Methods

We searched for: ‘Google’ across five health sciences related databases (CINAHL, Cochrane, PsycINFO, PubMed, Web of Science) and in Google Scholar*. We reviewed the first 100 citations from each database and selected results that:

1) Mentioned use of a Google tool
2) Discussed the effectiveness of Google or Google Scholar in scholarly literature searching
3) What other research is needed in this area?

We wondered:

1) What Google tools are Health Sciences Researchers and Healthcare Professionals using, and how are they using them?
2) How effective are Google and/or Google Scholar for literature searching?
3) What other research is needed in this area?

Results

Health Sciences Researchers and Healthcare Professionals use many Google tools for a variety of purposes.

Google Scholar:
A valuable tool for literature searching.

Why Use Google Scholar?
• Unique, highly relevant results
• Transdisciplinary research
• Added value: cited references and related articles

Top Search Strategies
• Keep your search simple
• Review 50-100+ results for maximum benefit of recall and precision rates
• Use Google-friendly formatting
  • Phrases: “childhood obesity”
  • Place operators in ALL CAPS: “childhood obesity” AND (Arizona OR California)
• Use advanced search, limits, and other options

Considerations
• PubMed has more results for recently published research
• Other tools have slightly higher precision rates
• Maximum benefit of recall and precision may be missed on average in a systematic review if results of a Google Scholar search are not included?
• To what extent are Google and/or Google Scholar particularly useful for identifying documents from multiple geographical regions and languages?

Future Research

• Replicate previous studies to generate longitudinal data
• How much applicable evidence may be missed on average in a systematic review if results of a Google Scholar search are not included?
• To what extent are Google and/or Google Scholar particularly useful for identifying documents from multiple geographical regions and languages?

Takeaways

Use of Google Tools
• Health Sciences Researchers
  • Gather and manipulate data
  • Visualize and disseminate results
• Healthcare Professionals
  • Facilitate interventions
  • Create interactive educational materials

Google Scholar and Literature Searching
• Unique content makes it a valuable complement to subject specific databases

Poster PDF and Reference List: hdl.handle.net/2286/R.I.17663

*For Google Scholar we searched health AND google