

Pub Crawling

by Dana Scully

When was the last time you did a Pub crawl? For me, it was just this morning and wow, do I feel better for it! It was so easy and left me feeling ready to tackle the day! But before you think I'm an early morning lusher, let me explain that I didn't go trolling through The Rocks with a gaggle of my girl friends pre-dawn style. I simply opened my computer and got stuck in. (Figure 1)

What is a Pub crawl?

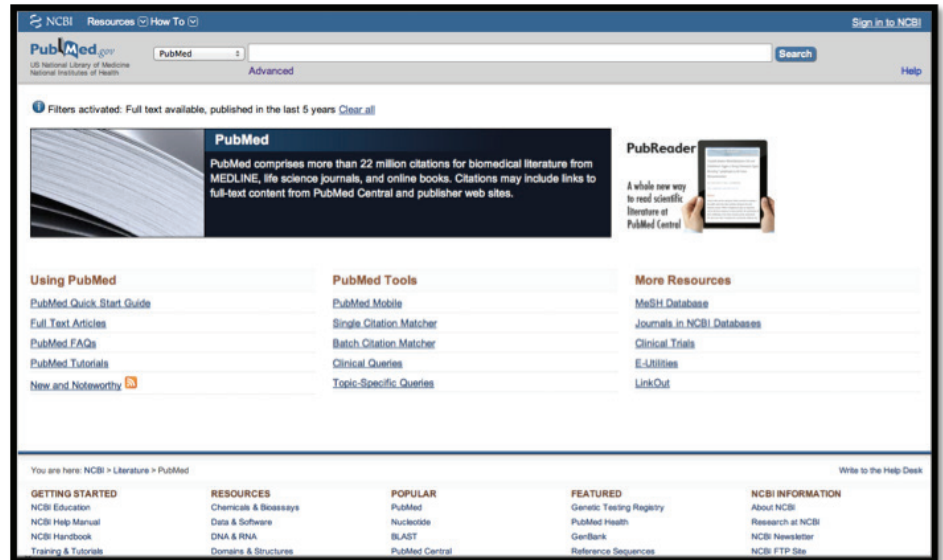
A Pub crawl is simply a search for relevant information using PubMed. PubMed is a search service of the United States of America's National Library of Medicine that gives access to Medline, an international medical database. This database houses millions of journal articles, references, and abstracts from all over the world and is free for all to access via the internet. Massage therapists can use this database to find information on specific health issues, techniques, guidelines, and much more.

Where do you go to use it?

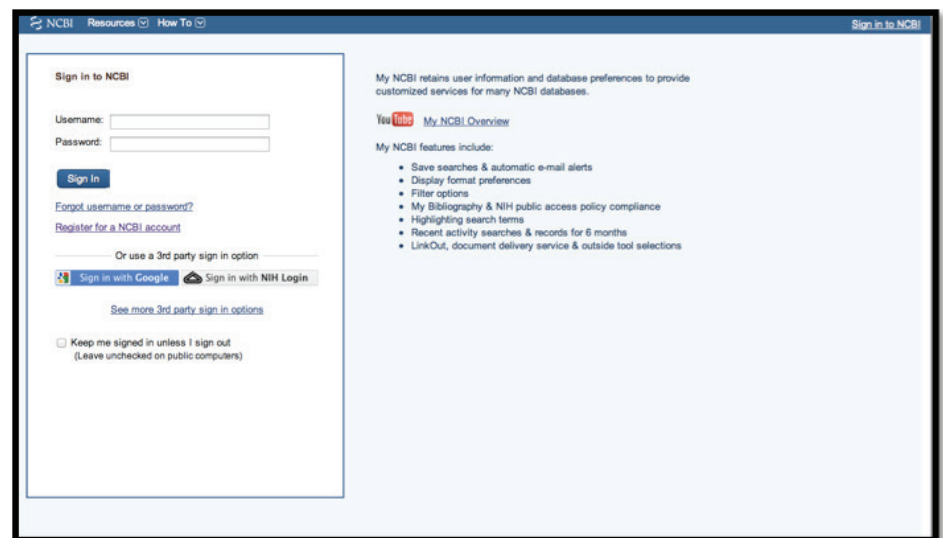
Simply go to <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed> and click into "Sign in to NCBI". This will take beginners to a registration page where you'll type in a user name, password, email address, and a security question and answer. A confirmation will then be sent (pretty much immediately) to your email inbox, asking you to verify your registration by clicking into the hyperlink supplied in the letter. Once this is done, you are registered and ready to begin! When logging back in, just click into the "Sign in to NCBI" link. (Figure 2)

How much does registration cost?

