

International HTA Database

User Guide

https://database.inahta.org

May 2026

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What is the International HTA Database?

The International HTA Database is a freely available repository of bibliographic information about ongoing and completed health technology assessments (HTAs) commissioned or undertaken by members of the International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment (INAHTA) and other HTA organizations. The database is a unique resource for locating HTA reports as these are typically not included in biomedical bibliographic databases. Currently, the International HTA Database includes records for more than 25,000 HTA reports published by agencies throughout the world, from 1989 to date.

The database, formerly called the HTA Database, was established in 1996 by the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD), at the University of York. In March 2018, INAHTA assumed responsibility for producing the database, created a new database platform, and re-launched the new International HTA Database in June 2020. (The CRD's HTA Database is now an archive and has not been updated since 2018.)

The International HTA Database uses a decentralized approach to produce the content. Once the INAHTA Secretariat has set up a contributing agency profile in the platform, agencies can upload bibliographic information on their ongoing and completed HTA projects. The database content administrator then checks the record and applies Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms. For more information see the "About" section of the International HTA Database website.

Please note: Contributing agencies voluntarily add their records according to their own priorities and work schedules — some add records weekly, others add them monthly or only annually. Moreover, some agencies add only a subset of their various publications, and others do not currently contribute their HTA report records. Searchers are advised to bear this caution in mind and consider checking individual agency websites as well to ensure more comprehensive searches.

Tip: To check for the most recent report records from a specific agency search by the name of the agency in the Source field and sort the results by year of publication.

About INAHTA

The International Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment (INAHTA) is a non-profit global network of publicly funded health technology assessment (HTA) agencies. INAHTA was founded in 1993 with just a handful of members, and it has since grown to become the largest independent HTA network in the world, with over 50 member agencies.

INAHTA members serve an important role in health systems by providing evidence to support decision-making about health technologies throughout their lifecycle - including their introduction, reimbursement, implementation, optimization, and divestment. As the costs and complexity of health technologies continue to advance, there will be a greater need for HTA to support evidence-informed policy making for creating high-quality and sustainable health systems. The uniqueness of INAHTA can be best described by understanding its role, its relevance to INAHTA members, and its importance in the

broader HTA ecosystem. Read more about this in the INAHTA Position Statement on the Uniqueness of INAHTA.

For more information about INAHTA visit: http://www.inahta.org
Or contact the INAHTA Secretariat via email: INAHTA@ihe.ca

Does your organization produce HTAs? Become a contributor

If your organization produces HTA reports, please contact the INAHTA secretariat at HTAdatabase@ihe.ca for information on how to set up your contributor account and upload your HTA report records to the database.

Register to Use the International HTA Database

The International HTA Database can be accessed at: https://database.inahta.org/.

The database is freely available, but visitors are encouraged to register as users to save, view, and download their search histories.

Please note: The database was designed to be searched using Chrome, Edge, or Safari web browsers. Some features may not work on other browsers, such as Firefox or Internet Explorer.

Register as a User

There are two links where you may register as a user of the International HTA Database. Both links lead to the same registration screen. The first 'Register' link is located in the top menu, the second is located below the Search History option on the left-hand side of the page.

To register as a user, please click either of the two 'Register' links (see Figure 1).

