There is life beyond Google! Effective research tools for finding authoritative resources in family, community and public health

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ABSTRACT

The Internet is an increasingly important source for finding information in public health. Google and Google Scholar are powerful tools to discover this scientific knowledge. However, in academia, researchers often need to dig up beneath the surface and find more authoritative resources and tools beyond the free Internet and to discover contemporary trends in family, community and public health research through paid subscription databases. The aim of this poster is to show advanced search techniques to navigate the information landscape with specialized search engines (e.g. Clinical Key and POPLINE) and in databases (e.g. EMBASE, PubMed, and Scopus).
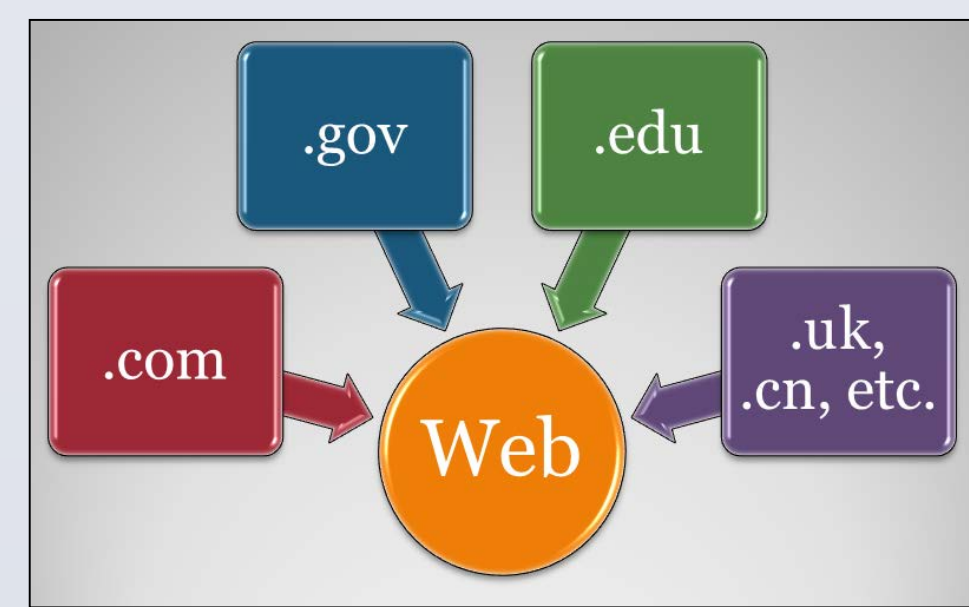
GOOGLE

Search Google like an expert with the following tips:

1. Use **double quotes** to search for a phrase.
   (*Example*: "colorectal cancer")

2. Use **OR (must be capitalized)** for similar words and synonyms.
   (*Example*: cancer OR neoplasms)

3. Use **suffixes** to limit to a specific site.
   (*Example*: "colorectal cancer" site:.gov)
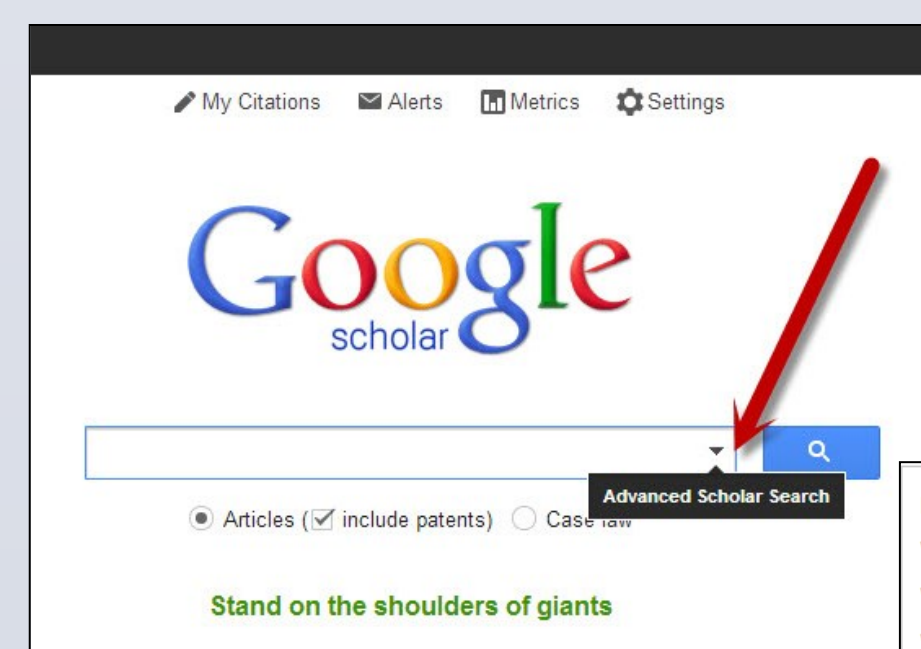

