Maternity and Infant Care Database: A User Guide

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midirs

Introduction to the database

The Maternity and Infant Care database is an online bibliographic database containing resources relating to all aspects of midwifery and maternity care, from pregnancy through to the first 1000 days. Our librarians scan over 300 international journals and publications to ensure that our database covers a wide range of maternity research. This includes paper and electronic resources from government, academic and professional sources. Every resource on the database is hand-picked by our team of librarians and indexed so that each record has full bibliographic information, an abstract and, where available, a link to access the full text. Our aim is to make maternity research easy to find, supporting evidence-based maternity practice and professional development.

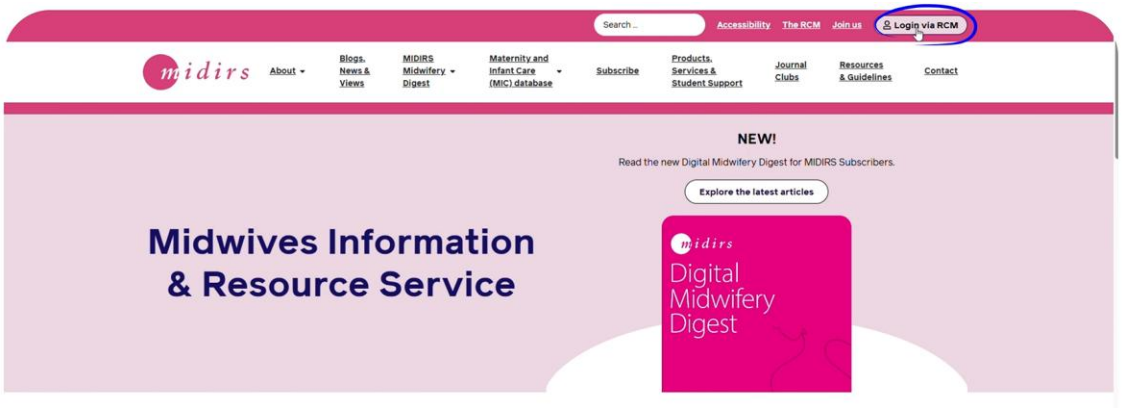
We began development of the database in 1987, and two years later it became available to subscribers. Since then, its contents and functionality have expanded rapidly. Today, the MIC database is the largest midwifery-specific research database in the world.

Within the database, users can filter by author, title, topic or keyword, ensuring that your search results are as broad or as specific as you like. You can conduct basic or advanced searches and even use our Search Pack functions to discover research on specific topics. We have created this tutorial to provide you with all the information you need to make the most out of your MIDIRS subscription and make accessing research easier than ever.

General functions of the database

Locating the database

The database is available to all MIDIRS subscribers, as well as individuals whose institutions are subscribed to MIDIRS. For information about joining MIDIRS, head to the **subscribe page** on our website. For subscribers, the database can be accessed through your **MIDIRS Membership Portal** which is located in the top right corner of our website:



The button will either say **'Login via RCM'** or **'My MIDIRS Account'**.

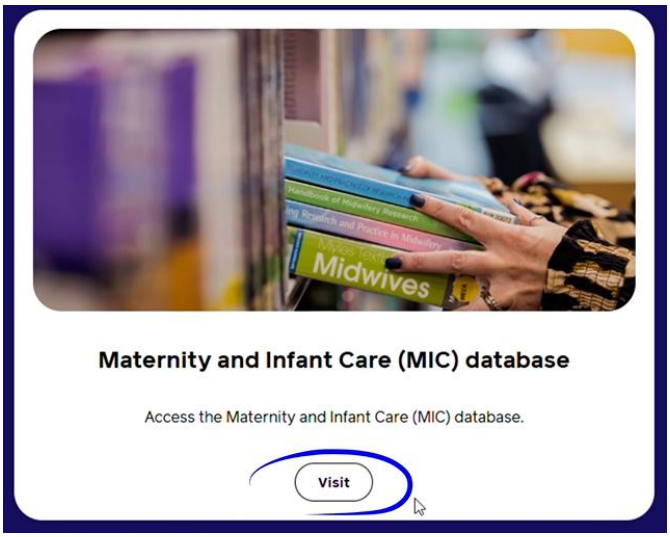
MIDIRS-only subscribers: Simply log into the portal using your email address and password.

Joint RCM subscribers: Once you have logged in using your email address and password (which is the same as your RCM login), scroll down and click on the button **My Profile** under the heading **Go to the MIDIRS Subscription Portal:**

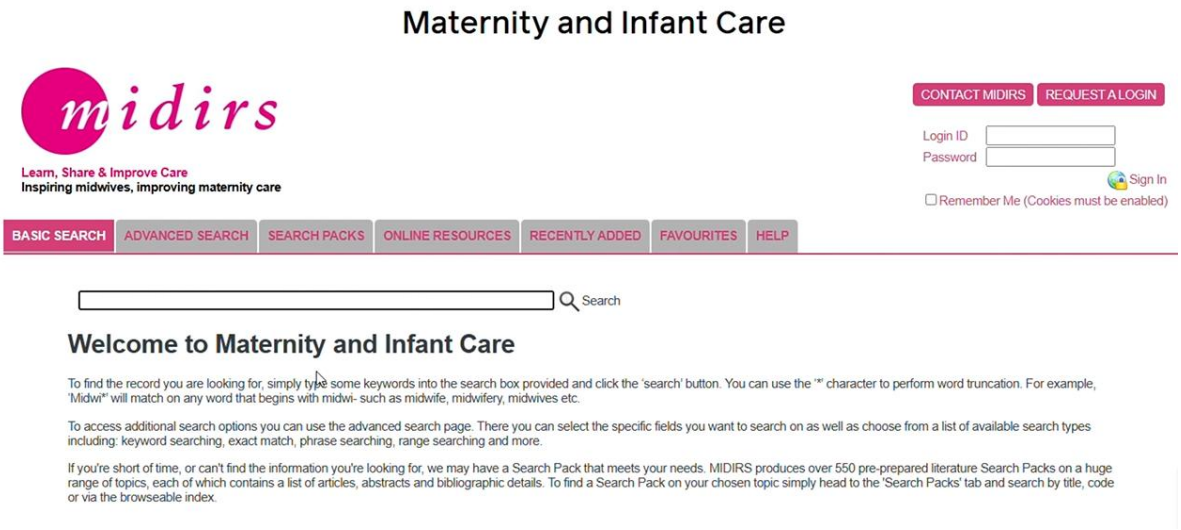


All subscribers: Once you are in the portal, scroll down and click **Visit** in the MIC Database section:





