Subject Heading (MeSH) searching in Ebscohost

Selecting databases
If you are performing a Subject Heading search you can only search one database at a time. This is because different databases may use different subject terms for the same topic.

Selecting the Subject Heading search option
To search using Subject Heading terms in databases from the EBSCOHost platform you will need to select the Subject Heading option from the top of the screen. This will differ depending upon which database you use.

Here are some examples:

Performing a Subject Heading search
You will need to add a search term, for the first concept of your topic, in the search box and select the relevancy ranked option and click on Browse.
only one term can be entered at a time and techniques such as truncation cannot be used.

Subject Heading terms related to the term you have entered will appear. Often there will be more than one Subject Heading term to choose from. Select the Subject Heading term which is most closely related to your topic. To see broader or narrower terms click on the Subject Heading term itself.

If the term you enter doesn’t appear in the index try a related term or alternative spelling. If that doesn’t bring up any appropriate subject terms- don’t worry. It just means that the database hasn’t categorised your topic under a Subject Heading. You will have to complete your search for this concept of your topic using a Keyword Search.

This will take you to the Subject Tree/Thesaurus. Here you will see a list of broader and narrower terms relating to the Subject Heading term you have chosen.
You should select any of the Subject Heading terms which you feel are relevant to your topic.

If there is a + sign next to a Subject Heading term, this means there are narrower Subject Heading terms that you can choose from.

If there is a Subject Heading term in the list you don’t know the meaning of, click on the speech bubble to get a definition.

These will be displayed in a table on the right of the screen.

When you select the Search Database button the database will retrieve any studies which have been categorised under either of the subjects in the table.

{NB} In some databases such as Academic Search Complete, Communication Source and PsycINFO, you will need to select the ADD button to place your selected Subject Heading terms into a 'search box' before you can complete the search.

Your results for this search will be displayed in your Search History as ‘Search 1’ (S1).
You can perform more than one Subject Heading search, if appropriate, for each concept of your topic.

For example, the term 'paediatric' is also relevant to the concept of children but did not appear in the previous list of terms.

Another search can thus be performed to see if this term is available as a Subject Heading in another part of the databases index.

If it is, a search under the Subject Heading ‘paediatric’ can also be added to your search history.

If it isn't the term ‘paediatric’ can be added when you perform a Keyword Search for this concept of your topic.