Unlike the other pub-crawl, crawling through PubMed is free and fairly painless. Anyone with access to a computer, library card (for access to the library's computer), or a mobile phone can register, log in, and utilize the service. But...and here's the rub, not all of PubMed's articles are free.



▲ **Figure 1:** PubMed at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed (Alternatively you can type www.pubmed.gov into your web browser and it should pull up the same page.)



▲ **Figure 2:** PubMed's painless registration page.

The database is free to access; the abstracts are free to read, but to view the full-text of some articles requires payment to the publishers. Fair enough, scientists are entitled to earn a living from research, but don't let this stop you from your search! PubMed has over 22 million articles to search many of which are *free!*

How do you do a Pub crawl?

Once logged in, you're ready to access the database. There are numerous tutorials on the Internet directing you on how to use it, but by far the best is the Quick Start provided by PubMed itself. The link to this is found on PubMed's home page under "Using PubMed" found on the left hand side of the screen. Alternatively, there is a tutorial that will take you through the steps of a search also listed under "Using PubMed".

There are numerous ways to search on this database. No way is wrong as long as it yields useful results.

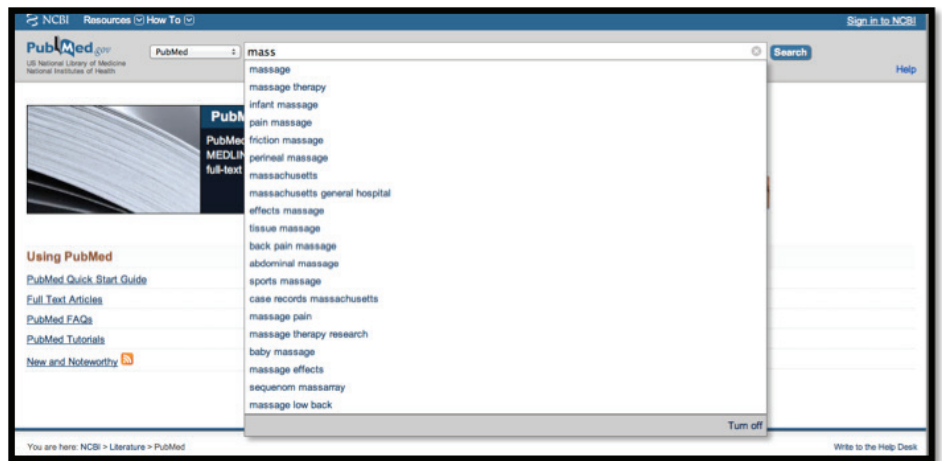
To start...

At the top of the homepage is a very long empty white box. This is the search bar. Type your search query here. As you type, a drop down box with alphabetically similar topics will appear. Disregard it unless it has your search topic listed. If your search topic is listed, you can stop typing and click into the listed topic. If your search topic is not listed, don't despair; just keep typing and hit enter or click into the word "Search" at the end of the search bar. (Figure 3)