Press Enter to search.
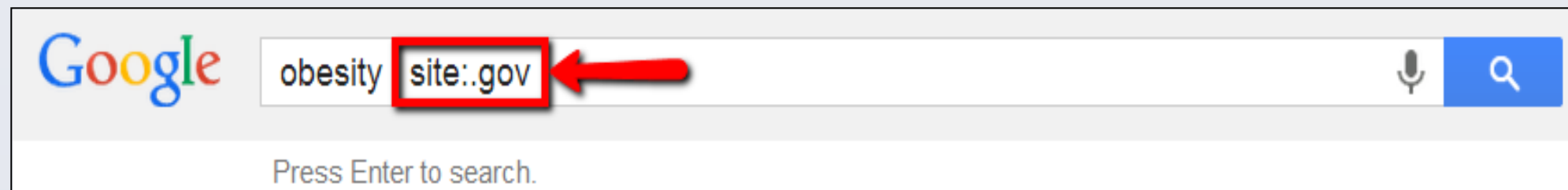
Potential sources include the government, non-profit institutions, professional organizations, a health system, a commercial organization, or an individual.


.com = Company
.gov = Government
.edu = Education
.org = Organization

GOOGLE SCHOLAR

Use **Advanced Search** to search for specific author, article title, sort by date, etc.

Google Scholar only searches a **fraction** of the published scholarly literature. Use Research Port to search one of the many databases covering scholarly publications. Some of the subject specific databases are **Academic Search Premier, EMBASE, Science Direct, Scopus, PubMed** and many more.
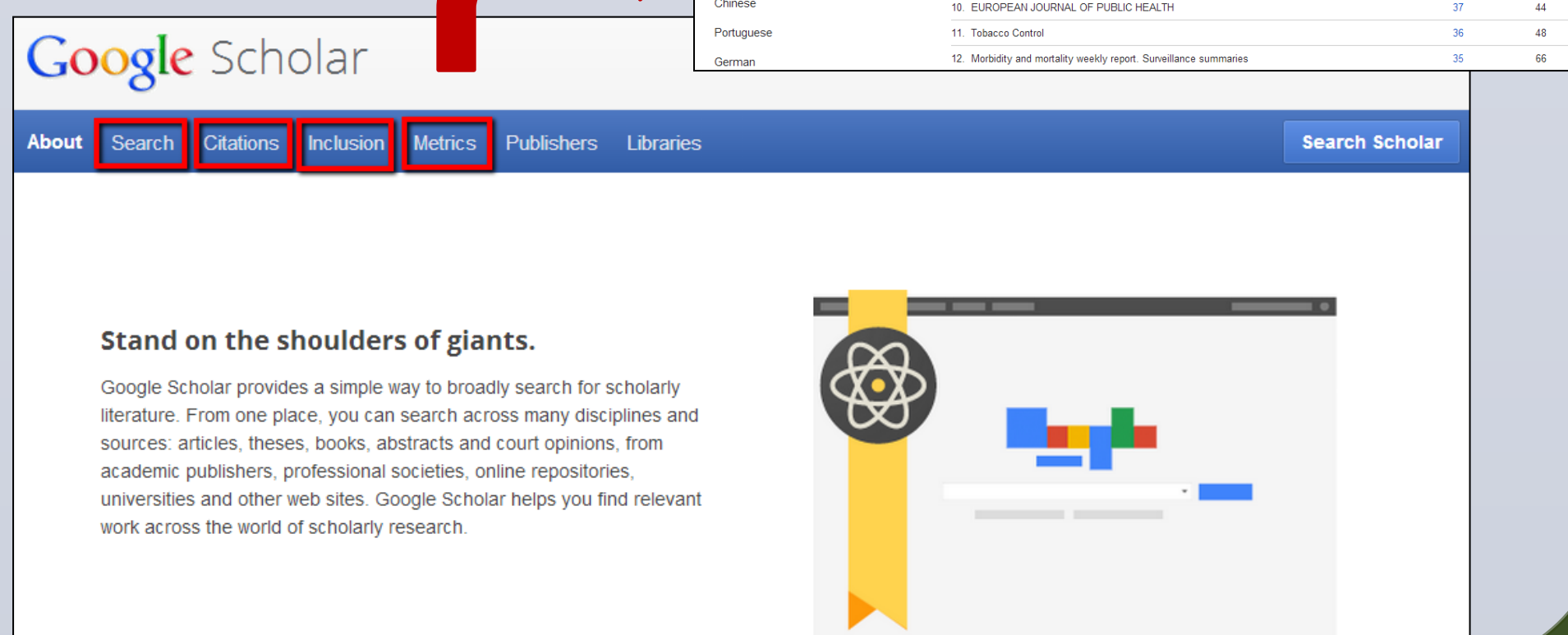
CLINICAL KEY

