FINDING YOUR WAY:

SCHOLARLY SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE AND MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Issue 4: Direction, Embase and Medline.

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This series focuses on the nexus between medical affairs and the published medical-scientific literature. Last time, we talked about the publications themselves and took a high-level look at access issues for brand new information as well as journal article cost considerations. In this fourth installment, we turn to accessing Embase and MEDLINE – the two bibliographic database “Biggies” – (Figure 1). Embase.com searches Embase as well as Medline-unique citations (with removal of most duplicates). PubMed searches MEDLINE and some nonMEDLINE entries.

Embase and MEDLINE are essential to your search experience, and hold most of what’s out there in terms of new articles: the better you are at utilizing interfaces that access this information, the better you will be at keeping abreast of new literature.

**Figure 1. Direction Embase, Medline: Literature Information and MSL-at-the-Center**

- **People**
  - Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs)
- **Pizzazz**
- **MSL**
- **Embase MEDLINE**
- **Publications**
We also call out interface tools for Embase or MEDLINE like Embase.com and PubMed here because they’re useful for the medical affairs manager who needs to identify Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs) worth their salt when it comes to searching/monitoring the literature. Medical Affairs managers out there, the next time you’re in the throes of interviewing the 2 or 3 finalists in the running for that coveted MSL position, try this simple exercise. After each has answered your open-ended question regarding “literature and med affairs,” turn to a computer conveniently nearby and say “Show me.” Any “experienced” MSL applicant who appears to be completely at a loss in front of PubMed, may not be all that he or she professes to be. And after hiring, Embase.com or PubMed proficiency – in conjunction with other knowledge management tool proficiency checks – are nice additions to your ongoing in-house performance assessments.
Finally, mining Embase and MEDLINE can be used as a springboard for the savvy med affairs manager who wants to flush out and disseminate literature searching expertise in his or her organization.

Buttonhole the MSL “searchmeisters” in your midst and get them to share their “Embase.com (or Pubmed) Pearls” in a standing 5-minute slot at staff meetings. The geeky part of literature searching is less daunting when it’s offered up in small and compelling servings. Even if you’re not a frontliner, don’t be surprised if you find yourself taking advantage of such valuable information. Execs at the highest levels – especially the science types – “get it.” Technical tricks (eg, Figures 2 and 3) will speak for themselves, promptly resulting in increased Medical Affairs’ literature knowledge.

Figure 2. Finding Your Way When Monitoring KOL-Authorized Publications for the Organization
- Do search in Embase.com.
- View built-in author “filter” to scan for your KOLs

Figure 3. Finding Your Way When Monitoring KOL-Authorized Publications for the Organization
- Get a myNCBI account in PubMed so you can set up custom filters, log in, and do any search.
- Click Manage my Filters and click “custom filter”
- Enter query ORing your KOL authors and SAVE

NEXT TIME, IT’S ON TO “DIRECTION, PIZZAZZ.”