
OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize an information need
2. Identify the major concepts that make up the information need
3. Determine the type of information needed
4. Convert the information need into a search statement

SCENARIO

- Your instructor has given an assignment to choose a medical condition and prepare a poster presentation about it.
- You must explain the condition and find current research about it from refereed journals.
- You decide that you are interested in osteoporosis because your grandmother has it. You recognize that you need general background information as well as current research information.
- You quickly discover that there is a lot of information on the topic and many different aspects so you have decided to focus your poster on the prevention of osteoporosis.

SEARCH PROCESS

STEP 1: Identify your "Information Need"

You have an information need because you have a class assignment or you have a patient with a condition that you know little about or even a personal health issue.

STEP 2: Identify the main concepts of your "Information Need"

"Prevention of Osteoporosis"

STEP 3: Identify the kind of information needed to satisfy your search

These are the types of situations where you need general knowledge as a starting point. Some examples of general knowledge questions are:

- What is Cushing's Disease?
- What is the standard therapy for West Nile Virus?
- What is the most reliable test to diagnose gall bladder disease?
- What are the side effects of Zocor?

To answer these questions, a textbook is often the best source. One drawback to using a textbook is that new topics, such as SARS, may not have become incorporated into textbooks.

The second part of your information need, or the assignment, is to locate current research from refereed journals about the prevention of a condition. Due to the amount of time that it takes a textbook to be written and published, they are not the best source for locating current research. Journal articles are usually a better source to find current research information.

Referred journals are also known as peer-reviewed. These journals utilize subject specialists to blindly review manuscripts to determine if they should be published in the journal. These reviewers also make suggestions to the authors on improving the quality of the article.

Now we have a better idea of what we need to find, textbooks with general information about osteoporosis and current articles reporting research from refereed journals about the prevention of osteoporosis.

STEP 4: Formulate a Search Statement

"I am looking for general background information on Osteoporosis from textbooks and I am looking for peer-reviewed research articles on the prevention of Osteoporosis".