Upgraded and expanded from MD Consult, this online search tool provides one stop searching of hundreds of Elsevier's medical books, textbooks and very current journals, Procedures Consult (medical procedure videos), First Consult (evidence-based clinical decision-making), and MEDLINE search. This resource is specifically designed to support physicians in evidence-based clinical care and clinical education, and also supports researchers and instructors with an included presentation builder for use with images and videos.

POPLINE

POPLINE (POPulation information onLINE), the world's largest database on reproductive health, provides more than 300,000 citations with abstracts to scientific articles, reports, books, and unpublished reports in the field of population, family planning, and related health issues. POPLINE has numerous special features including links to free, full text documents; the ability to limit your search to peer-reviewed journal articles; and many abstracts in French and Spanish.

POPLINE is maintained by the INFO project at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of public Health/Center for communication programs and is funded primarily by the United States Agency for International Development.
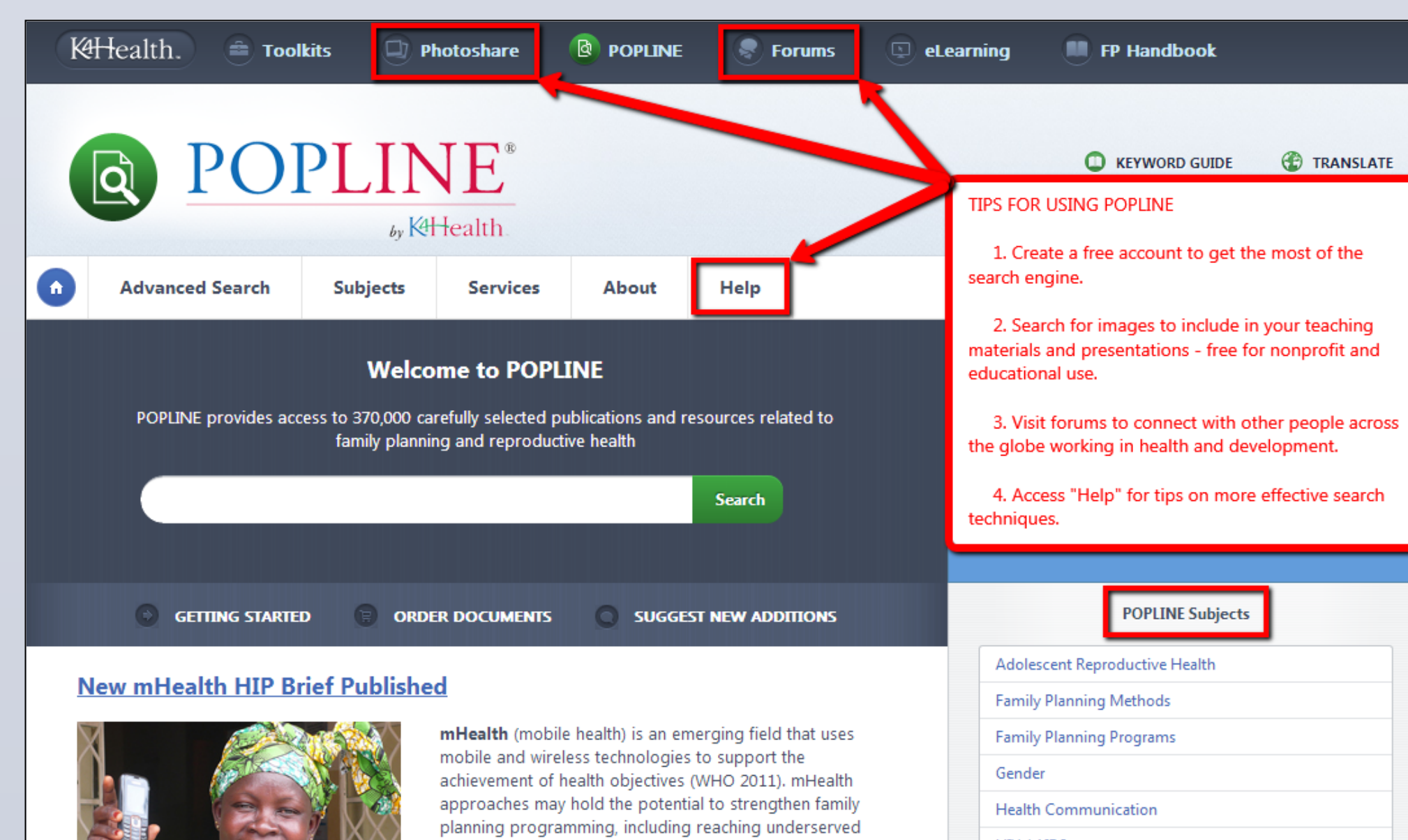

