Using Emtree Terms to Search Embase

Embase is a biomedical and pharmaceutical database, which is particularly useful when you need to conduct a systematic review or search for topics on food/diet/nutrition topics, medical devices, or drugs. Embase contains all of MEDLINE's citations, and many more additional unique citations. Emtree terms are Embase's controlled vocabulary, which are used to assign subject terms to articles.
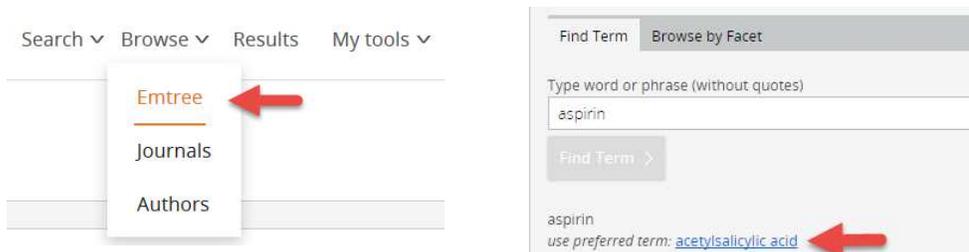
Accessing Embase
1. Go to the Health Sciences E-Resources A-Z list at http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/eresources and click on the link to Embase.
2. If you are off-campus, you will be prompted for your HawkID and password.
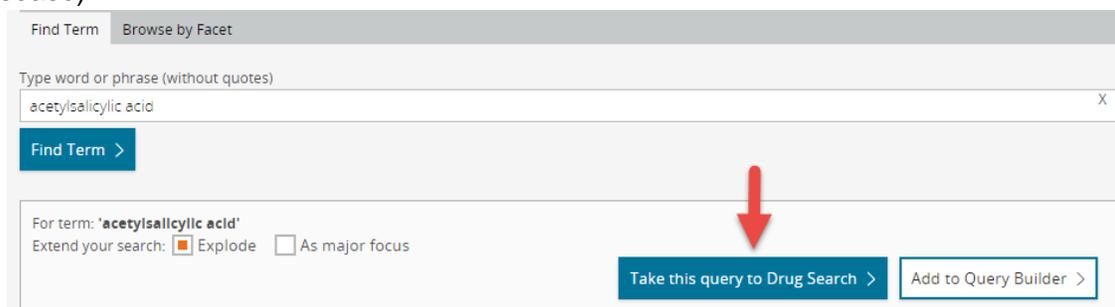
Identifying Main Concepts
Identify the main concepts in your research question, so you can search for each concept separately and the combine them together later. A search about the effects of aspirin on heart attacks has two concepts – "aspirin" and "heart attack."

Finding and Searching Emtree Terms
1. Click on the arrow after Browse on the upper right corner of the screen and then click on Emtree.
2. Type your first concept in the search box and click the Find Term button.

3. Browse the search results and click on the term that matches what you're searching. In this example, the preferred index term used in Embase for aspirin is, acetylsalicylic acid. So click on acetylsalicylic acid.
4. Now you are on a page showing the Emtree structures with acetylsalicylic acid in them. Scroll down to see more information such as history and synonyms. Click on the Take this query to Drug Search button (it will read Take this query to Disease Search if your term is a disease).
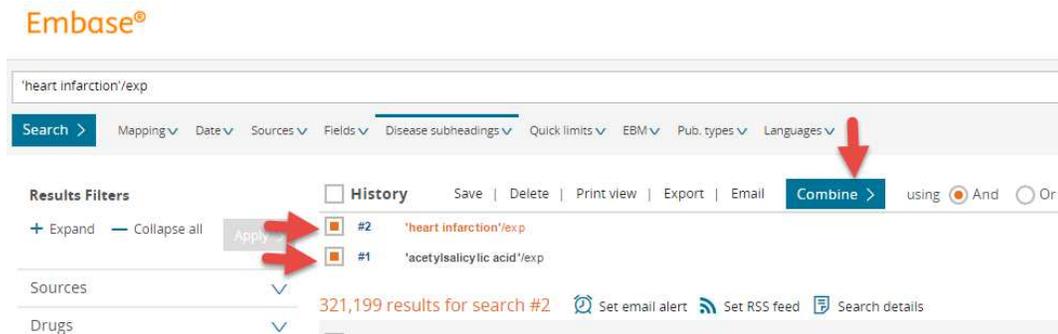

5. Now you're on the Drug Search page (Disease Search if your term is a disease). Click on the Search button to execute your search, and you'll see your search results.

6. Repeat Steps 1-5 for your second concept, heart attack.
7. Notice how Embase has searched your terms. The "/exp" (short for explosion) means this search not only looks for the Emtree term you searched but also many related subjects when available in the Emtree structure. The search, 'Heart Infarction'/exp, not only looks for the Emtree term, heart infarction, but also many related terms listed below heart infarction in the Emtree structure. The "/exp" in the search, 'acetylsalicylic acid'/exp only looks for the Emtree term, acetylsalicylic acid', and does not actually look for related terms because none is listed below "acetylsalicylic acid" in the Emtree structure.

Combining Your Searches

On the top of results page, combine your searches by checking the boxes to the left of each search and then clicking the Combine button. Be sure AND is selected for the aspirin and heart aspirin example. OR should be selected if you're searching for results that contain either one of your concepts.

Refining Your Searches

1. On the Results page, there are several options in the gray bars beneath the search box. For example, if you click on Quick limits, you will have the options to limit your search to Human subjects and English language.
2. There are also several options in the left side-bar of the Results page. For example, you can see how many citations there are in the most recent search in various subsets, e.g. age, gender, drugs used, and other diseases.

Exporting, Printing, and Saving References

1. Check the boxes to the left of references of interest.
2. Click on the "Print", "Export, or "Email" link (found at either the top or the bottom of the search results) and follow the prompts.
3. For EndNote Desktop, make sure the Export Format is RIS format (Reference Manager, ProCite, EndNote)". For EndNote Web (Basic), make sure the Export Format is Plain Text and Output is Full record. When in EndNote Web (Basic), make sure the Import Option is EMBASE.com.

Finding Full Text

1. To see if full text is available, use the UILink button, located below the article title, authors, and journal title.
2. If no full text is available, use our free interlibrary loan service http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/illa/

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