# MeSH Changes and PubMed Searching: Class Handout

Check your learning and follow along with the class by answering the questions below.

## **Introduction and Review**

1. MeSH changes for the next year are generally posted on the NLM MeSH web site during which month?   
   Answer:
2. Where is documentation and guidance on MeSH changes in MEDLINE published in November and December?  
   Answer:
3. What should you check your saved PubMed searches for?  
   Answer:
4. How many additional MeSH terms are added when my search maps to **Migraine Disorders**?  
   Answer:

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## **Two Dates in MeSH**

1. When two dates are listed for “Year Introduced,” can you use the term to search the concept back to the oldest or newest date listed?  
   Answer:

## **Quiz 1**

How far back can you search with the MeSH term **Post-Acute COVID-19 Syndrome**?

* 1. 1963
  2. 1983
  3. 2020
  4. 2023

## **Quiz 2**

How far back can you search with the MeSH term **Plastic Surgery Procedures**?

1. 1963
2. 1998
3. 2022
4. 2023

## **Change 1: New Term with the Same Meaning**

When MeSH renames a concept (e.g., Ill-Housed Persons):

* The existing indexed records are changed.
* The old term is added as an Entry Term.

**To adjust your searches:**

1. What should you usually do?  
   Answer:

## **Quiz 3**

Which MeSH term does a search for **Alien Hand Syndrome** map to?

* 1. Alien Hand Syndrome
  2. Alien Limb Phenomenon
  3. It does not map
  4. Alien Limb Syndrome

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## **Change 2: New Term is More Specific**

When MeSH adds a term to gain specificity (e.g., Motorized Mobility Scooter):

* Existing indexed records are generally NOT changed.
* The “old” term continues to be used.

**To adjust your searches:**

Consider using the new, more specific term to retrieve newly indexed records.

1. Use Previous Indexing information and/or the broader term with which search tag to search previously-indexed records?  
   Answer:

### **Exercise 1**

* How far back can I search with **Knee Fractures**?  
  Answer:
* Where do I look in the MeSH record for terms used prior?  
  Answer:
* What field tag do I use to limit to records indexed between 1991 and 2012?  
  Answer:

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### **Exercise 2**

If you had a saved search for lactobacillus previous to 2023, and you wanted to continue to retrieve the same scope of literature, would you change your saved search? If yes, how?  
Answer:

### **Exercise 3**

Does a saved search for Aneurysm, Dissecting need to be changed if you want to continue retrieving the same scope of literature? If yes, how?  
Answer:

MeSH hierarchy changes (e.g., Aortic Dissection) can:

* Result in dramatic retrieval changes.

1. Generally, they offer an improvement to your what?  
   Answer:

To adjust your searches:

* Take a fresh look at the new hierarchy and reconsider your search

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### **Exercise 4**

* You want to search PubMed as comprehensively as possible, back to 2010, for literature related to **Paramedicine**. How would you do this?  
  Answer:

### **Exercise 5**

* You want to search PubMed as comprehensively as possible, back to 2015, for literature related to **Dust Mite Allergy**. How would you do this?  
  Answer:

## **Summary of Tips**

To adjust to changes in MeSH:

* Check MeSH mappings in your PubMed Search Details
* Check automatic explosions in MeSH
* Use the “Year Introduced,” Previous Indexing guidance and broader terms with [mhda] to craft searches for older records.
* Read about the MeSH changes in October and the year-end changes to MEDLINE in December in the NLM Technical Bulletin.

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1. When a new, more specific MeSH heading is added to the vocabulary, it is applied to records that were indexed in previous years.
   1. True
   2. False
2. When a MeSH term is replaced, the term that was replaced is retained in MeSH as a(n):
   1. MeSH Term
   2. Entry Term
   3. Supplementary Concept
3. The PubMed search results for a new, more specific term (e.g., Systemic Racism) will be included in the results for the broader term above it (e.g., Racism).
   1. True
   2. False
4. If my saved search suddenly retrieves many more or many fewer citations on a regular basis starting at the end of a calendar year, what is the most likely explanation? (Select the best answer)
   1. A changed MeSH term with the same meaning
   2. A new MeSH concept
   3. Hierarchy changes to MeSH

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## **Useful Links:**

[NLM MeSH Homepage](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/)

[Dates in MeSH](https://youtu.be/CBU7FYJ5Hnk)

[2023 MEDLINE Data Changes](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/nd22/nd22_medline_mesh_data_changes_2023.html)