

## Search Tips for EBSCO CINAHL Plus Full-text

**Demo Example:** You are interested in finding information on the role of nurse practitioners in rural, remote or northern regions.

### **1. Identify concepts present in your topic and identify key words related to each.**

Concept 1 (in this case, the population of interest): nurse practitioners

Concept 2 (in this case, geographic location): rural, remote, northern/arctic regions

### **2. Enter each concept into separate *Find* box, using the combining word OR to combine related concepts. Link different concepts using AND.**

The screenshot shows the EBSCO CINAHL Plus Full-text search interface. The search bar contains the text 'nurse practitioner\*' and a dropdown menu with the text 'rural or remote or northern or arctic'. Below this, there are two more search boxes, each with a dropdown menu containing the word 'and'. The interface also includes a 'Search' button, a 'Clear' button, and a 'Choose Databases' link. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Keyword', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Headings', 'Evidence-Based Care Sheets', and 'More'. The bottom navigation bar includes links for 'Advanced Search', 'Visual Search', 'Search History/Alerts', and 'Preferences'.

If you are not sure whether a subject should be phrased in the singular or plural, use the truncation symbol (in EBSCO it is the asterisk: \*), e.g. nurse practitioner\*. A truncation symbol is used when you wish to search for variations in the ending of a word, e.g. *nurs\** will retrieve: *nurse*, *nurses*, *nursed*, *nursing*, etc.

Omit extraneous words, e.g. in this case, the searcher simply enters 'rural or remote or northern or arctic' instead of 'rural regions or remote regions or northern regions or arctic regions'. This is to ensure that variant terms like 'rural areas, remote locations, northern territories, etc' will be retrieved.

### 3. Click on *Search Options* to refine your search.

The screenshot shows a search results interface. At the top, there are search filters and a navigation bar with links: 'Advanced Search', 'Visual Search', 'Search History/Alerts', and 'Preferences'. Below this, a 'Narrow Results by' sidebar on the left lists 'Source Types' with options like 'All Results', 'Periodicals', 'Books/Monographs', and 'Dissertations'. The main results area shows 'All Results: 1-10 of 507' and a list of results, with the first result being 'Eight into one: national registration by 2010.' by Carrigan C. On the right, a 'Limit your results' panel contains checkboxes for 'References Available' and 'Abstract Available', an 'Update Results' button, and a link to '< Search Options' which is circled in red.

Some of the more commonly used limits include:

- Limiting to **Peer Review**, i.e. articles published in peer-reviewed journals.
- Limiting to **Research**
- Limiting by **Publication Year**
- Limiting by **Language**
- Limiting to **Age Group**
- Limiting to **Publication Type**
- Limiting to **Evidence-Based Practice**, i.e. publications like systematic reviews/meta analyses, evidence reports and article commentaries in which critical appraisal of the literature takes place.

After selecting appropriate limits (e.g. **Publication Year**, **Peer Reviewed**) from the **Search Options** panel, click on **Search**.

The screenshot shows the 'Search Options' panel. At the top right, there are 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons, with 'Search' circled in red. The panel is divided into sections. The 'Search modes' section has radio buttons for 'Boolean/Phrase' (selected), 'Find all my search terms', and 'Find any of my search terms'. The 'Limit your results' section contains several options: 'References Available' (checkbox), 'Publication Year from' (2000 to 2008, circled in red), 'Author' (text input), 'Peer Reviewed' (checkbox, checked, circled in red), 'Exclude Pre-CINAHL' (checkbox), 'Exclude MEDLINE records' (checkbox), 'Abstract Available' (checkbox), 'Published Date from' (Month/Year dropdowns), 'Publication' (text input), 'Research Article' (checkbox), 'CE Module' (checkbox), and 'Evidence-Based Practice' (checkbox).

#### 4. Adding additional terms to your search.

If you wish to add an additional term to a search you have already done, simply add these to the third search box. If you have more than three separate concepts in your search, click on **Add Row** to add an additional search box.