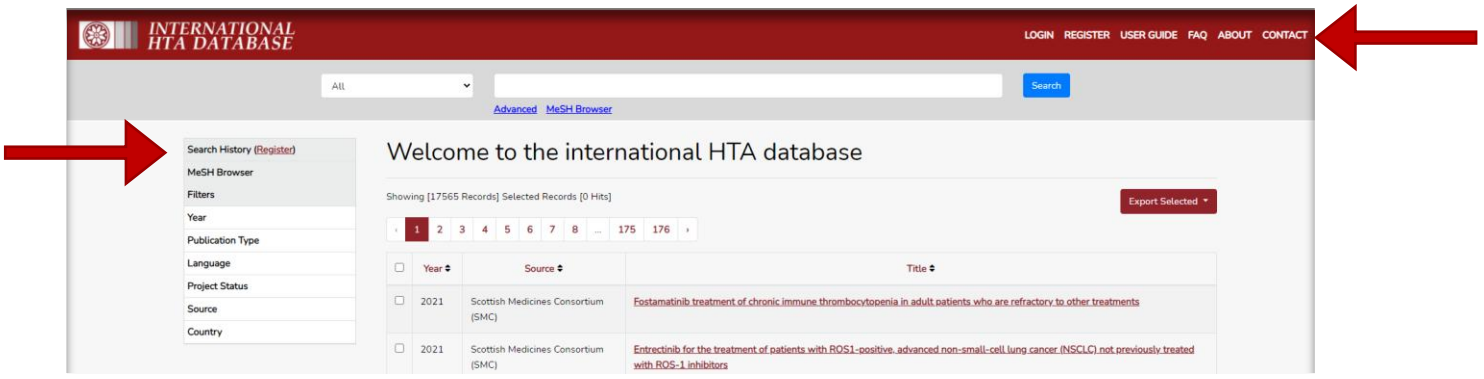


Figure 1 - International HTA Database home page

You will be taken to a screen where you will be prompted to enter your name, email address, password, and confirm the password in the fields (see Figure 2). Once you have entered this information, click the 'Register' button.

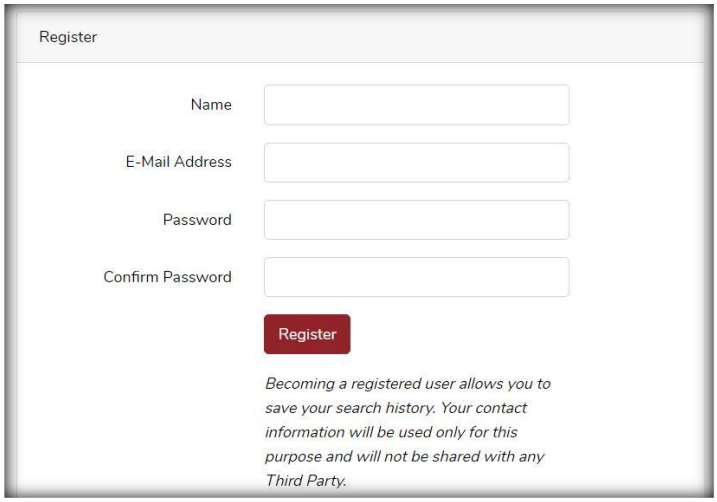


Figure 2 - Registration fields for the International HTA Database

User Login

The International HTA Database can be accessed at: https://database.inahta.org/.

You can search the database without logging in, however, to see your search history or save your searches you need to login. To log in as a registered user, click the 'Login' link in the top menu of the International HTA Database. On the login screen, enter your account email address and password and click the red 'Login' button. You are now logged into the database as a registered user. You will notice that the top menu no longer displays 'Login' and 'Register' and instead displays your registered user profile name. Once you are logged, in the menu on the left of the screen will display the options to see your Search History and your Saved Search History.

Account Profile

Registered users of the International HTA Database have an account profile where they may update their profile, change their password, or logout. To view your account profile, change your password, or logout, click your registered user account name in the top menu (see Figure 3). A dropdown menu will appear with three options: 'Profile,' 'Change Password,' and 'Logout.'

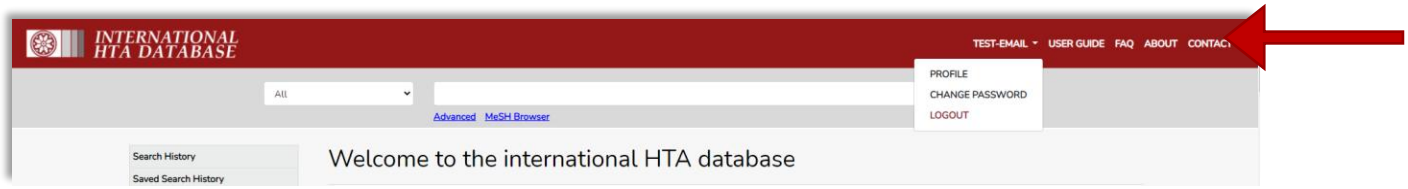


Figure 3 - International HTA Database account profile

- **Name**
  - To change the account profile name, type the new name into the 'Name' field. Once you have changed the account profile name, click the red 'Update' button and the account profile name will be updated immediately.