EMBASE

EMBASE covers the latest international biomedical and pharmaceutical research including Medline plus as well over 5 million records not covered on MEDLINE. Indexes current, mostly peer-reviewed journals and includes also published proceedings and conference abstracts. Users can research on adverse drug reactions, compare drug therapies for disease and search for evidence-based medicine research.

**STEP 1:** Before you start searching a database, familiarize yourself with the database features.
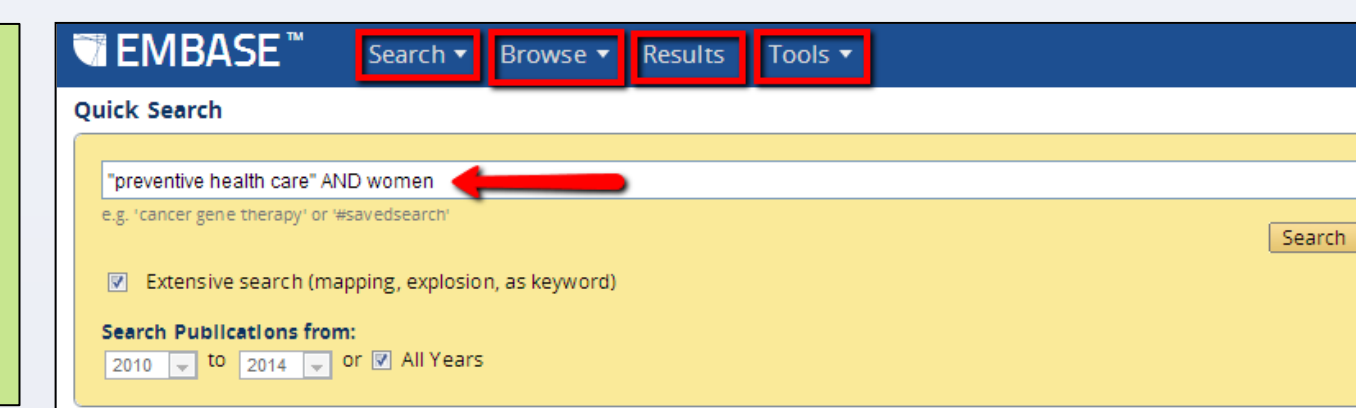
The database will only look for search terms in the **Title**, **Abstract** or **Keywords**.