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Keyword', 'Publications', 'CINAHL Headings', 'Evidence-Based Care Sheets', and 'More'. Below these, there's a search bar with the text 'Searching: CINAHL Plus with Full Text'. To the right of the search bar are buttons for 'Sign In to My EBSCOhost', 'Folder', and 'New Features'. Below the search bar, there's a section for 'Suggest Subject Terms'. The main search area has three rows of input fields. The first row contains 'nurse practitioner\*' in the first field and 'Select a Field (optional)' in the second. The second row contains 'and' in the first field, 'rural or remote or northern or arctic' in the second, and 'Select a Field (optional)' in the third. The third row contains 'and' in the first field, 'canada' in the second, and 'Select a Field (optional)' in the third. To the right of the third row is a button labeled 'Add Row'. Below the search area are links for 'Advanced Search', 'Visual Search', 'Search History/Alerts', and 'Preferences'.

If you wish to access an earlier step in your search, click on **Search History/Alerts** to view all searches performed earlier in your session.

This screenshot is identical to the previous one, but the 'Search History/Alerts' link at the bottom of the search area is circled.

The earlier steps of your search will be displayed, and you click on **View Results** or **Revise Search** as appropriate for that particular set of references..

Search History/Alerts					
<a href="#">Print Search History</a>   <a href="#">Retrieve Searches</a>   <a href="#">Retrieve Alerts</a>   <a href="#">Save Searches / Alerts</a>   <a href="#">Clear Search History</a>					
Combine searches with: <span>and</span> <a href="#">Add</a>					
Add to Search	Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options	Actions	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/>	S4	nurse practitioner* and ( rural or remote or northern or arctic ) and canada	Limiters - Publication Year from: 2000-2008; Peer Reviewed; Language: English Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	<a href="#">View Results</a> (9) <a href="#">Revise Search</a> <a href="#">View Details</a>	<a href="#">X</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	S3	nurse practitioner* and ( rural or remote or northern or arctic )	Limiters - Publication Year from: 2000-2008; Peer Reviewed; Language: English Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	<a href="#">View Results</a> (229) <a href="#">Revise Search</a> <a href="#">View Details</a>	<a href="#">X</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2	nurse practitioner* and ( rural or remote or northern or arctic )	Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	<a href="#">View Results</a> (507) <a href="#">Revise Search</a> <a href="#">View Details</a>	<a href="#">X</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	S1	nurse practitioner* and ( rural or remote or northern )	Search modes - Boolean/Phrase	<a href="#">View Results</a> (506) <a href="#">Revise Search</a> <a href="#">View Details</a>	<a href="#">X</a>

You can also combine different sets in the **Search History**. You can type the **Search ID #** for the applicable sets into the **Find** box

Searching: CINAHL Plus with Full Text | Choose Databases >

☐ Suggest Subject Terms

(MH "Canada+") in Select a Field (optional) Search Clear

and s1 in Select a Field (optional)

and in Select a Field (optional) Add Row

Advanced Search | Visual Search | Search History/Alerts | Preferences >

**Search History/Alerts**

[Print Search History](#) | [Retrieve Searches](#) | [Retrieve Alerts](#) | [Save Searches / Alerts](#) | [Clear Search History](#)

Combine searches with: and Add

Add to Search	Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2	(MH "Canada+")	Search modes - Boolean/Phrase
<input type="checkbox"/>	S1	nurse practitioner* and ( rural or remote or northern or arctic )	Search modes - Boolean/Phrase

**OR**, you can select the **Search ID#** from the **Add to Search** column (as shown below) and after selecting the appropriate combining word from the **Combine searches with** menu, click on the **Add** button to add **Search ID#** to the **Find** box and then click on **Search**.

