4 – Subject specific databases

When it comes to doing your search for your systematic review you’ll be doing it on the Abstracting and Indexing (A&I) databases (sometimes called academic literature databases, or bibliographic databases) which are resources you can use to find out about the contents of journals for the most part, so mostly tell you about articles but these databases may also tell you about book chapters or theses for example.

They are publisher independent so they tell you about the contents of journals, often in a particular subject area, quite a broad subject area, but from journals not just restricted to one publisher. You can find out about the ones that the University makes available to you from our, from The Library’s, databases pages and the link at the top of this slide [www.ed.ac.uk/is/databases-subjects] that will take you to a page which lists mostly Schools or divisions within Schools and on that you will see a mention of “Clinical Psychology”, for example.

You can also get to that page from MyEd. Under the Studies tab, or area, there is a “Library” column or links which are headed “Library”, and the link which is “Search and access library resources” will take you to a channel, or a bit of MyEd, within which there is a search box for DiscoverEd but where there are also three links one of which is “Databases by subject” and that will take you to this page which is on the slide and from which you can pick Clinical Psychology.

You may want to pause this recording and go to the page and have a look down it now.

The A&I databases, or literature databases, are certainly what you would be expected to use in a systematic review but you may choose to do your initial searching on things you are happy with so things you have used before and you know what you’re doing and you understand them. DiscoverEd perhaps or Google Scholar or whatever resources you would usually use to find literature on a topic. That can be helpful. It can give you an idea of what is out there on the topic you hope to review, might give you some confidence that your research question is one you can follow through.

But the databases you would be expected to use for your systematic review will be ones like those listed on the Clinical Psychology databases page.

As well as databases listed by subject there are also a few lists on our webpages, on our databases pages, which are about the kind of thing, or the format, of what it is you may want to find out about and “Theses” is one of those.

The Theses databases page lists a few resources are dedicated to finding out about theses. One of them is the Edinburgh Research Archive, ERA, which we mentioned earlier on. That would give you a link to where you can look for some previous DClins to read.

On these lists there is the title, which is the link that takes you through to the resource itself but there is also the a descript which you can use to decide if a part
database might be useful to you, is one you want to use. In the Clinical Psychology
database page the list has three entries which have an extra heading above them.
The screenshot on the slide is for psycINFO where it says “psycINFO is a key
resource”. The three which are so labelled are psycINFO, EMBASE and MEDLINE.
Those three are certainly three you would probably want to include in your
systematic review search. Definitely psycINFO and MEDLINE.

PsycINFO, as it sounds, is a database that tells you about the contents of journals
published in psychology and psychiatry fields.

MEDLINE is clinical medicine and the free interface to MEDLINE is called
PubMed. If you have used PubMed you’ve used MEDLINE and if you prefer
PubMed, if you’re happy with it, you may want to use it but I would say that you
don’t need to use both. If you are using PubMed you don’t need to use MEDLINE
through another route and if you choose to use the MEDLINE we link to, then you
don’t need to use PubMed as well.

EMBASE is also clinical medicine. It’s bit smaller but may have coverage of more
European journals than MEDLINE does and the way it talks about psychology and
psychiatry subjects is quite good.

The advantage to these three, as we’ll see in the next slide, is that they are all
through the same interface so you can search psycINFO, MEDLINE and EMBASE
all at the same time through an interface called “Ovid”. So there are a number of
different suppliers or intermediary sites where we buy access to these resources
and Ovid is one of those and it just so happens that these three key resources,
psycINFO, EMBASE and MEDLINE are all searchable for you, through that.

If your population or perhaps the professionals involved, if they are not just clinically
based, if they are community based or out in the community, there may be other A&I
databases it is worth you having a look at. Some of those listed here are ASSIA and
Sociological Abstracts, the latter includes Social Services Abstracts and ERIC which
is for education and teaching but is also good on the wellbeing of the child. Anything
which has got training or school based intervention but also is just about children’s
health, it may be worth using ERIC as well.

Part of your scoping would be to decide not just your topic and what your search
terms are going to be but also to decide what you are going to search. Part of your
decision making process would be having a go at what you think looks useful and
then deciding on those databases which are best for you and which you are going to
choose to use.