- **Email**
  - This field displays the email address associated with your account profile. The email address can only be changed by the database administrator. To change your email please email the database administrator: *HTAdatabase@ihe.ca*.
- **Publisher**
  - This field is only shown for contributing agencies' account profiles.

After updating the account profile information, click the red 'Update' button to save your changes and return to the database homepage. If you do not wish to make any changes, click the red 'Cancel' button and you will be returned to the database homepage without changing your account profile.

Change Password

The 'Change Password' link allows a registered user to change their password. Click the 'Change Password' link, then enter your new password into the 'New Password' field, and retype it in the 'Confirm Password' field. Once you have typed the new password, click the red 'Update' button and your password will have been changed. If you make an error typing your password into either of the password fields and they do not match, an error message will appear and your password will not be changed. If you do not wish to make any changes, click the red 'Cancel' button and you will be returned to the database homepage.

Logout

The 'Logout' link allows registered users to safely exit the registered user functions of the database.

Searching for Records in the International HTA Database

There are several tools to help you search for information in the International HTA Database.

- Search bar
- Advanced search
- Filters
- MeSH browser

Search Bar

The search bar is located at the top of the International HTA Database homepage (see Figure 4). Use the dropdown menu on the left of the search box to limit your search to specific fields (e.g., all, title, MeSH search, author, etc.), then enter your search term(s) in the search box and click search or hit enter.



Figure 4 - International HTA Database search bar

English is the main language for the database, however, you can search for words in other languages using the "All" default search option, or for reports in other languages using the Language filter.

Search Bar Options

Search options in the dropdown menu (to the left of the search bar) include: 'All', 'Title', 'MeSH Search', 'Author', 'Language', 'Keywords', 'Abstracts', 'Status', 'Record ID', 'Country', and 'Source'.

The default search option is 'All' fields. The main database fields and field abbreviations are shown below.

- **All**
  - This is the default search option. 'All' allows you to search all fields in the records (e.g., title, abstract, keywords, MeSH terms, record id, etc.). Use simple searches and the 'All' fields option for the most comprehensive results.
- **Title [title]**
  - Title will limit your search to look for terms only in the title of the report.
- **MeSH Search [mh]**
  - MeSH Search will search for records that are tagged with specific MeSH terms.
  - **Please note:** MeSH subheadings and supplementary concepts are not used. MeSH terms are updated annually to include new terms added by the U.S. National Library of Medicine going forward, but, we do not retroactively re-index older records with new terms.
  - To "explode" a MeSH search (i.e., to include all the narrower subject headings that appear under the broader term in the MeSH hierarchy) use the field abbreviation [mhe].
- **Author [author]**
  - Author will limit your search to specific authors.
- **Language [languages]**
  - Language will limit your search to whichever language you select.
- **Keywords [keywords]**
  - Keywords will limit your search to the keywords field. Please note that keywords are supplied by the HTA report authors/agency and not all agencies add keywords to their records.
- **Abstracts [abs]**
  - Abstracts will limit your search to records which contain the search term only in the abstract.
- **Status [status]**
  - This is a dropdown menu that allows you to limit your search to either Ongoing or Completed HTA reports. **Please note:** Not all agencies include records for their ongoing projects.
- **Record ID [record id]**
  - This field allows you to search for a specific HTA report by using its unique International HTA Database identification number.
- **Country [country]**
  - This dropdown menu allows you to limit searches to HTA agencies in a specific country.
- **Source [source]**
  - This will limit your search to reports from a specific HTA agency.

Using Boolean Operators

You can search the International HTA Database using Boolean search operators (AND, OR, and NOT).

- **AND**
  - If you combine terms using AND, you will only find documents containing both terms. AND is the default operator. If two or more search terms are entered in a single search box without any Boolean operator, they will be combined with AND. You will retrieve documents that contain all those terms, but the terms are not necessarily adjacent to each other, or in any particular order.
- **OR**
  - If you combine terms using OR, you will find documents that contain either term.
- **NOT**
  - If you combine terms using NOT, you will find documents that contain one of the terms but not the other.

Advanced Search

The Advanced search option is shown below the main search bar. Clicking here allows you to quickly add and combine multiple lines of search terms, and add publication date limits.