Searching: CINAHL Plus with Full Text | Choose Databases >

☐ Suggest Subject Terms

(MH "Canada+") in Select a Field (optional) Search Clear ?

and in Select a Field (optional)

and in Select a Field (optional) Add Row

Advanced Search | Visual Search | Search History/Alerts | Preferences >

**Search History/Alerts**

[Print Search History](#) | [Retrieve Searches](#) | [Retrieve Alerts](#) | [Save Searches / Alerts](#) | [Clear Search History](#)

Combine searches with: and Add

Add to Search	Search ID#	Search Terms	Search Options
<input type="checkbox"/>	S2	(MH "Canada+")	Search modes - Boolean/Phrase
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	S1	nurse practitioner* and ( rural or remote or northern or arctic )	Search modes - Boolean/Phrase

## 5. Identifying CINAHL Headings to represent your search concepts

CINAHL records are indexed with controlled vocabulary terms called CINAHL headings. CINAHL headings will assist you in performing a comprehensive search.

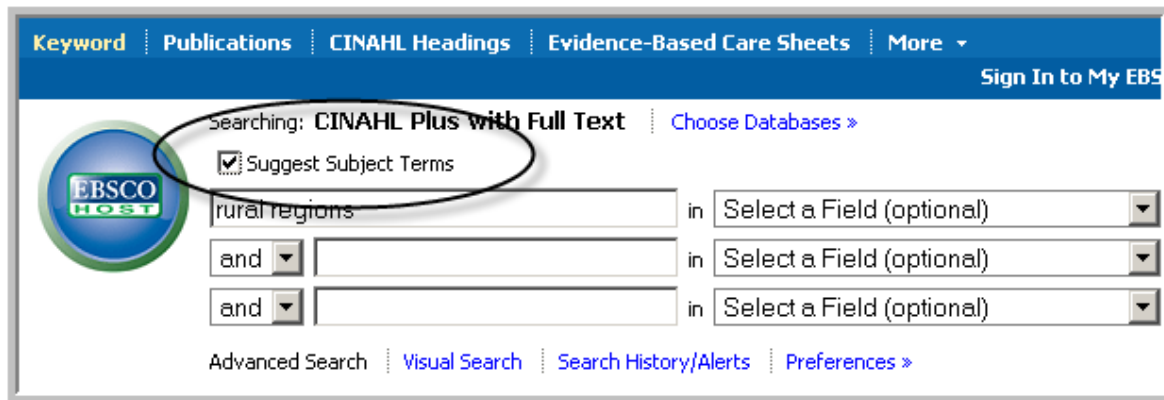
You can identify relevant CINAHL headings by looking at the **Major/Minor Subjects** section of the complete record for any reference that looks highly relevant. (You can access the complete record for a reference by clicking on the title link for the record.)

The screenshot shows a CINAHL record for a journal article. The record is displayed in a web browser window with a toolbar at the top containing icons for Citation, PDF Full Text, Print, Email, Save, and other functions. The record details are as follows:

<b>Title:</b>	Introducing a nurse practitioner: experiences in a rural Alberta family practice clinic.
<b>Author(s):</b>	<a href="#">Reay T</a> ; <a href="#">Patterson EM</a> ; <a href="#">Halma L</a> ; <a href="#">Steed WB</a>
<b>Affiliation:</b>	Assistant Professor, School of Business, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alta, <a href="mailto:trish.reay@ualberta.ca">trish.reay@ualberta.ca</a>
<b>Source:</b>	<a href="#">Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine</a> (CAN J <i>RURAL MED</i> ), 2006 Spring; 11(2): 101-7 (24 ref)
<b>Publication Type:</b>	journal article - research, tables/charts
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Major Subjects:</b>	<a href="#">Family Practice</a> <a href="#">Nurse Practitioners</a> <a href="#">Rural Health Services</a> -- <a href="#">Administration</a>
<b>Minor Subjects:</b>	<a href="#">Alberta</a> ; <a href="#">Cost Benefit Analysis</a> ; <a href="#">Funding Source</a> ; <a href="#">Interviews</a> ; <a href="#">Qualitative Studies</a>
<b>Abstract:</b>	Objective: To report on the experiences of introducing a <i>nurse practitioner</i> (NP) into a <i>rural</i> physicians' clinic in Taber, Alberta. Design: Case study, grounded theory qualitative approach. Setting: A <i>rural</i> community-based family practice in Taber, Alberta.

If there are any relevant terms listed among the **Major/Minor Subjects** that would not have been retrieved with the keywords you originally used, you can incorporate these terms into your search.

