Subject Heading (MeSH) searching in Ovid Online

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.

Performing a Subject Heading search
To search using Subject Heading terms you will need to select the Advanced Search option. You will need to add a search term, for the first concept of your topic, in the search box and ensure the box entitled Map Term to Subject Heading is ticked.

{NB} 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 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 as 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 more terms to choose from. Clicking on the + sign will display these terms.

Select the **Continue** button at the top of the screen to perform a search for studies which have been categorised under either of the subjects you have selected.

This search will now be added to your Search History as search number 1.

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.