest' (Clinical (360), Drugs and Technologies (133), Commissioning (69), Public Health (63), Social Care (9), Education and Learning, Tools (7)) and 'Type of information' (Systematic Reviews (186), Guidelines (173), Cochrane Literature (42)). The main results area shows 'Results 1 - 10 (of 951)' with a '10 per page' dropdown and a pagination bar with numbers 1 through 8. The first result is titled '1. [Report on Early detection and intervention for young people at risk of psychosis](#)' and includes a snippet: '...The concept of **early intervention** puts the onus on...people with emerging **psychoses** and their families...highly specialised **interventions** they require both...achieve that, then **early intervention** really will have become...Rationale for intervening earlier 4.1 What is **psychosis** Psychosis is not... [read summary](#)'. The second result is titled '2. [Early Intervention for psychosis](#)' and includes a snippet: '...preventing **psychosis**, the common...**psychosis** The **intervention** may consist of: **early** detection...specific **interventions** (medication... 4.4 **Interventions** 4.4...onset of **psychosis** The **Early Detection and Intervention** Evaluation...interest in **early intervention** offers an...specific'.

The search results will be displayed in order of relevancy: the most ‘relevant’ results appearing at the top. NHS Evidence aims to enable you to find what you are looking for on the first page.

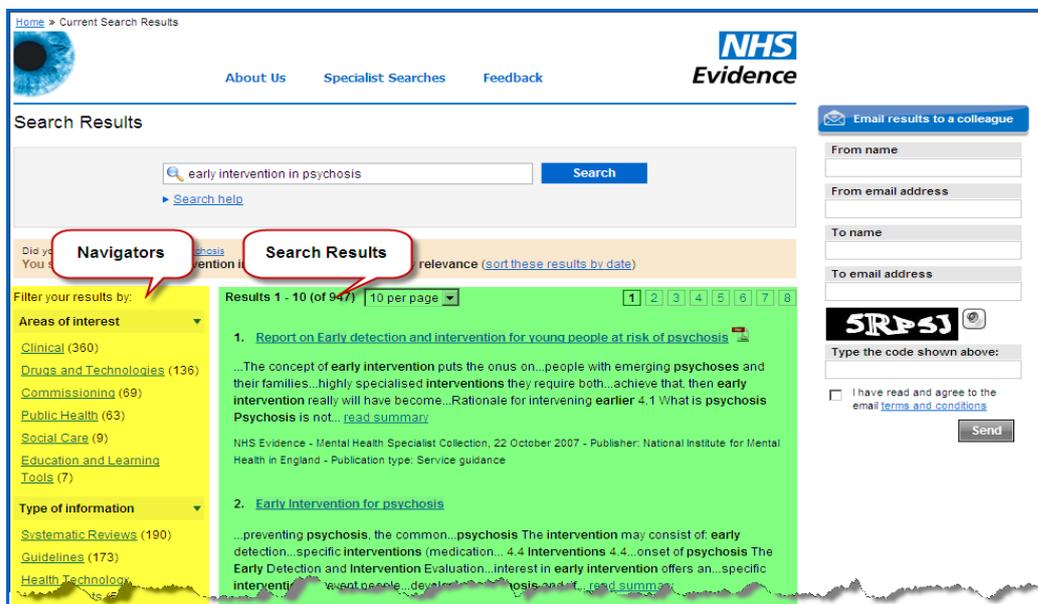
As with many well-known search engines, relevancy takes into account factors such as how frequently the search terms appear and how significant the occurrences are. For example, occurrences in the title or abstract are considered more important than in the full text.

NHS Evidence also ranks results based on the relative hierarchy of evidence with Guidelines and Commissioning Guides being promoted above Primary Research articles for example. This means you are presented first with the best evidence available for your search.

The results are displayed by relevancy by default, but you can also choose to display them ordered by Publication Date with the most recent at the top, by clicking on the “sort these results by date” filter.

Navigators

You can also extend or refine your search from the Search Results page. Use the results filters – or Navigators - on the left hand side of the page to examine the numbers of results returned for different "Areas of interest", "Types of information", "Clinical queries", "Sources" or “Medicines”. You can click on any of these to limit your search to these results. You can also add other selections to limit your results still further.



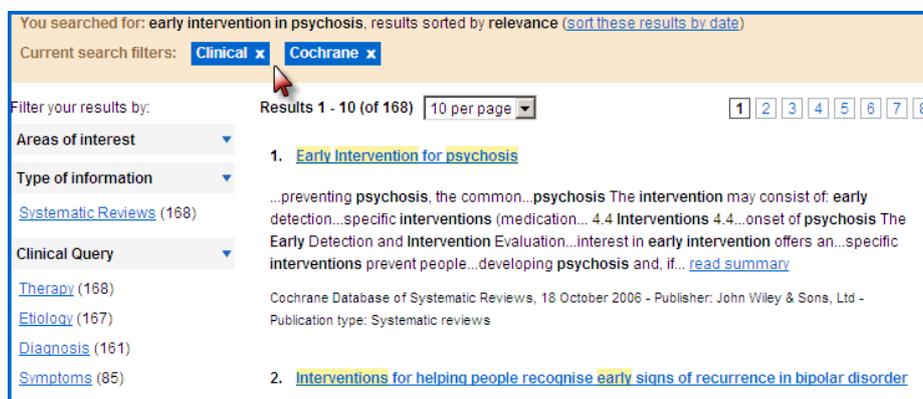
The selections appear in the pink bar at the top you can click on these in any order to remove them from your search.