Another way of identifying CINAHL headings is to enter a single term, select the **Suggest Subject Terms**, and click on **Search** to be provided with a list of suggested terms



Keyword | Publications | CINAHL Headings | Evidence-Based Care Sheets | More ▾

Sign In to My EBSCO

Searching: CINAHL Plus with Full Text | [Choose Databases »](#)

☒ Suggest Subject Terms

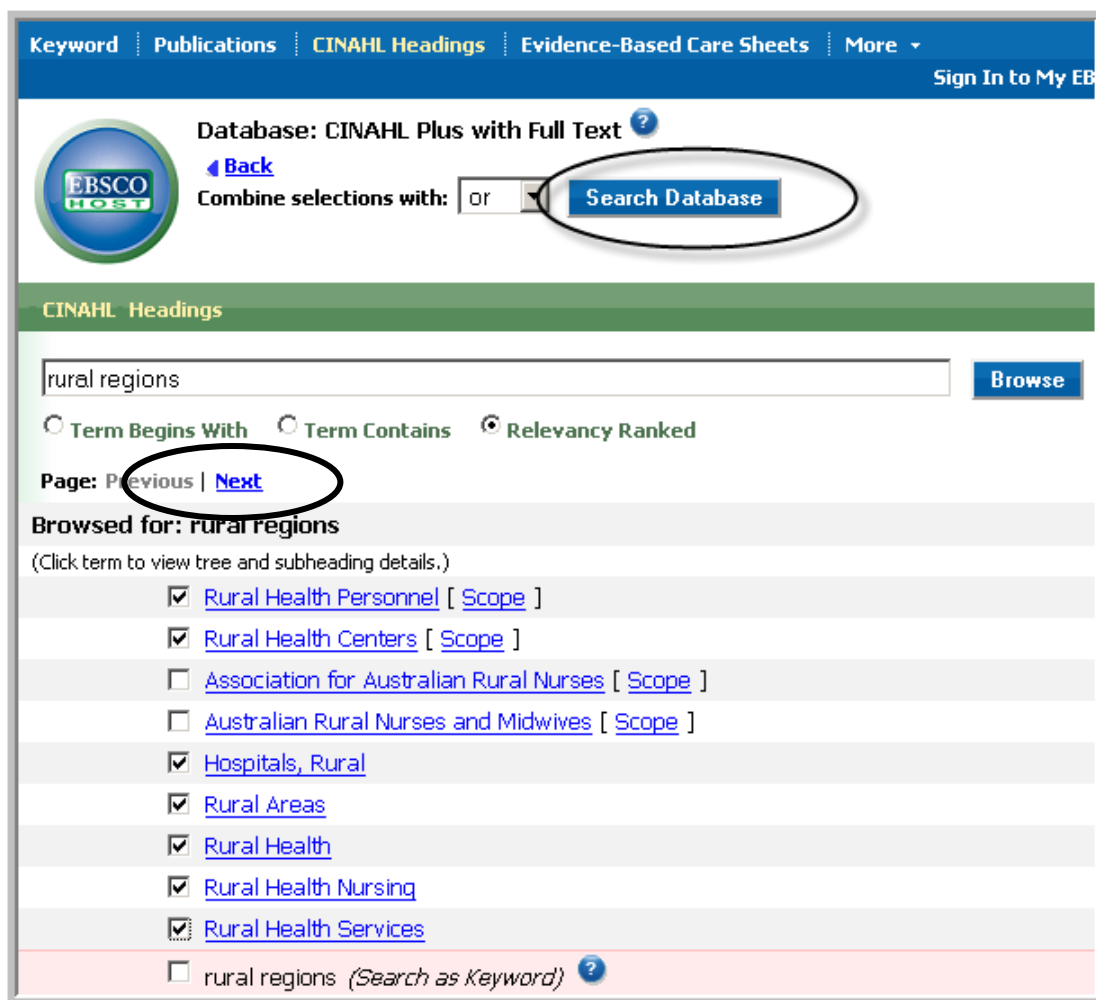
rural regions in [Select a Field \(optional\)](#)

and [Select a Field \(optional\)](#)

and [Select a Field \(optional\)](#)

[Advanced Search](#) | [Visual Search](#) | [Search History/Alerts](#) | [Preferences »](#)

After clicking on **Search**, you will be taken to a list of suggested subject headings from which you can choose the most relevant terms. Browse the list and select the most appropriate subject heading(s) and then click on **Search Database**.