Once on the database homepage, you will see tabs for our different search functions and resources:



How to conduct a basic search

The basic search is a quick method that allows you to search the entire database by adding keywords in a single box. It's useful if you are new to online searching or want to explore the volume of related content to a broad topic. To conduct a basic search, simply type your keywords into the box click **'search'**:



A list of results will appear on your screen.

Truncation

Truncation is a useful tool that can be applied to any term that you're using, in basic or advanced searches. It is a technique that broadens your search to include various word endings and spellings, and involves entering the beginning of the word followed by an asterisk. For instance, truncating a term might be useful when searching the topic of 'midwifery'. By putting **midwi*** (**'midwi'** followed by an asterisk) in the search box, you will ensure that the search returns articles containing the word midwife, midwives or midwifery.

For the topic of midwifery:

"Midwi*" = Midwife
Midwives
Midwifery

Filtering basic searches

Once you have searched your keywords, you can narrow your results by using the filter panel on the left-hand side of the results page.



Select the checkboxes within your desired categories to automatically refine your results.

If you want to see the abstract and complete bibliographic details for each record, select the **'Show Abstract View'** button and this information will appear:



How to access articles

Once you've identified an article that you would like to look at, you can see if it's available to view by clicking on the article and scrolling down to the description section titled 'Full Text'. If it's available to view, it will say **'Access URL Here'**. Simply click on this link to read it:



Unfortunately, your MIDIRS subscription doesn't guarantee full access to each piece of research. This is because the cost of offering full-text access is prohibitive; we would rather offer midwifery's most comprehensive database for the best price. If your article isn't available to read on our database, you can use the bibliographic information in the description to search for it online.

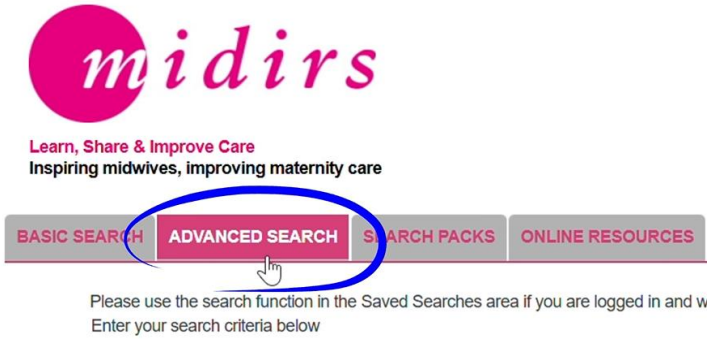
Conducting Advanced Searches

What are Advanced Searches?

Advanced Searches are a method of searching the database that allows you to filter results to your own specific research requirements. Advanced Searches are useful for performing more complex searches because they allow you to filter across multiple fields, or a single field multiple times. This function can be used in several different instances, including:

- If the topic you are looking for is not covered by one of MIDIRS Search Packs
- If you need to search for specific elements of a topic
- If you need to combine topics
- Or if you wish to apply a time frame to a search.

To begin, make sure that you are on the **Advanced Search** tab within the database:



Explaining Search Fields

You will first need to set your Search Field, which is the bibliographic filter that you would like to use. The Search Fields are found in the middle box, which defaults to **'All Fields'** at the beginning of each search:



If you want to search for terms across multiple fields, including the title, abstract and subject, you can leave it as **'All Fields'**.

The Search Field categories explained:

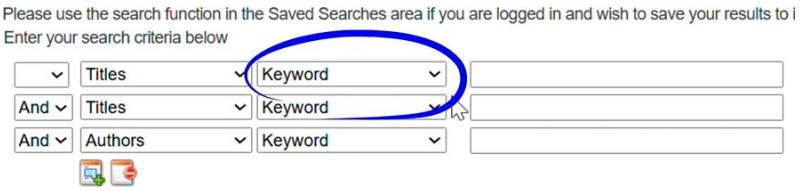
- **Author** = who wrote the article (stored in the database as a surname and initials, for example **"Webb S"**)
- **Year** = The year it was published
- **Title** = The article title
- **Source** = the journal or web source that the article came from.
    - If you are looking for a specific source which has a title longer than one word, switch the search type to 'phrase' before proceeding, so that you search for more than a single keyword. We will talk more about the use of the function 'phrase' later.
- **Abstract** = a short summary that accompanies an article.
    - Searching for a word or phrase using this field retrieves articles where the terms you search appear in this summary, rather than in the title.
- **Subject** = similar to the abstract field, but more specific. When articles from certain publications are added to the database, they are assigned 5-10 keywords that are related to the topic. These sit in the 'Subject' box of each article's description.
- **Search Pack Codes** = another way of narrowing down by subject. Learn more about Search Pack Codes here.
- **Type** = the type of document an article is.
    - This could be a systematic review, guideline, or original research, for example.

- **Format** = the way in which the article appears, whether that be an electronic document, journal supplement, leaflet, or even a DVD.

If you select either **Type** or **Format** in the Search Field, it will bring up a drop-down list which shows all the different options you can choose.

Explaining Search Types

After selecting your Search Field, there are several Search Types that you can use to further narrow down your results. These are found in the right-hand box:



Most fields default to a **Keyword** search, but you can choose a different search type from the drop-down menu. The Search Types available to you will depend on the Search Field. Each Search Type has different functions.