STEP 2: Break down your research topic into two or three concepts. Execute a search with each concept separately. Then use "Combine" to search for all concepts of interest.
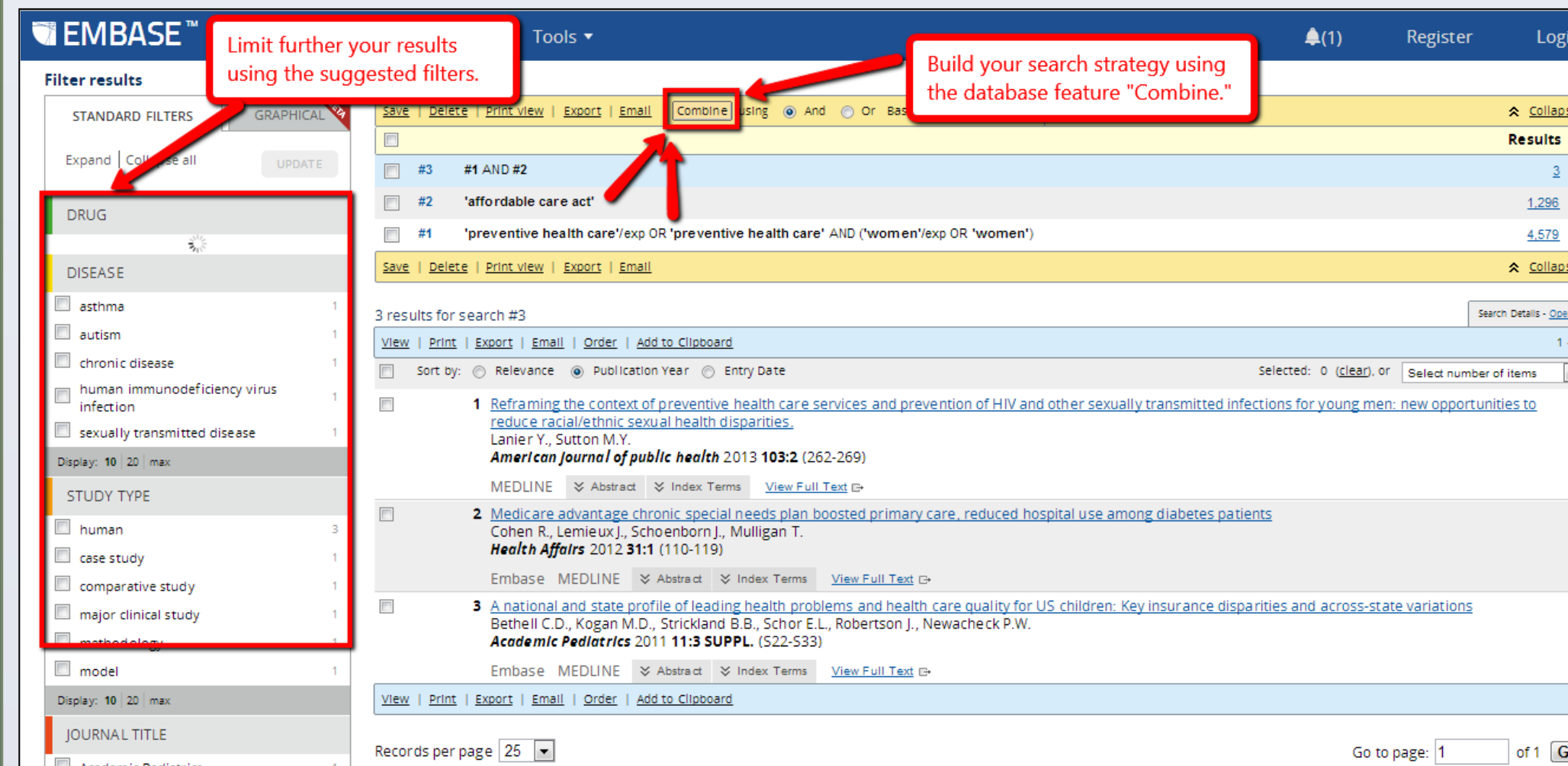
STEP 3: Take a look at an article record of interest. Find related articles and other keywords to refine your search