Keyword | Publications | CINAHL Headings | Evidence-Based Care Sheets | More ▾

Sign In to My EBSCO

Database: CINAHL Plus with Full Text ?

[Back](#)

Combine selections with: [or](#) [Search Database](#)

CINAHL Headings

rural regions [Browse](#)

☐ Term Begins With ☐ Term Contains ☒ Relevancy Ranked

Page: [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Browsed for: rural regions

(Click term to view tree and subheading details.)

- ☒ [Rural Health Personnel](#) [ [Scope](#) ]
- ☒ [Rural Health Centers](#) [ [Scope](#) ]
- ☐ [Association for Australian Rural Nurses](#) [ [Scope](#) ]
- ☐ [Australian Rural Nurses and Midwives](#) [ [Scope](#) ]
- ☒ [Hospitals, Rural](#)
- ☒ [Rural Areas](#)
- ☒ [Rural Health](#)
- ☒ [Rural Health Nursing](#)
- ☒ [Rural Health Services](#)
- ☐ rural regions (Search as Keyword) ?

You will notice that there is also an option at the bottom of the screen allowing you to **Search as Keyword**. By selecting this, you will search for any references containing the term in the title or abstract of the article. You can select this in addition to, or instead of, selecting any of the suggested subject headings.

Use **Search as Keyword** if:

- You do not get suitable suggestions of subject headings for the term you entered.
- You are not retrieving much on your topic using the suggested subject headings.
- You must ensure that you retrieve *everything* on your topic.

Do not use **Search as Keyword** if:

- You are finding enough on your topic using the suggested subject headings.
- The keyword has multiple meanings and might result in a high retrieval of irrelevant items, e.g. searching *aged* as a keyword will retrieve articles indexed with the subject heading *Aged* (referring to those 65 and older) but will also retrieve any record where the word 'aged' is used in the title or abstract in a context such as the following: 'A study of children *aged* 5-10...' Searching as keyword in this case should be avoided if you only want to retrieve items that pertain to those 65 and older.

When the search is complete, you can add additional terms either by entering them in the additional search boxes.

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: **Keyword**, **Publications**, **CINAHL Headings**, **Evidence-Based Care Sheets**, and **More**. On the right, there are links for **Sign In to My EBSCOhost** and **Folder**. The main search area has a header that says "Searching: **CINAHL Plus with Full Text**" and a link for **Choose Databases >**. Below this, there is a checkbox for **Suggest Subject Terms**. A list of suggested subject headings is displayed: (MH "Rural Health Personnel") or (MH "Rural Health Centers") or (MH "Hospitals, Rural") or (MH "Rural Areas") or (MH "Rural Health") or (MH "Rural Health Nursing") or (MH "Rural Health Services"). To the right of this list are **Search** and **Clear** buttons. Below the suggestions, there is a search box containing the text "nurse practitioner\*", which is circled in red. To the left of the search box are dropdown menus for "and" and "in". To the right of the search box is a dropdown menu labeled "Select a Field (optional)". Below the search box, there is another "and" dropdown menu and another "Select a Field (optional)" dropdown menu. At the bottom right, there is a link for **Add Row**. At the bottom of the interface, there are links for **Advanced Search**, **Visual Search**, **Search History/Alerts**, and **Preferences >**.