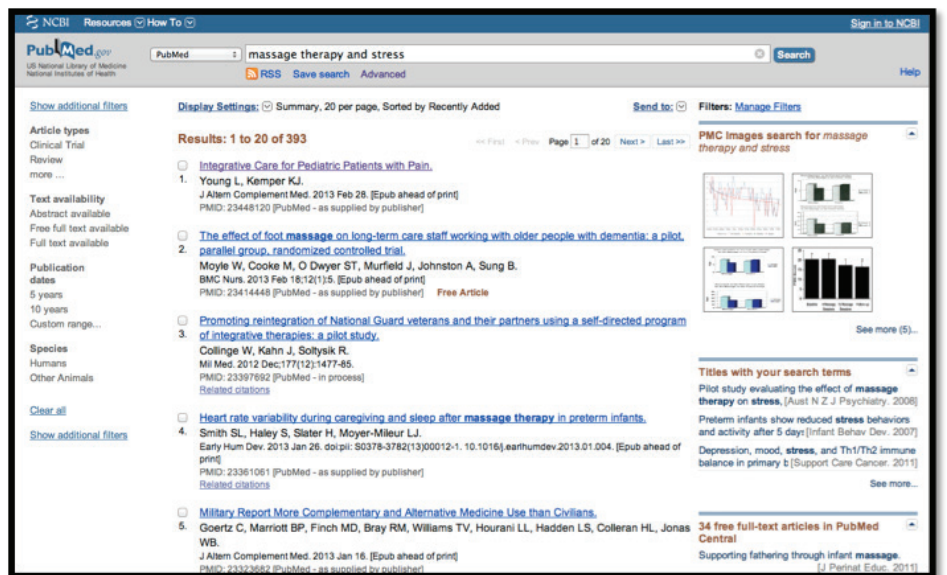
To Search Results...

This will bring up a results page. (Figure 4) Article titles, written in blue and underlined, provide you with a hyperlink to the article abstract. The abstract is a condensed version of the article's major points. (If you've already viewed the article, the title bar will appear purple instead of blue.)

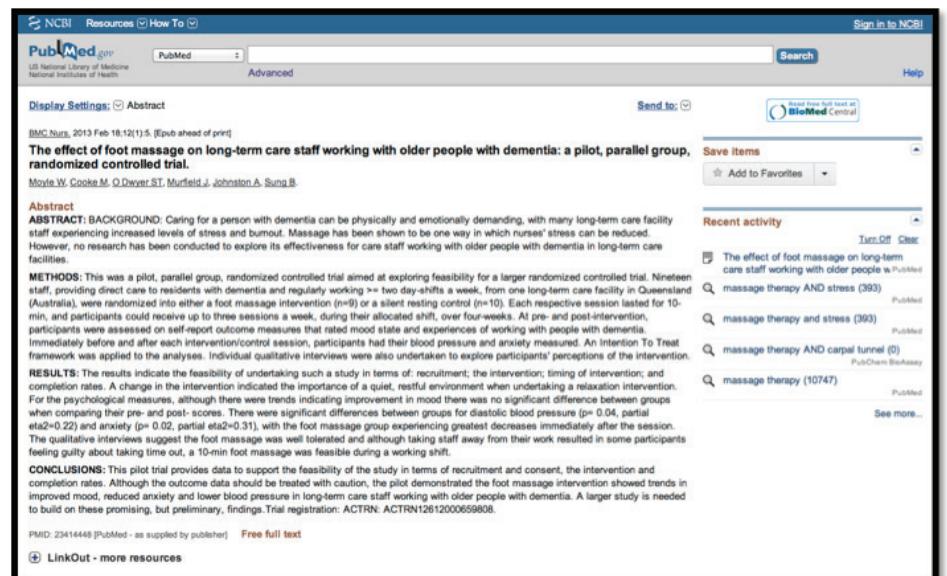
Notice only some of the articles have "Free Article" at the end of the citation. These are the free full-text versions of articles that you can access. Those without this hyperlink require you to register with the publisher of the article and pay the fee requested. Regardless of fee request though, the abstract is available for viewing through PubMed at no charge.



▲ Figure 3: Typing in a search.



▲ Figure 4: A typical PubMed results page.



▲ Figure 5: An example of an abstract.

(Alternatively, public libraries hold subscriptions to major journal publishers, albeit not all of them, and you may be able to access the full article via their system sans the fee.)

To view the abstract, click into the title link. (Figure 5)

If the abstract carries relevant information to your search, you can then pull up the whole article by clicking into the “Free full-text” link (written in brown) at the bottom of the citation or the publisher logo near the top on the right hand side. This takes you to the full-text that can then be read and/or download.