You can use these ‘navigators’ to filter and refine your search results. The broad ‘navigator’ categories are Areas of Interest, Types of Information, Clinical Queries, Sources and Medicines and Devices. Each option within the categories indicates how many results within your existing results set have been assigned to that category, and clicking on an option narrows the search to just display those results. You can combine several selections to produce a really focussed final results set, without having to think of extremely specific search terms before you start.

Continuing with the example of *early intervention in psychosis*:

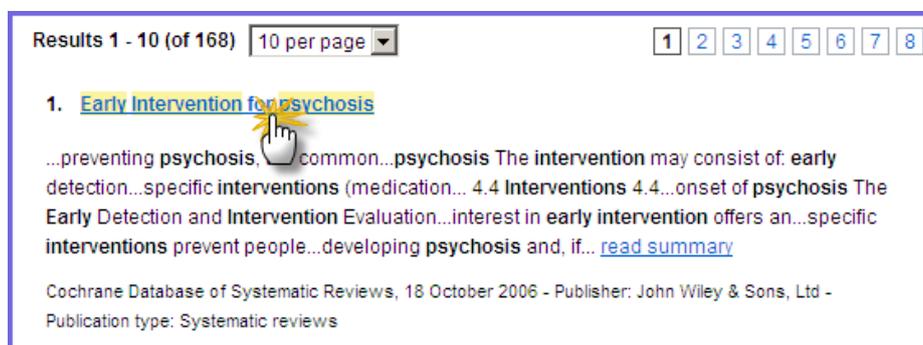
Search terms: early intervention in psychosis
 First navigator: Area of Interest → Clinical
 Second navigator: Sources → Cochrane

The selected navigator options now appear in a pink bar below the search terms and are labelled as **Current Search Filters**.



You can remove the filters you have applied in any order by clicking on the **x** in the corner of each box individually. Note that only the options which have results for your search will be displayed within the navigation filters (for example, zero returns will not be displayed).

The title of each search result is a link to the full text on the source site. There may also be a link to read a Summary page on the NHS Evidence site which gives you more information about an article to assist you to decide whether to open the full text.

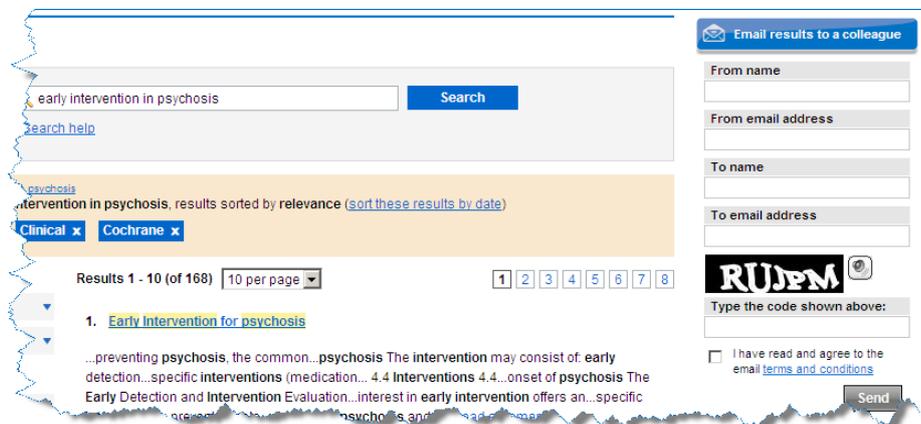


From the search results page you can also:

- Re-order your search results by publication date instead of by relevance
- Change the number of results displayed from the default of 10 to 20, 30, 40 or 50.

Sharing your results

You can email your search results by completing the email form on the right hand side of the results screen. The recipient receives a copy of the final version of your search.



The screenshot shows a search interface on the left and an email form on the right. The search bar contains the text "early intervention in psychosis" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are filters for "Clinical" and "Cochrane". The results section shows "Results 1 - 10 (of 168)" and a list of results, with the first result titled "Early Intervention for psychosis". The email form on the right is titled "Email results to a colleague" and includes fields for "From name", "From email address", "To name", and "To email address". It also features a CAPTCHA image with the text "RUJPM" and a "Send" button.

NHS Evidence is a new service and we need your comments in order to develop the site, so please send your comments to us using the feedback link shown at the top of all the NHS Evidence web pages.