## 6. More features available using *Suggest Subject Terms*

The screenshot shows the CINAHL Headings interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a 'Browse' button. Below the search bar, there are three radio buttons: 'Term Begins With', 'Term Contains', and 'Relevancy Ranked'. The 'Relevancy Ranked' button is selected. Below the radio buttons, there is a 'Page: Previous | Next' link. The main section is titled 'Browsed for: nurse practitioners' and includes a note '(Click term to view tree and subheading details.)'. There are three columns: a list of terms, an 'Explode' column, and a 'Major Concept' column. The terms listed are: 'Nurse Practitioners [ Scope ]', 'Emergency Nurse Practitioners [ Scope ]', 'Acute Care Nurse Practitioners', 'American Academy of Nurse Practitioners [ Scope ]', and 'American College of Nurse Practitioners'. The 'Explode' column has checkboxes next to the first two terms. The 'Major Concept' column has checkboxes next to all terms. The 'Scope' link in the first term is circled.

	Explode ?	Major Concept ?
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Nurse Practitioners</a> [ <a href="#">Scope</a> ]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Emergency Nurse Practitioners</a> [ <a href="#">Scope</a> ]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Acute Care Nurse Practitioners</a>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">American Academy of Nurse Practitioners</a> [ <a href="#">Scope</a> ]		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">American College of Nurse Practitioners</a>		<input type="checkbox"/>

In the screen above, you will notice that there are two columns that appear to the right of each term listed. (In this case, these are the terms suggested when you enter browse for 'nurse practitioners'.) One column is labeled **Explode** and the other **Major Concept**. You will also notice that there is a link labeled **Scope** directly to the right of most headings.

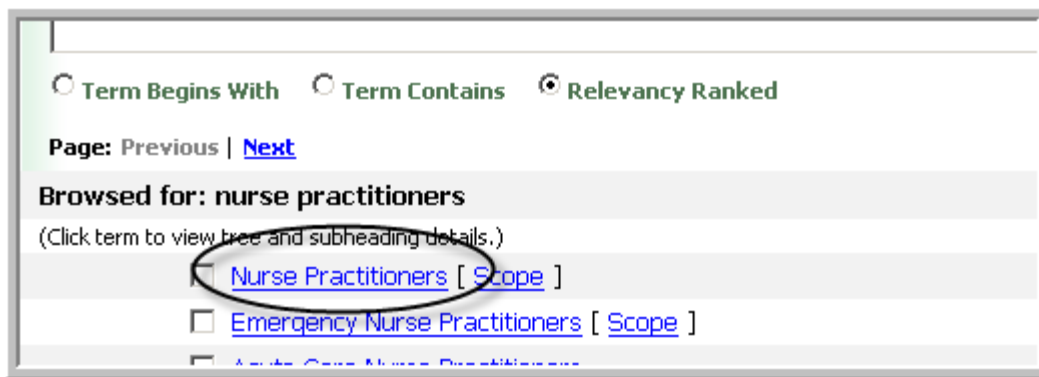
In the **Explode** column, a selection box appears for some terms, but not for all. It will appear only for those terms where the term listed -- in this case 'Nurse Practitioners' -- has narrower terms associated with it. By selecting **Explode**, you will automatically be searching 'Nurse Practitioners' as well as the narrower terms associated with it. (More about narrower terms below.)

A selection box appears for all terms in the **Major Concept** column. By selecting **Major Concept**, you will be limiting your search of the selected term to those articles where the topic is a primary focus of discussion and eliminate any references where the topic is discussed but only in a secondary manner. It is best not to limit a search to **Major Concept** unless you know there will be a lot of information on your topic. Sometimes you will not know how much information there is on your topic until after you do an initial search.