Other Search Tips

Combining search lines

- View your Search History to combine multiple lines of search terms by selecting the check box for the search lines and the Combine Selections With (AND, OR, or NOT). (Remember: you need to be logged into the database as a registered user to see your Search History).
- You can also combine multiple lines of search terms using the Advanced search option.

Parenthesis / Brackets ()

- Use parentheses to combine search concepts, for example, (breast OR colon OR lung) AND (immunotherapy OR radiotherapy OR chemotherapy)
- Search concepts can also be combined using the Advanced search option.

Phrase searching " "

- Use double quotation marks to find documents that match the exact phrase contained in the quotes, for example, "negative pressure wound therapy".
- Use phrase searches in double quotation marks for more precise searching of multiple word search terms, for example, use “multiple sclerosis” rather than multiple sclerosis.
- Multiple word MeSH terms that include punctuation should also be enclosed in double quotation marks if the MeSH field is selected in the search line, for example, "technology assessment, biomedical"[mh]. MeSH terms without punctuation can be searched without quotation marks. Parentheses can also be used when searching MeSH terms, for example, (technology assessment, biomedical)[mh] will also work.
- Note that truncation (*) does not work when the phrase is enclosed in quotation marks.

- Note that the quotation marks should be non-directional (i.e., they look the same at the start and end), and not the directional "smart" quotation marks used in Word documents. (Something to be aware of if you are cutting and pasting in a search string rather than typing it into the database directly.)

Hyphenated terms

- Hyphenated terms should be searched as phrase searches and enclosed in quotation marks (with or without the hyphen).
- **Please note:** Some agencies record drug combinations using hyphens, while other agencies use a forward slash (/). For example, ivacaftor/tezacaftor/elexacaftor also appears as ivacaftor-tezacaftor-elexacaftor. Enclosing either variation as a phrase in double quotes will capture both variations.

*Truncation **

- Use an asterisk * at the end of a term to search for multiple endings. For example, nurs* will retrieve nurse, nurses, nursing, etc.
- **Please note:** that truncation (*) does not work for phrase searches enclosed in quotation marks.
- **Please note:** that wildcard truncation does not work at the beginning or in the middle of search terms, for example, tumo*r, will not retrieve either tumor or tumour.

Proximity (adjacency searching) ADJ#

- ADJ# allows you to specify that the words you are searching are within a certain proximity of each other, regardless of the order. Substitute the number with the maximum number of words that you would like to have one term from the other, for example:
  - breast ADJ3 cancer will retrieve: *breast and gynecological cancer*
  - breast ADJ4 cancer will retrieve: *breast and uterine cervix cancer*
  - breast ADJ5 cancer will retrieve: *cancer sites: colon/rectum, lung, breast*
- **Please note:** that ADJ# cannot be used with groups of terms. If ADJ is used with groups of terms, the interface ignores the ADJ and uses AND instead. For example, ((stomach OR breast) ADJ3 cancer) = ((stomach OR breast) AND cancer).
- ADJ# also cannot be used more than once in a search line, and will show zero results.

Please note: Search terms must be at least 3 characters long. For example, abbreviations such as MS or TB will show 0 results, but longer abbreviations, such as HTA, will retrieve results.

Filters

Filters are shown in the left-hand menu of the database. These allow you to quickly narrow your search, both in the initial record display as well as in your search results.

Results may be filtered by 'Year,' 'Publication Type' (Full HTA, Rapid Review, Mini HTA, Not Assigned, and Other), 'Language' (customizable checkboxes), 'Project Status' (Completed or Ongoing), 'Source,' and 'Country' (customizable checkboxes). [**Please note**: Not all agencies assign publication types to their reports. For more information about publication type, please see the INAHTA Product Types.]

Select the filter you wish to apply, and, if prompted, click 'Apply.' The search results will be updated to reflect the filter you have selected and applied.

To remove filters click on the Clear option next to the Filters tab.

MeSH Browser

To search using Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms, click on the 'MeSH Browser' link below the search bar. The 'MeSH Browser' link will take you to the MeSH explorer where you can search for records tagged with specific MeSH terms. Clicking the 'MeSH Browser' link will take you to the 'MeSH Explorer' screen with a search bar (see Figure 5).

