



FPIN Librarian Community: Frequently Asked Questions

What qualifications do I need to participate?

FPIN has adopted the following FPIN Librarian Community Standard of Search Experience and Education:

FPIN prefers that librarians have . . .

1. Two more more years of experience searching electronic databases and Internet resources applicable to FPIN searches, including MEDLINE (use of MeSH vocabulary, publication types, and limits to search strategies).
2. A basic understanding of evidence-based medicine.
3. Experience performing clinically oriented searches for point-of-care questions.
4. A master's degree in library science.

Co-Authorship

Are all librarians listed as co-authors of Clinical Inquiries?

In recognition of the critical nature of the literature search and the expertise involved, all FPIN librarians are listed as co-authors on Clinical Inquiries.

What are the responsibilities of librarian co-authors?

Librarians assume primary accountability for the search strategy and results, essential to the CI methodology. Additionally, they are expected to review the entire manuscript, correctly format references, and assume accountability for the content that they feel qualified to address. Librarians are also expected to update searches periodically, and to respond to questions regarding searches.

Literature Searching

What is an FPIN search?

An FPIN search supports a Clinical Inquiry, which is published in the *Journal of Family Practice* or the *American Family Physician*. The search, conducted by an expert librarian searcher, covers prescribed databases and uses specific evidence-based medicine MEDLINE search filters (required, according to the search protocol).

The clinician author provides essential background information and guidance as to the scope of the topic and search. Search methods and results are recorded in standardized format using the Search Summary Form

How long does a search typically take to run?

Initially, the librarian may find that it takes, on average, 5-8 hours to run a full search based upon the search protocol. However, as he/she becomes more familiar with the search process, the search time will probably run between 3-4 hours.

This estimate does not include time to prepare results for delivery, which will depend upon the degree of sorting necessary and the delivery format selected (see suggestions below).

Librarians should also be prepared to review the completed Clinical Inquiry manuscript, and perform an update search, as necessary.

What databases do I need to search?

Librarians search databases included in the FPIN search protocol on the Search Summary Form. The protocol includes two tiers of resources. All resources in Tier I are required as part of an FPIN search. Tier II may be searched at the librarian's discretion.

Does FPIN provide training or support on how to conduct an FPIN search?

The Librarian Editor is available to provide search guidance and mentorship to all librarian members. Additionally, each librarian new to FPIN submits their first three searches to the Librarian Coordinator before officially submitting the search to the clinician author. This formal orientation period gives the librarian time to learn (and ask questions) about FPIN searching and Clinical Inquiries co-authorship, and to adapt his or her own literature searching style to the more formalized FPIN procedures.

Search Delivery

Am I required to use the Search Summary Form?

Yes. The Search Methodology & Sort Form is a required element of FPIN's formal search delivery process. The FPIN Librarian Community takes pride in providing literature search results in a meaningful format that enables the clinician author to more efficiently assess the scope of the literature and identify key references. The combination of both structured search and results delivery, and the expertise this entails, is an important part of the co-authorship role and is what sets apart the FPIN expert search from more general literature searches.

How should I deliver my search results to the clinician author?

The FPIN Librarian Community does not have a required format in which to deliver article citations to clinician authors, but librarians should take care to provide citations in a format that preserves the value of results sorting presented on the Search Summary Form.

Some examples of search delivery methods are:

- Separate word-processing documents, each with MEDLINE citations from a different study category (meta-analyses, RCTs & clinical Trials, guidelines, etc.).

- Word document with Table of Contents linking to sections of results, following the outline of the Search Summary Form.
- Webpage with links to pre-formulated database searches, including links to full-text from the local library (for librarians and authors at the same institution).

Who retrieves articles from the search results?

Physician authors are responsible for retrieving articles with which to write their Clinical Inquiry. If they share institutional affiliations, librarians are expected to assist authors with obtaining copies of articles and interlibrary loans, in accordance with local library policies. Those authors whose librarian co-authors are at distant institutions should attempt to retrieve articles through local means and will follow rules and incur costs as appropriate.

When no viable means of obtaining articles seems available, contact the Librarian Editor for assistance.