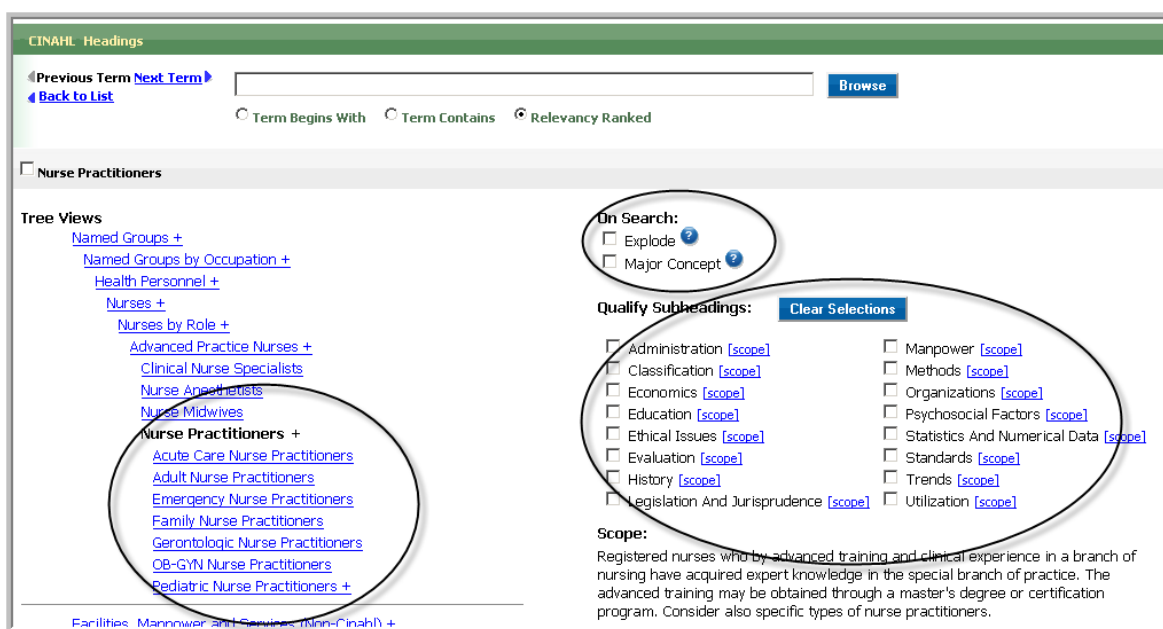
By clicking on the **Scope** link, you can view a brief definition of the term. This is useful to clarify whether a term is appropriate if you aren't entirely familiar with it.

By clicking on the heading link, you can view the information screen for a specific term. This is useful for identifying broader and narrower terms as well as for adding applicable subheadings to the term.





After clicking on the heading link, you will see the following screen:



Indented under **Nurse Practitioners** in the **Tree Views** are the narrower terms associated with **Nurse Practitioners**. When you select **Explode**, all these terms will be included automatically in your search.

On the right hand side of the screen is the **Qualify Subheadings** section where you can select as many sub-headings as are relevant. This will limit your search to those articles where only a specific aspect of the topic is discussed, e.g. if you selected the subheading 'Education', you would retrieve articles that discuss educational issues related to nurse practitioners such as what training they require, what teaching methods are using in educating nurse practitioners, etc. You do not need to select sub-headings if none are applicable or if all of them interest you. The default is to include all sub-headings unless you select specific ones.

You will also notice that there is the option to select **Explode** and **Major Concept** on this screen. The **Scope** note also appears on this screen.

## **7. What to do when you retrieve too much information on your topic**

To narrow a search with high retrieval consider doing the following:

- Click on **Search Options** and use limits such as **Publication Year**, **Peer Review** and **Language**, etc.
- Add additional terms to your search
  - e.g. in our demo example, adding 'Canada' to the search will reduce the number of references retrieved.
- Use **Suggest Subject Terms** to browse for appropriate terms and select **Major Concept** for all or some of your terms.
- Select applicable **subheadings** from the **CINAHL Headings** information page for your term(s).

## **8. What to do when you retrieve too little information on your topic**

- Try to think of synonyms for the terms used and incorporate these as keywords into your search.
- Consider using the truncation symbol (\*) if there may be variant endings to your keyword(s).
- Remove any limiters you have set
  - e.g. Publication Year
- Remove terms from your search
  - e.g. in our demo example, if we add the term 'Canada' to the search, we end up with very little. Remove 'Canada' from your search and see whether there is applicable information published about the same situation in other areas.
- Use **Suggest Subject Terms** to browse for appropriate terms and select **explode** if applicable so narrower terms are included..
- Click on **Cited References**, if available, of any relevant articles you do retrieve for additional relevant information.
- Check the citing references, if available, of any relevant articles you do retrieve for additional relevant information. Click the **Times Cited in this Database** link to do that.