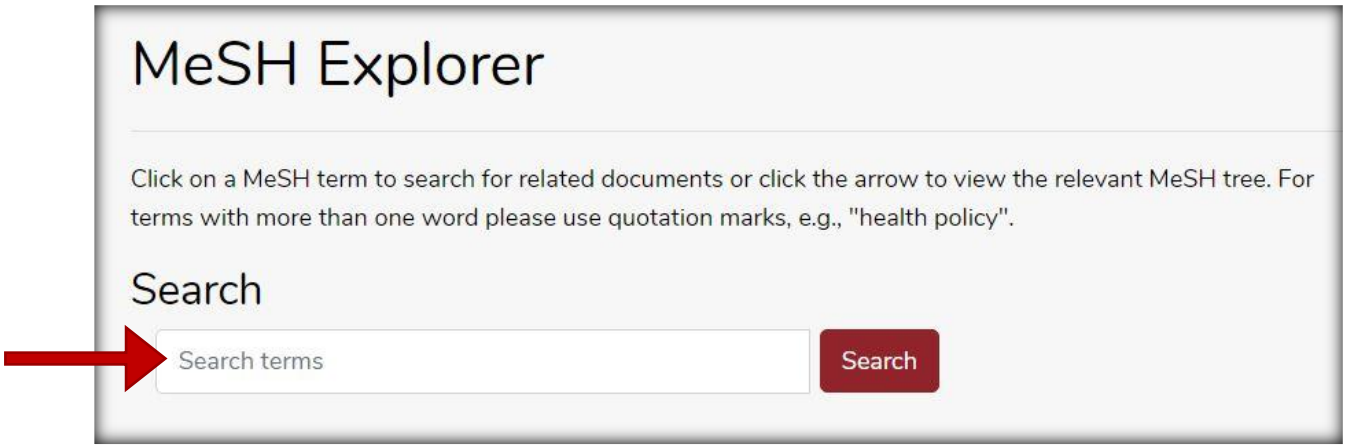


Figure 5 - MeSH Explorer

Enter your term into the search bar and click the red 'Search' button. Results will display a list of MeSH terms, and each term will have a 'Search,' 'Explode,' and 'Go to MeSH Tree' view of MeSH terms' options (see Figure 6).