The Search Type categories explained:

- **Keyword** = the simplest of the search types. It denotes a specific word or term that you are looking for, like in a basic search.
    - In Advanced Searching, keywords are a good starting point to add further filtering to.
- **Phrase** = allows several terms to be kept together in sequence.
    - This method will retrieve any record where your chosen phrase appears. For example, **'continuity of care'** is a distinct area of research as well as a phrase, so if we select 'title' and 'phrase' and type it into the search box, it will bring up all results with 'continuity of care' within the title.
    - The function 'phrase' is also useful for retrieving authors. Rather than only searching for an author's surname, by selecting 'Phrase' you can type in their surname and then their first initials, which will narrow down the search further.

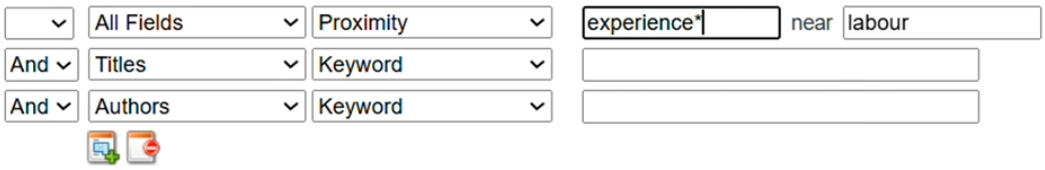
The database only stores authors' first initials rather than their full first names, so be sure to only type the initials in to retrieve the most accurate search.

- **Exists** = retrieves records where the specified field has a value.
    - For example, if you select the field 'author' and the type 'exists', it will bring up all articles which have an author. This search type is rarely used as it is likely to bring up hundreds of thousands of results, as most articles have an author, for example. However, it is worth mentioning as it can support your advanced search, especially when used alongside other filters.
- **Natural** = employs natural language to find matches for the approximate meaning of the search term.
    - You can think of this search type as being like a google search. For example, entering the question **"how do I use a pinard?"** will retrieve records that are in some way related to using a pinard, such as those on fetal monitoring.
    - It's an effective way of finding relevant articles without going through intense filtering, but that also means it will retrieve a broad return of articles, so if you want to be more specific, you can use this function alongside other search types.
- **Range** = used with numerical Search Fields to denote a range of numbers, for instance the field 'year'
    - Use this function to specify the years that you would like to retrieve. Once you select range in the search type box, the **term** box will automatically split into two. Enter the years which you would like to search between to retrieve your desired records. For example, if I wanted to retrieve records written between **2020** and **2025**, I would put those two years into the boxes:



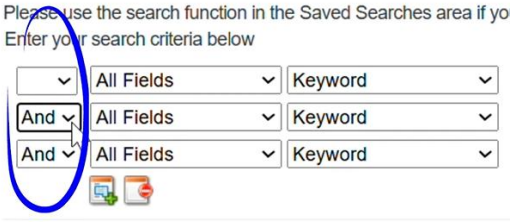
    -
- **Greater Than / Equal / Less Than** = can be applied to numerical terms like year to specify the time range of articles you want to find.
    - So, if you wanted to look at all articles written **from** 2020, you would use the search type 'Greater or Equal'. Similarly, if you wanted to look at all articles written **after** 2020, you would use the search type 'Greater than'.

- **Proximity** = retrieves records where search terms appear near each other.
    - For example, if you wanted to find articles on experiences of labour, you could select proximity and type **'experience'** and **'labour'** in the search boxes. Truncation would also be effective in this example with the term 'experience': by putting **'experience*'** with an asterisk, you will retrieve records containing the terms experience, experienced and experiences:



Explaining the functions of 'and', 'or' and 'not'

The small box on the left-hand side contains the functions **'and'**, **'or'** and **'not'**:



These are used to make your search even more specific. These filters are compatible with any search fields or types, so they are a great way to filter your search further.

And: Using 'and' narrows your search by allowing you to only retrieve records that contain all the terms applied.

- For example, to find records around midwives' attitudes over time to obesity, enter **'midwives'** in the first box, **'attitude'** in the second box and **'obesity'** in the third box, ensuring that 'and' is selected in the small left-hand box.



Or: Using 'or' expands your search and ensures that you capture records containing either, or all of, your terms.

- For instance, as with the previous example, you could enter **'attitude'** or **'view'** or **'perception'**. Using 'or' in this example means that you capture a diverse array of records relating to midwives' outlooks, and are not limited to only records with the word **'attitude'** in.



Not: The 'not' function is used to exclude a theme from your search. For example, if you want to find research on qualified midwives only, put 'not' **'student***'.



As indicated by the three lines of filters, you can combine multiple search filters, and you can add more than three lines by pressing the green plus box:



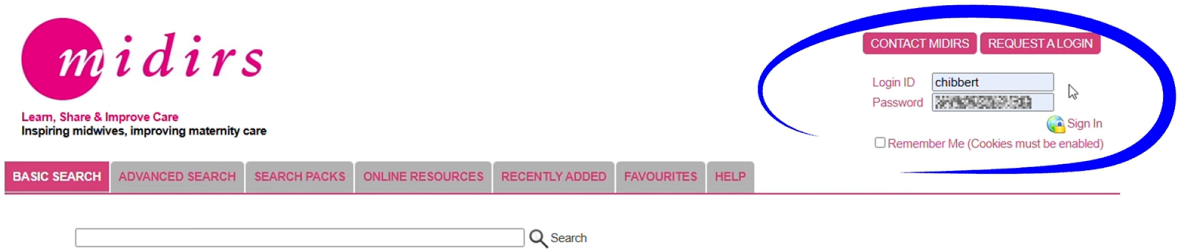
Once you are happy with your selection, simply press search and the articles within your filters will appear.

If you're having trouble retrieving results through an Advanced Search, or the session times out, please contact our helpdesk. You can reach us through our online chat or email.