strategy. Look at article's references to identify more resources on your topic.
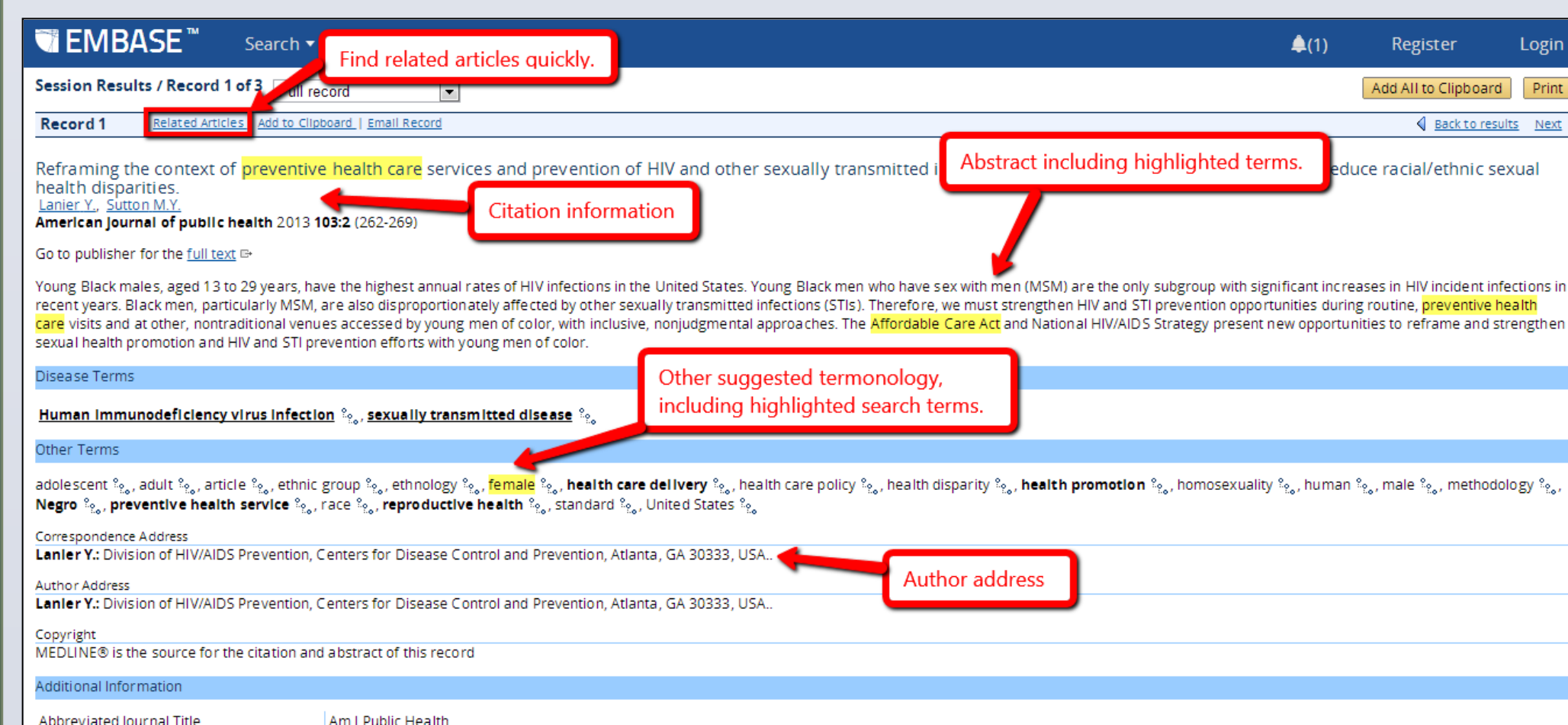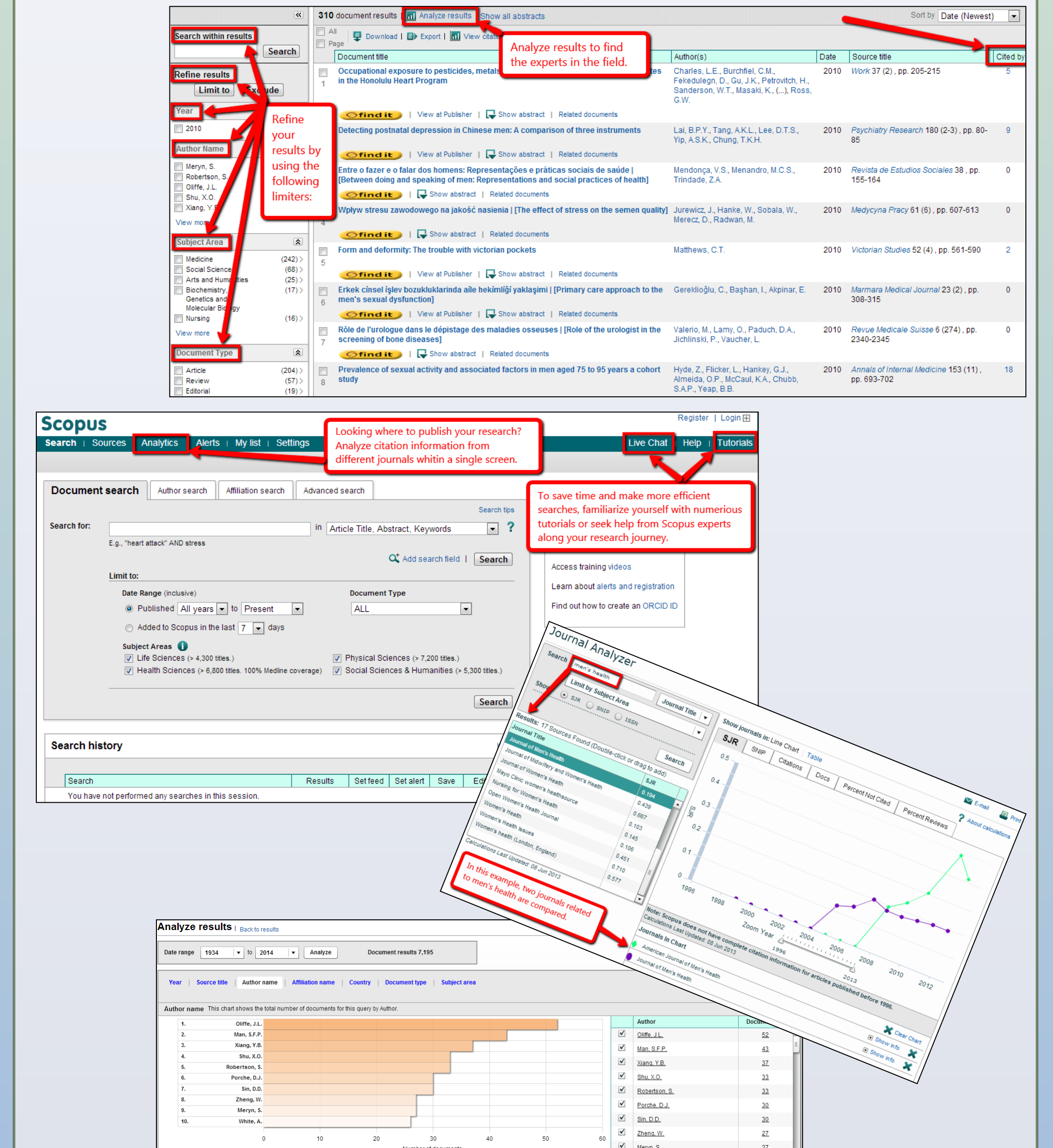

