

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Phrase truncation in PubMed searches

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See end of article for author's affiliation.

Comment on Duffy S, de Kock S, Misso K, Noake C, Ross J, Stirk L. Supplementary searches of PubMed to improve currency of MEDLINE and MEDLINE In-Process searches via Ovid. *J Med Libr Assoc.* 2016 Oct;104(4):309-12. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3163/1536-5050.104.4.011>.

To the editor, in their "Methods" section, the authors of "Supplementary Searches of PubMed to Improve Currency of MEDLINE and MEDLINE In-Process Searches via Ovid" state that "PubMed does not accept truncation when phrase searching, so we had to use numerous phrases to capture as many variations as possible."

In fact, if an asterisk is added to the end of a phrase, truncation is performed. No double quotes are required around the phrase, as the asterisk acts as a phrase marker as well as truncation. The PubMed searches in the supplementary material duplicate the search string used in the article. Sets 3

and 9 utilize the phrase truncation feature (figure 1). The number of results is the same for the terms using this feature as it is for each individual variation of the term using a Boolean "OR."

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Figure 1 Sample truncation in PubMed

#10	Add	Search (#5 OR #6)	92815	}
#9	Add	Search prostate cancer*[tiab]	92815	
#8	Add	Search "prostate cancerous"[tiab] Schema: all	0	}
#7	Add	Search "prostate cancerous"[tiab]	0	
#6	Add	Search "prostate cancers"[tiab]	5002	}
#5	Add	Search "prostate cancer"[tiab]	91372	
#4	Add	Search (#1 OR #2)	6800	}
#3	Add	Search prostate carcinoma*[tiab]	6800	
#2	Add	Search "prostate carcinomas"[tiab]	974	}
#1	Add	Search "prostate carcinoma"[tiab]	6127	



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