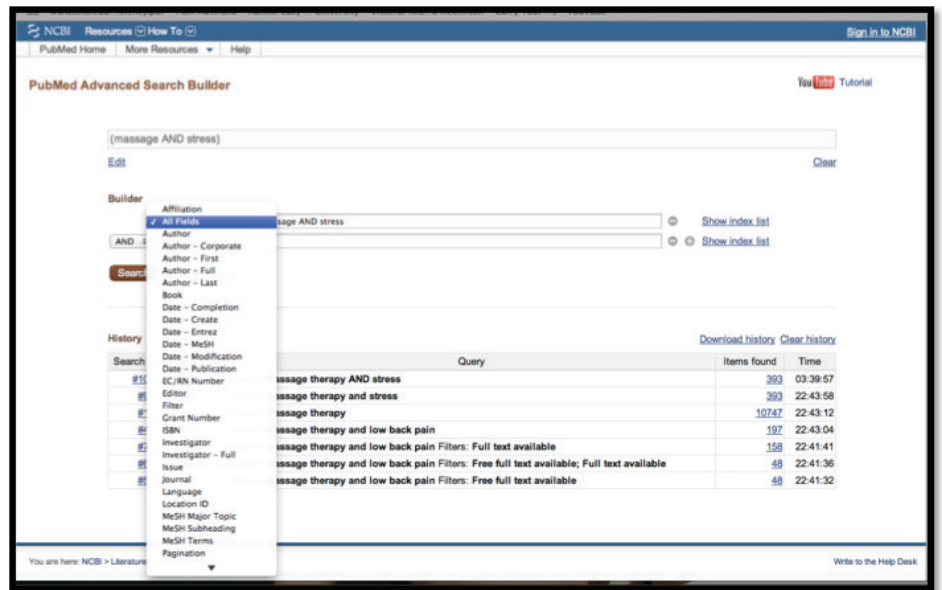
If the search results were less than useful then refining is in order.

To refine a search...

There are many ways to refine a search. One of the simplest is to use Boolean tools: AND, OR, and NOT. These capitalized words direct the database to find or exclude certain words, terms, or phrases. “AND” tells the database to combine words/terms/phrases e.g. massage AND stress. “OR” tells the database to find either of the searched words/terms/phrases e.g. massage therapy for cancer OR oncology massage. “NOT” tells the database to exclude certain words/terms/phrases e.g. sports massage NOT relaxation massage. You can also combine the Boolean phrases in a single search e.g. massage therapy OR touch therapy NOT massage parlor.

Quotations are often used in searching for specific *phrases*. For example, searching for “oncology massage” will call only references where the two words are paired together. This differs from the Boolean AND which calls up any reference containing both words but not necessarily together.

Truncation shortens a word so the database is searched for any reference containing the root word. The asterisk (*) is used as the truncation tool. Type the root word with the asterix at the end e.g. massag* and hit “Search”. This tells the database to search for massage, massaging, massaged, etc....



▲ Figure 6: PubMed's Advanced Search page.

The refining tool that may make the most difference to your search though might be the “Free Full Text Available” filter found on the left hand side of the results page.

Click this and wait two seconds for the page to reload. A check (✓) by Free Full Text Available shows that you've successfully reloaded the page with only citations to full articles that are available free of charge.

Of course, you can use advanced tools to refine your search too. Underneath the search bar you'll see the command Advanced. Click into this. (Figure 6)

From this page you will be able to refine your search in a number of ways such as by specifying the author, or title, or journal, etc..., or any combination thereof.

There are even more ways to refine a search through PubMed using MeSH terms, limiters, citations, and more, but the above will get you started on your own Pub crawl for now.

Intoxicated With Knowledge

By far the best way to become a veteran Pub crawler though is to just get stuck into it. Play around with the tools and have fun! You'll be amazed at how little effort it actually takes to get information that will ultimately help you to become an even better and more effective massage therapist!

You'll find yourself going back to the Pub time and again, but the only hang-over you'll be left with is a head full of useful information just waiting to be put to use!

Dana Scully has been a member of AMT since 2001, when still a student she opened her own business. She recently completed a Bachelor of Health Science-Complementary Medicine through Charles Sturt University. Dana is passionate about massage, health care, and member education.