Saving searches

If you are using evidence to support your academic research and writing or have identified articles that you would like to come back to, then saving your searches is a good idea.

To save articles into individual folders, you must first sign in within the database:



This login ID is separate from your general MIDIRS login, and it has been designed this way to keep your saved searches secure. If it's your first time saving searches, you will need to request a login from us. You can do this by selecting **'Request a login'** and following the instructions on the screen:

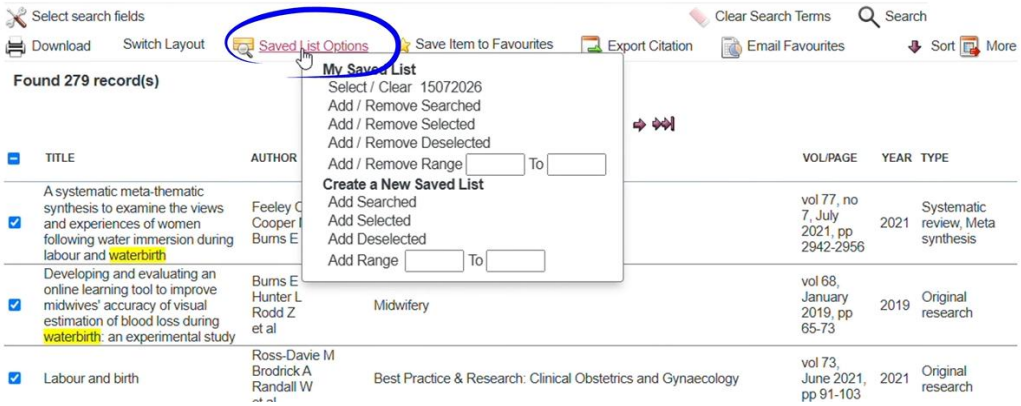


Once you have signed in, the **'Saved Searches'** tab will appear. Navigate here to begin a search you would like to save:



Enter your search terms into the box, like you would with advanced database searches, and hit **'Search'**. Once your search has completed, tick the checkbox next to the articles that you want

to save (or click the top checkbox to select all articles on the page) and then select **'Saved List Options'**:



Here, you can save records in a new or existing folder. These will be saved in your account, so you can come back to your folders at any time. Read below for guidance on both new and existing folders.

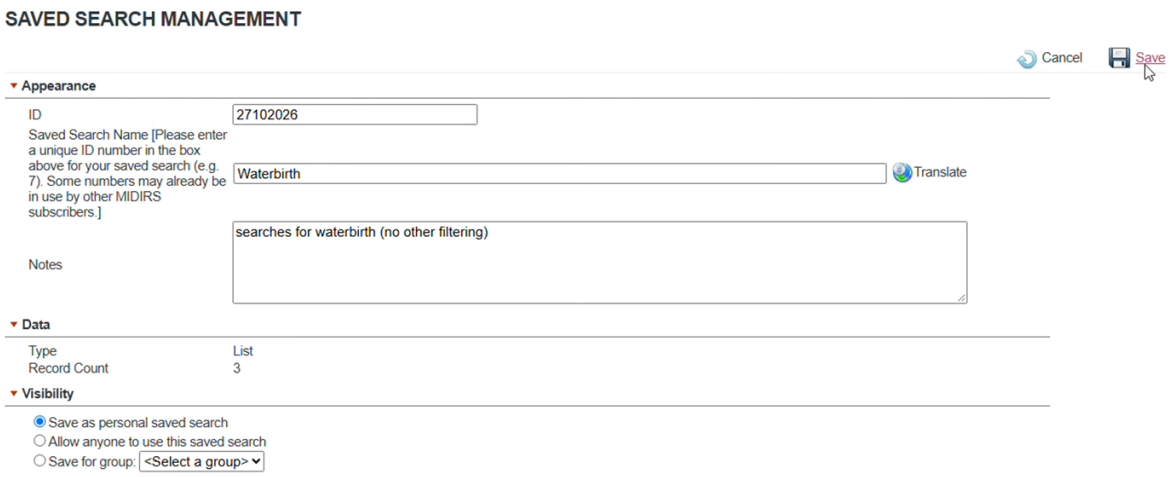
Saving to a new folder

To save records to a new folder, click **'Add Selected'** under **'Create a New Saved List'**:



This will take you to a page where you can enter a unique ID number. We suggest using the date or a similar format as the simplest numbers such as **1** or **100** have likely already been taken. For instance, you could call the list something like **27102026**. You can also name the

folder in the box below. Additionally, you can add notes to help you understand your saved searches when you return to them, such as adding details about the filtering that you applied to the search. For example:



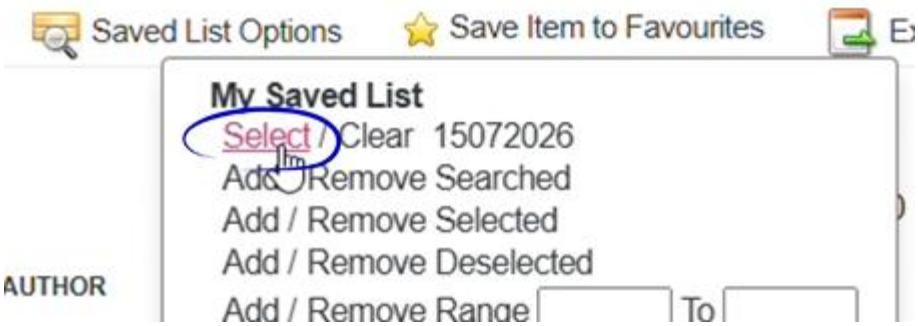
Once you are happy with the details you have inputted, click **'Save'** to save your selected articles into the newly created folder.

To view your saved searches, click on the **'My Saved Searches'** tab. A drop-down list will appear with the names of each of your searches.