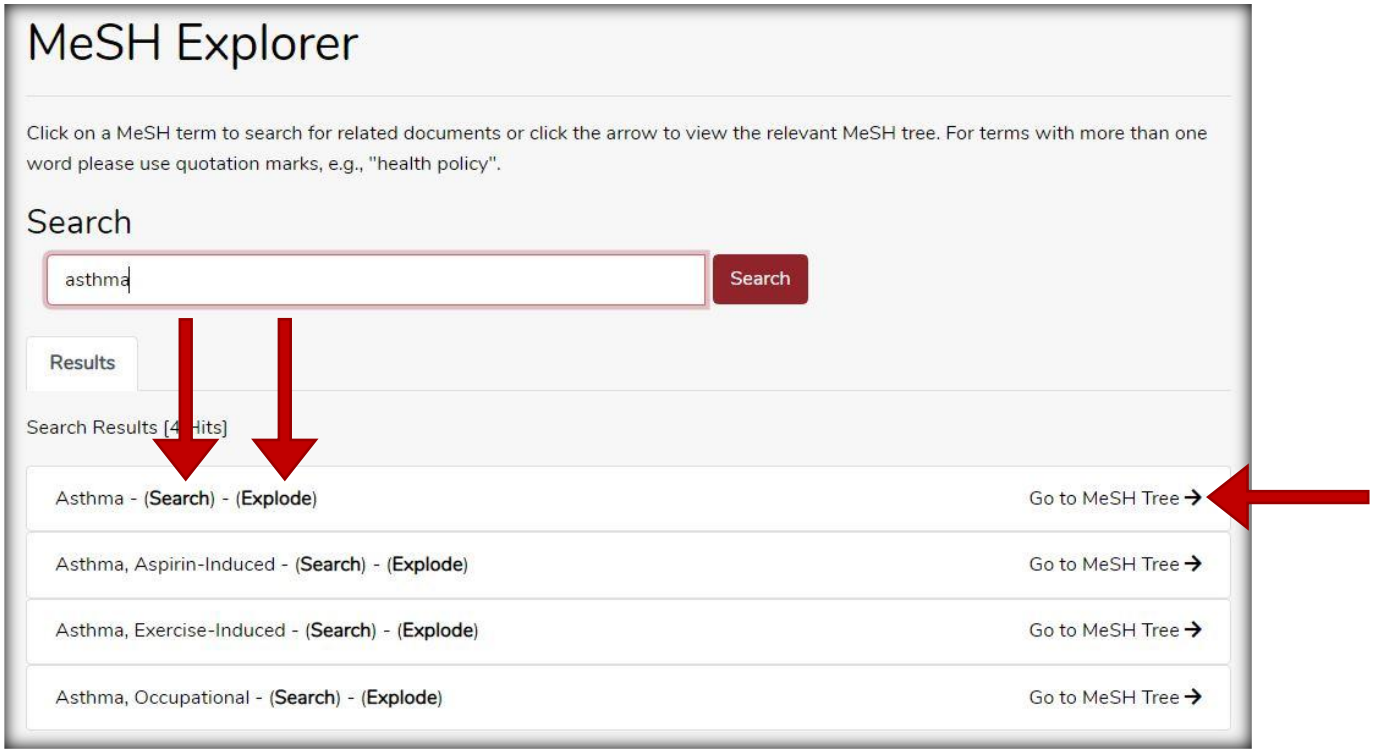


Figure 6 - MeSH Explorer (Search, Explode, MeSH tree)

- The '**Search**' function retrieves terms tagged with that specific term.
- The '**Explode**' function in the MeSH Term Browser will retrieve records that are tagged with that MeSH heading and also records that are tagged with any of the more specific MeSH headings below that heading in the MeSH hierarchy (tree).
    - For example, if you search for Diabetes Mellitus, you will see that there are several subtypes of this disorder, such as Type 1, Type 2, and Gestational, listed in the tree under Diabetes Mellitus. Choosing to 'explode' this MeSH term [mhe] will retrieve records tagged with Diabetes Mellitus as well as all of the terms below it in the MeSH tree.
- The '**Go to MeSH Tree**' function shows how that term fits into the overall hierarchy of MeSH terms.

Clicking 'Search' or 'Explode' in the MeSH Explorer will display those search results and the MeSH term search will be saved in your Search History.

Tip: In some cases you may need to use older and new MeSH terms, for example, for a search on Deprescribing, MeSH terms would include "Deprescriptions" (introduced in 2015) and "Drug Prescriptions" (used from 2007-2015). (Check PubMed's MeSH browser to see the dates MeSH terms were introduced.)

Tip: As records have only a limited number of MeSH terms, be sure to include search terms in other fields of the records, either by using the default "All", or by including additional fields (title, abstract, keywords, etc.) as well.

Please note: MeSH supplementary concepts and subheadings are not used in the database.

Please note: The MeSH Browser is not supported in Internet Explorer.

Building Searches

Searches that combine terms using Boolean operators can be done in various ways.

- On the advanced search page, pull-down menus allow search boxes to be combined using AND, OR, and NOT (see Figure 7).
- On the Search History page **(remember you must be registered and logged in as a user to see your Search History page)**, individual search lines can be combined by ticking the search lines of interest and then clicking the "Combine selections with" button.
- For simple searches you can also type your search terms in the main search box, group them using parentheses, and combine them with AND, OR, and NOT as needed.

Tip: We recommend that searches are kept as simple as possible and that search queries are relatively short. The character limit for search queries on most browsers is approximately 2,000 characters, after which long search strings will be truncated and the search results will not be accurate.