PUBMED

Start with natural language but consider more advanced tips:

1. Familiarize yourself with PubMed **Tutorials**.
2. Use **MeSH database** to identify additional keywords.
3. Use **Topic-Specific Queries** to search within a specific PubMed subset.
4. Open an account (by clicking "**My NCBI**" and registering) to save searches and collections.
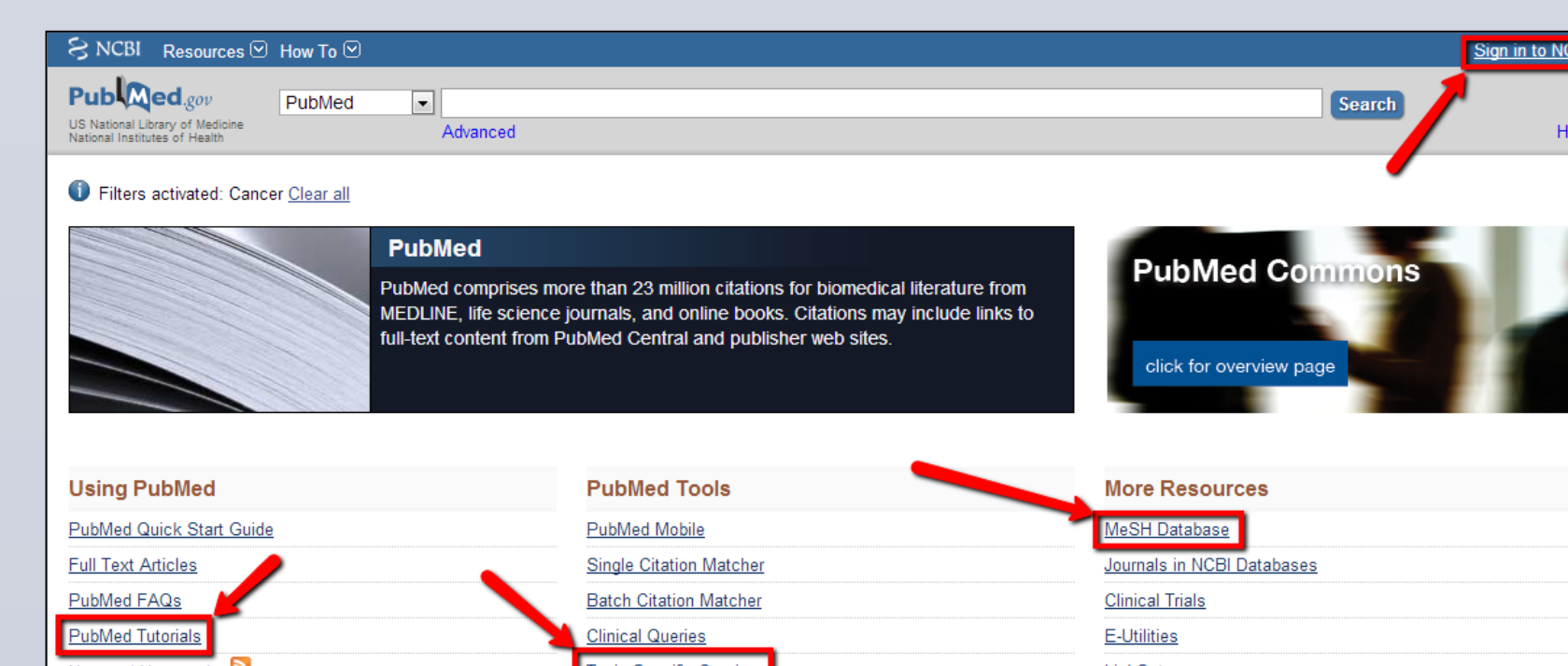
SCOPUS

SCOPUS is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature and quality web sources with smart tools to track, analyze, and visualize research from your region and from the rest of world. It covers titles from many international publishers, open access journals, conference proceedings, trade publications, patents, and many more.

Differences between PUBMED, EMBASE, and SCOPUS

1. For **beginning most searches** in the health sciences, **PubMed** is the first choice. The searches appear to be very specific with the explosion of MeSH. Use *Related Citations* to find similar to those found in your search results.

2. For more **European journals**, **non-English journals**, and more **drug therapy journals**, **Embase** is the preferred database. It indexes many journals not covered by PubMed.

3. For finding **articles that cite the articles** found in your searches, **Scopus** is the best choice.

   - *Coverage*: Scopus covers all the journals included in PubMed and Embase from 1996-present but it is not as up to date as PubMed.
   - *Search algorithm*: Using the same search in Scopus will yield different results in PubMed and Embase.
   - *Thesaurus*: Scopus doesn't have a thesaurus of its own but it can search subject headings assigned by PubMed and Embase as keywords without exploding MeSH and Emtree terms.

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