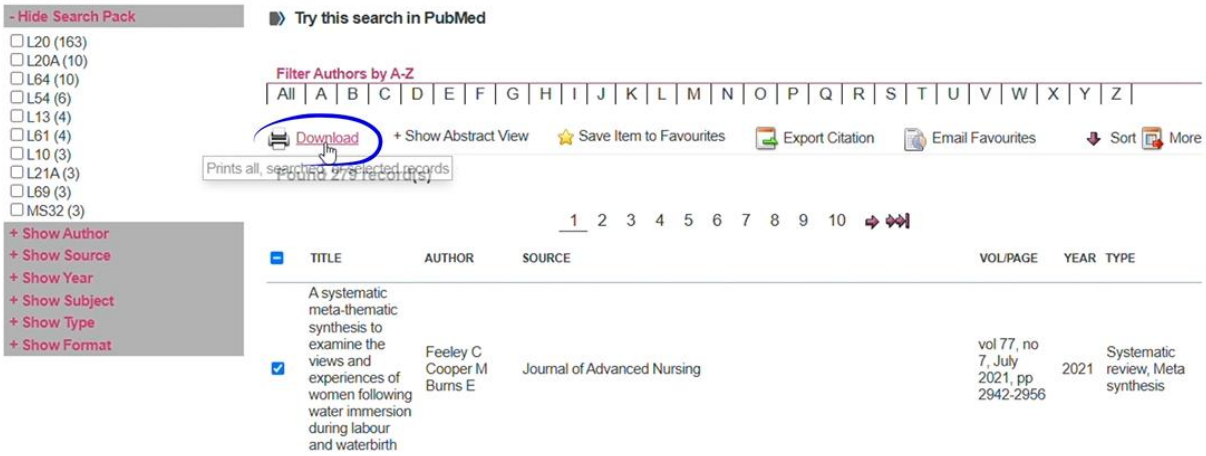
Saving to an existing folder

To save your results to an existing folder, you can click **'Select'** under **'My Saved List'** in the **'Saved List Options'** tab. You can then choose the folder that you want to use to save your search results.


Saved List Options
Save Item to Favourites
My Saved List
Select / Clear 15072026
Add / Remove Searched
Add / Remove Selected
Add / Remove Deselected
Add / Remove Range
To
AUTHOR

Downloading searches to your device

You can also download your search results directly to your device. After searching, tick the checkbox next to the titles you wish to download. If you want to download all results that appear in your search, you can click the Download button without checking any boxes, and it will automatically select the whole page of articles. Once you're happy with your selection, click **'Download'**:



This will take you to the Printing Report page, where you can tailor the download to your specific requirements. You can either Download the **hitlist**, which shows the basic bibliographic information such as the title, author, date and source, or the **full records**, which include a more detailed report of each record's abstract information.

To download the hitlist, select **'Print Hitlist to PDF'**. This will automatically download the PDF to your device, and the document will save in the layout demonstrated here:

Catalogue - *Print Hitlist to PDF

Title	Author	Source	Vol/Page	Year	Type
A systematic meta - thematic synthesis to examine the views and experiences of women following water immersion during labour and waterbirth	Feeley C, Cooper M, Burns E	Journal of Advanced Nursing	vol 77, no 7, July 2021, pp 2942-2956	2021	Systematic review, Meta synthesis
Developing and evaluating an online learning tool to improve midwives' accuracy of visual estimation of blood loss during waterbirth: an experimental study	Burns E, Hunter L, Rodd Z, et al	Midwifery	vol 68, January 2019, pp 65-73	2019	Original research
Labour and birth	Ross-Davie M, Brodrick A, Randall W, et al	Best Practice & Research: Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology	vol 73, June 2021, pp 91-103	2021	Original research

Additionally, you can save this report as a CSV file in excel by clicking **'Export Hitlist to CSV'** instead.

To download the full records, select **'Print Full Record(s) to PDF'** instead. Once again, this will automatically download a PDF of your search to your device and will appear in this format:

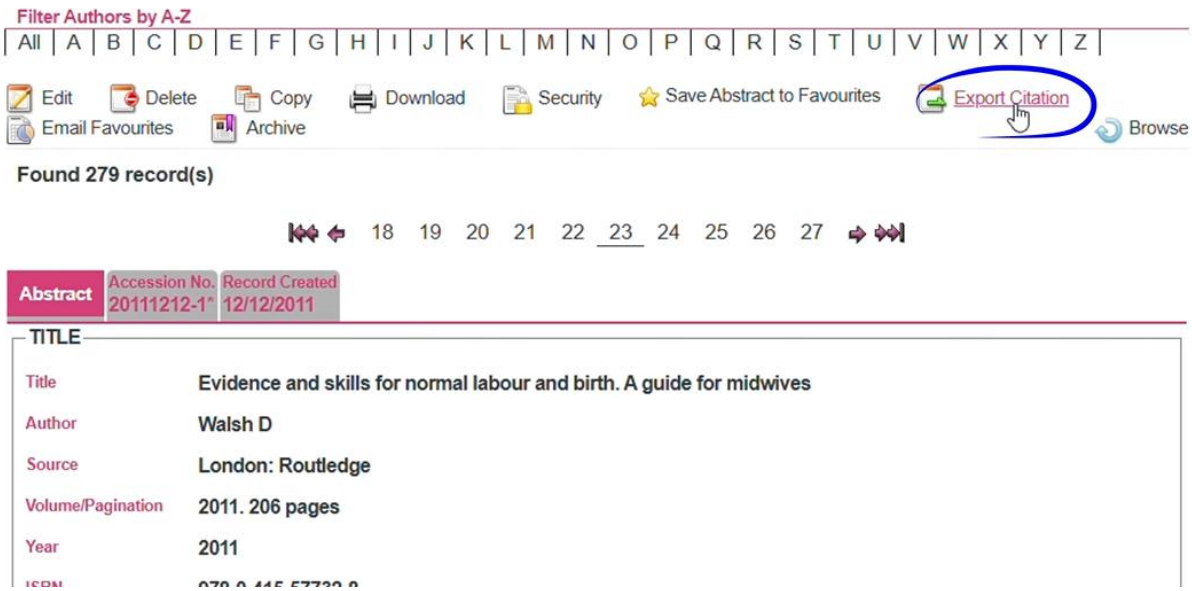


Catalogue - *Print Full Record(s) to PDF

Record Number	262601
Format	Journal article
Original Date/Time Created	19/10/2018 16:17:48
Originally Created By	Kirsten-Rose Brooks/MIDIRS
Import File No	6
Accession No/Date	10/19/2018- 20181019-27
Note ID	2527CE
Old Accession No.	20181019-27
Accession No.	20181019-27
Record Created	19/10/2018
Article Copyright	No
Abstract	Objective : the principal objective was to test the effectiveness of an online learning tool to improve midwives' accuracy of blood loss estimations in a birthing pool environment. The secondary objective was to assess the acceptability of the online learning tool to the midwives using it. Design : a one group pre-test post-test experiment with immediate and six weeks follow-up to test ability together with an online questionnaire to assess perceived usefulness of an online learning tool. Setting : a large NHS maternity hospital comprising an acute care obstetric unit, a small district unit labour ward, one alongside midwifery-led unit and three freestanding midwifery-led units. Participants : volunteer NHS employed midwives who had experience in caring for women labouring and giving birth in water (n=24). Intervention : an online learning tool comprising six randomly ordered short video simulations of blood loss in a birthing pool in real time, and a tutorial giving verbal and pictorial guidance on making accurate blood loss estimations in water was developed then piloted. Midwives' accuracy scores for estimating blood loss in each of the videos were calculated at three timepoints; pre and immediately post the learning component, and six weeks later. The estimated blood loss volume was subtracted from the actual blood loss volume, to give the difference between estimated and real blood loss in millilitres(ml) which was then converted to percentage difference to standardise comparison across the six volumes. The differences between pre- and post-learning for each of the six blood volumes was analysed using a repeated measures ANOVA. Statistical significance was set at p<0.05. An online questionnaire incorporated questions using Likert scales to gauge confidence and competence and free text. Free text responses were analysed using a modified form of inductive content analysis. Findings : 22 midwives completed the online learning and immediate post-test, 14 completed a post-test after six weeks, and 15 responded to the online questionnaire. Pre-test results showed under-estimation of all blood loss volumes and particularly for the two largest volumes (1,000 and 1,100 ml). Across all volumes, accuracy of estimation was significantly improved at post-test 1. Accuracy diminished slightly, but overall improvement remained, at post-test 2. Participants rated the online tool positively and made suggestions for refining it. Key conclusions and implications for practice : This is the first study measuring the accuracy of midwives' blood loss estimations in a birthing pool using

Citing articles for a bibliography

It's important to always use the correct information when referencing articles to avoid plagiarism and ensure that you can find your research again. We've made it easy to export your search results to use in a bibliography or reference list. To do so, select **'Export Citation'** at the top of the article description:



Then, choose the reference management software you are using from the dropdown list and press **'Download'**.

Using Search Packs

What are Search Packs?

Search Packs are pre-prepared database searches created by our librarians to make finding articles on specific topics easy. They are a great way to discover new areas of research and are particularly useful for essay writing, as they filter articles by topic. You can use Search Packs to find articles within the database, or download a PDF of articles to your device. Most articles added to the database are assigned to a Search Pack based on their topic.

Finding Search Packs

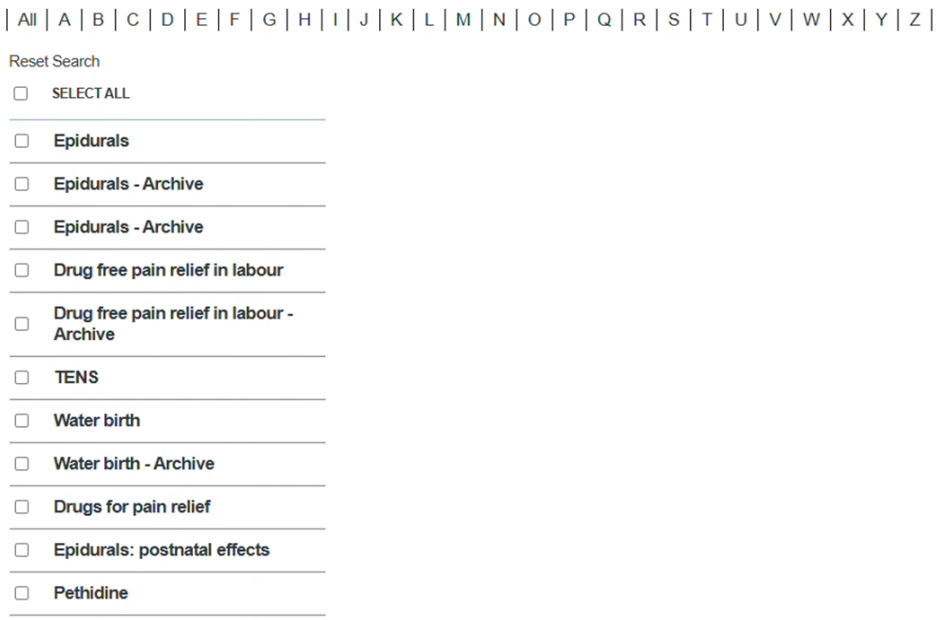
To use Search Packs within the database, you must first locate the specific pack you want. You can do this in two ways.

Method 1 – Finding Search Packs on the database:

You can search for a topic within the 'Search Packs' tab by entering a term or phrase into the search box and ensuring that **'Subject'** and **'Keyword'** or **'Phrase'** are selected (depending on if you are searching for a single word or a phrase). Press 'Search' and a list of all Search Packs covering that subject will appear. Make sure you scroll down to view them.