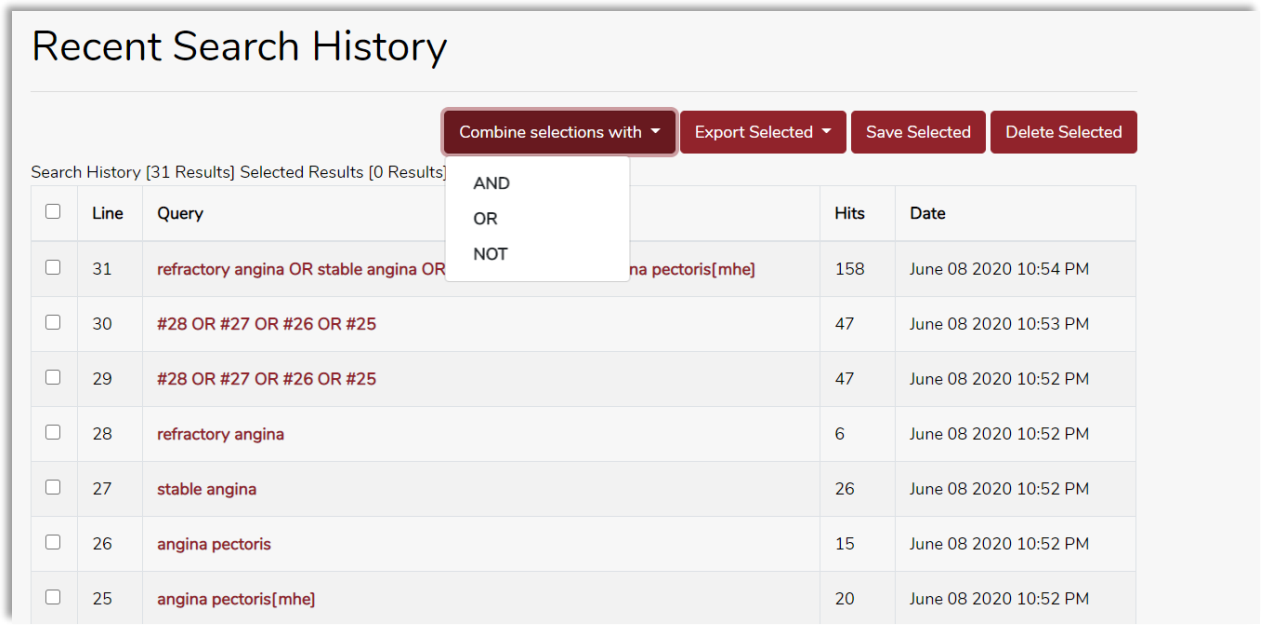


Figure 7 - International HTA Database advanced search history with Boolean operators

Managing Searches and Search Results

To manage your searches, you must first set up a user account via the "Register" link in the top right-hand corner. To save, re-run, modify or delete searches you will need to have registered and be logged in.

Search History

After you have registered and logged into the International HTA Database, you will be able to see your searches on the search history screen.

Deleting Lines

Individual lines can be deleted from the search history by checking the box located next to the search item you wish to delete. Other lines in the strategy will be automatically renumbered.

Please note: If you delete a search term line that is included in a later search line the later search will still include the deleted search term (i.e., you will need to redo this search line as well to remove the term).

Saving Searches

To save searches, you must first set up a user account via the "Register" link in the top right-hand corner. From the search history screen, click the checkboxes of the searches you wish to save, then click on the "Save Selected" button.

Re-Running a Saved Search

To re-run a saved search, ensure you are logged in. Click on the "Saved Search History" link on the left of the screen, then click the search you wish to re-run. The search will automatically re-run.

Exporting Search Strategies

Search strategies can be exported to a CSV (Excel) file from the "Saved Search History" screen. To export a saved search, click the checkbox for the search lines you wish to export, then click the "Export Selected" button. A dropdown option of 'CSV' will appear. Click 'CSV' and the search strategy will be downloaded as a CSV file to your computer.

Alternately, your search strategy can be copied from the "Search History" screen and pasted into a Word document.

Exporting Search Results / Records from the International HTA Database

You can export search results from the International HTA Database. Records can be exported from the results page as either CSV or RIS files. Either Select All (for all references in the search results) or use the check boxes to select the individual references you want to export and then press the "Export Selected" button. A dropdown option of 'CSV' or 'RIS' will appear.

- CSV files are suitable for importing into Excel spreadsheets.
- RIS files are text (.txt) files that can be imported directly into EndNote, Zotero, or other bibliographic reference manager programs.

Select and click the file type you prefer, and the search will be downloaded to a file on your computer in that format.