

TWO IMPORTANT NURSING DATABASES RELEASED ON THE INTERNET – BRITISH NURSING INDEX AND COCHRANE LIBRARY ONLINE

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BRITISH NURSING INDEX

The British Nursing Index was released onto the Internet in July. It lists articles from over 220 journals in nursing and related areas. It combines the old RCN Nursing Bibliography and the old Bournemouth University Nursing and Midwifery Index. It is compiled by Royal College of Nursing, Bournemouth University, Poole Hospital NHS Trust and Salisbury Health Care NHS Trust. It is from 1987 to date.

Optology Ltd have taken over both the production of the CD version and they have the server for Internet version. There is a choice of interfaces – Windows, MAC, Unix and Web and also ARC – the academic intranet running on Janet and SuperJanet and MIRON – the Health sector intranet running over NHSnet. SilverPlatter is the interface.

Costs for the Internet version are:--

single user network	£695
2-4 users	£820
5-8 users	£1,065

Further information and details of free trials are available from:--

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Notition House Menzies Road
St Leonards-on-Sea
East Sussex TN38 9BB
Tel: 01424 445100
e-mail: info@optology.com

Fax: 01424 446100
Website: www.optology.com

COMMENTS

It is possible to retrieve using textwords. Optology hope to load the thesaurus to make controlled vocabulary searching better. However I found material by using textwords for specialised topics. The range of journals is better suited to British nursing than CINAHL but this database is regarded as being complementary to CINAHL not a rival. The great strength is British community nursing and the working of the NHS and British nursing practice. A number of journals not abstracted by CINAHL are included but it also avoids the obscure local American publications. Many of the students prefer this database to CINAHL.

The Internet version produced fast results and was easy to use. The references do not have abstracts.

Printing of results is also straightforward unlike the defunct version!

The advantage of the Internet version is that it is updated monthly compared with the quarterly updates on CD. It has the advantage of being on SilverPlatter allowing searches of it and other databases together.

At the present time the Steinberg collection of theses held in the RCN library, is not included but Otology hope this may be included in the future. At present there is no link to full text so there is for example no link to *Nursing Standard* but this is for future development.

Overall, Optology have done a splendid job. Now this database must be regarded as essential for all nursing libraries in the UK.

COCHRANE LIBRARY ONLINE

The Cochrane Library online was made available on the Internet in July. It has the full data base and is available via Mosaic, Internet Explorer or Netscape. It is held on the Update Software file server.

It is possible to register for a personal subscription or to a stand alone subscription providing access via the Internet through a single computer. There are organisational site licences which have user id's.

Stand alone subscription is £250

Organisational licences are £250 for a single concurrent user and additional licences are £50 per user.

Details are available from:---

Update Software
Middle Way
Oxford OX2 7LG
Tel: 01865 513902
e-mail info@update.co.uk

Fax: 01965 516918
<http://www.cochrane.co.uk>

COMMENTS

The Cochrane data base has separate sections such as the database of systematic reviews and the database of reviews of effectiveness (DARE) which lists reviews of research published elsewhere.. Its strength is in the effectiveness of drug treatment on a disease or comparison of different drugs on a disease. It is research based and is based on the idea of evidence based practice. It does not have general articles nor guidelines on nursing practice nor statistics nor environmental nor epidemiology nor opinion surveys. The systematic reviews are original and there is quality control but their depth does depend on the literature available.

The reviews are updated. These are original and not found elsewhere e.g. on Medline so Cochrane is complementary to Medline or other online indexes. Its specialised scope needs to be borne in mind. Some subject areas are weaker than other. For instance, there is very little in the learning difficulties area but there is strength in midwifery.

The online version seems rather easier to use than the CD version with a simpler presentation. It is possible to search using MeSH. One has to accept the patchy distribution of material and so this database is additional and complementary to the large comprehensive data bases such as Medline. It is up to date with references to material a few months old. It is of great value to any health library, both nursing and medical that needs to be aware of evidence based practice and the price is very reasonable.