For example, if you were looking for a search pack containing articles about pain relief, type this into the search box and then scroll down. All related Search Packs will appear:



Click on the Pack you are interested in and all the articles within it will appear in a list.

Method 2 – Finding Search Packs using Search Pack codes:

An alternative way to find a Search Pack is to use our Search Pack brochure, which contains all the Search Packs that we have. You can view the brochure by clicking this link within the **Search Packs** tab:



This brochure can also be found on our website, on the **Search Packs** page.

We have over 550 different Search Packs covering a wide range of topics in maternity care, so you're sure to find a relevant Pack for your research. The brochure is interactive, so you can click on the contents list to take you directly to the Packs within that topic.

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Once you have located the specific pack that you want, you need to make a note of its code, which is what you will use to search the database with. The codes are located to the left of each Search Pack and are made up of a series of letters and numbers. For example, if you wanted to research **'Neurodiversity in midwifery'**, you can see here that its code is **M101:**

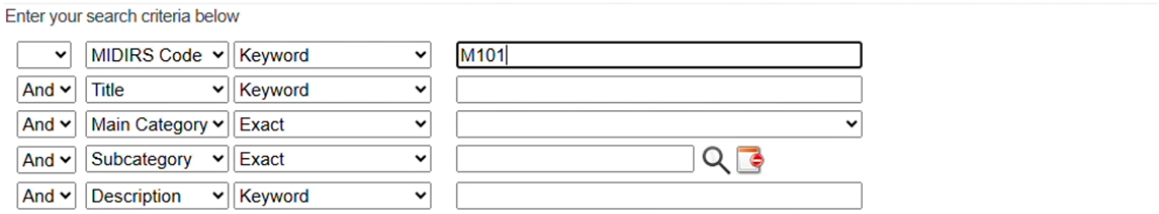
Professional issues

M16	Men in midwifery
M2	Autonomy and accountability
M31	Extended role of the midwife
M33	Record keeping
M57	Maternity support workers and health care assistants
M63	Childfree midwives / midwives who are mothers
M64	Communication / relations with other health professionals
M69	Public health and the midwife
M7	History and development of midwifery
M80	Liability insurance for midwives
M9	Role and status of midwives
M82	Clinical negligence
M83	Professional organisations
M96	Institutional racism
M98	Psychological safety
M100	Specialist midwives
M101	Neurodiversity in midwifery
M102	Artificial intelligence in midwifery and obstetrics
M104	Royal College of Midwives

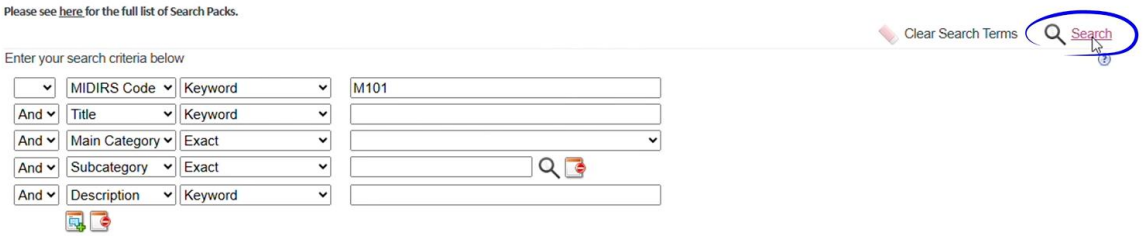
Now that we have this code, we can navigate to the database to begin our search.

Conducting a database search using Search Pack codes

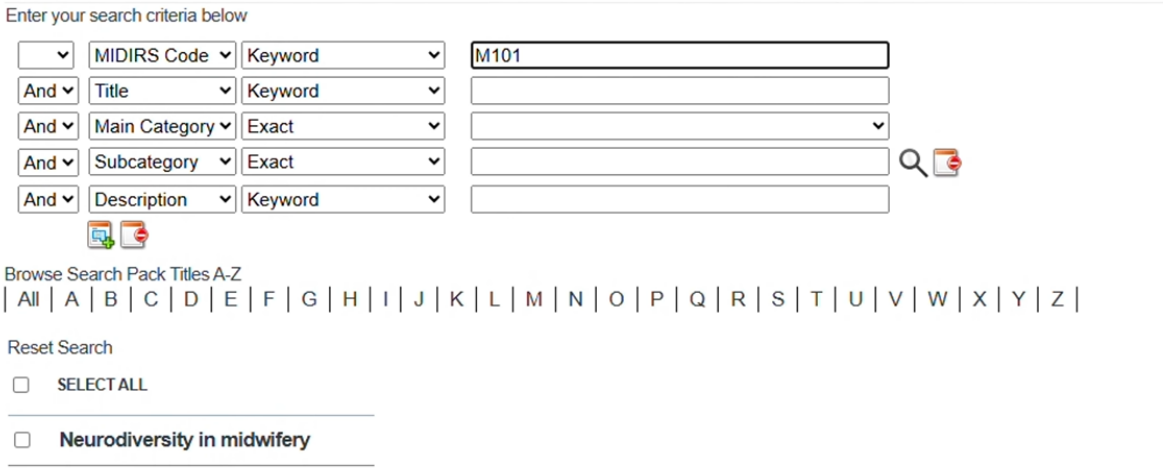
To use this code, first ensure you're on the **'Search Packs'** tab within the database. In the first line, where it says **'MIDIRS Code'**, enter your desired code into the box. Here, I am going to type in M101, the code that we identified from the brochure:



Once you're happy with your search selections, click the **'Search'** button. Make sure that you click the correct search button, and not the one within the filtering, as this will return incorrect results. This is the **correct** search button:



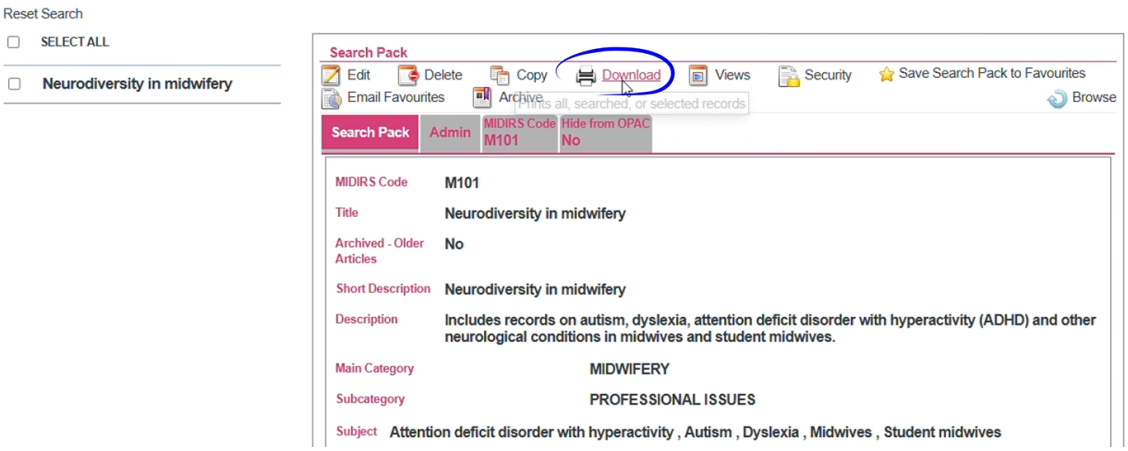
Scroll down and you should see the title of the Search Pack, which confirms that you have used the correct code:



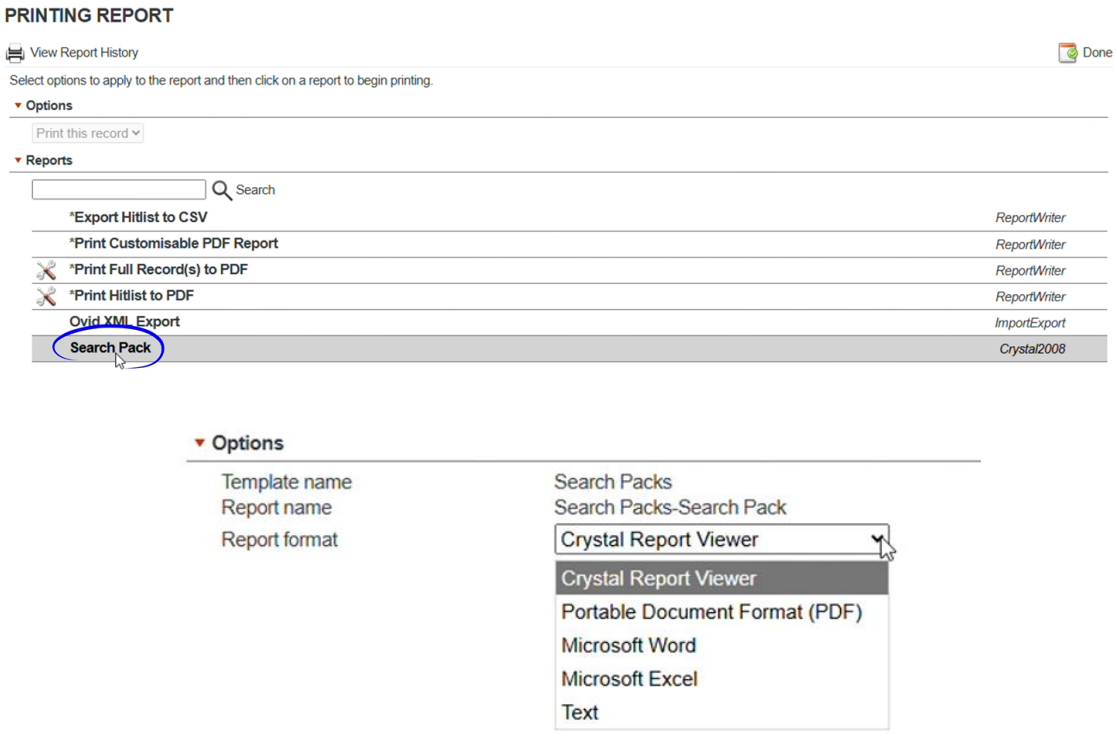
Click on this and the Search Pack details, as well as a full list of articles, will appear. To see more information about any of the articles in the list, click to select it and then scroll down past the list of articles, where you will see the bibliographic information and access information, like you would with any search.

Downloading a Search Pack

To download a Search Pack to your device, click on the 'Download' button at the top of the Pack:



Then, in the Printing Report Page, select 'Search Pack' and then the format you would like your document in from the dropdown menu:



We recommend using the PDF format for best results. Finally, click 'Download' and the Search Pack will save to your device. The document will contain all articles within the Search

Pack, including the bibliographic information, abstract and – where available – a URL link to read the full text.

Please be aware that downloading to your device will mean that this document becomes a static resource and doesn't get updated with any new articles added to the Search Pack. To view the latest version of a Search Pack, simply re-search using the same code at the time you want to access it.

The 'Recently Added' tab

You can use the 'Recently Added' tab to view all items added to the database within the last month. Please note that this material differs from the Latest Research, which indicates the most recent publications in the field; the Recently Added tab isn't necessarily research that has come out most recently.

Within the tab, you can follow the steps we have outlined in this tutorial to download the records to your computer, save to your favourites, or export citations.

FAQs and further help

We hope that this tutorial will help you get the most out of the database and feel confident using its various functions. For more information and to look at our **Frequently Asked Questions** about the database, head to the MIC database tab on our website. If you have any further questions, or are encountering problems with using the database, please contact us! We have a customer service email address, phone number, and an interactive chat box on our website, and the team will be very happy to support you:



midirs.helpdesk@rcm.org.uk



03003 030444



Located in the bottom right corner of our website

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