

Searching Basics



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The Search Strategy

- Develop question
- Identify keywords and terms from question
- Identify standardized subject headings
- Combine subject headings and keywords to narrow or broaden your search
- Evaluate your search results
- Revise the search in light of your results

Pulling Keywords from Your PICO Question

- What are the main topics of your question?
- Brainstorm – what other words could you use to describe your topic?
- What are some synonyms for the words you've come up with?

Evaluate the Search Results

- Don't be afraid if you have zero (0) or thousands of results, play around with search strategies – you won't break anything!
 - Read the titles and abstracts of "hits" in your search to get a feel for their relevance
 - Identify relevant Subject Terms and Keywords used to index particularly relevant "hits"
 - If your search yields too many or too few hits, modify it and try again

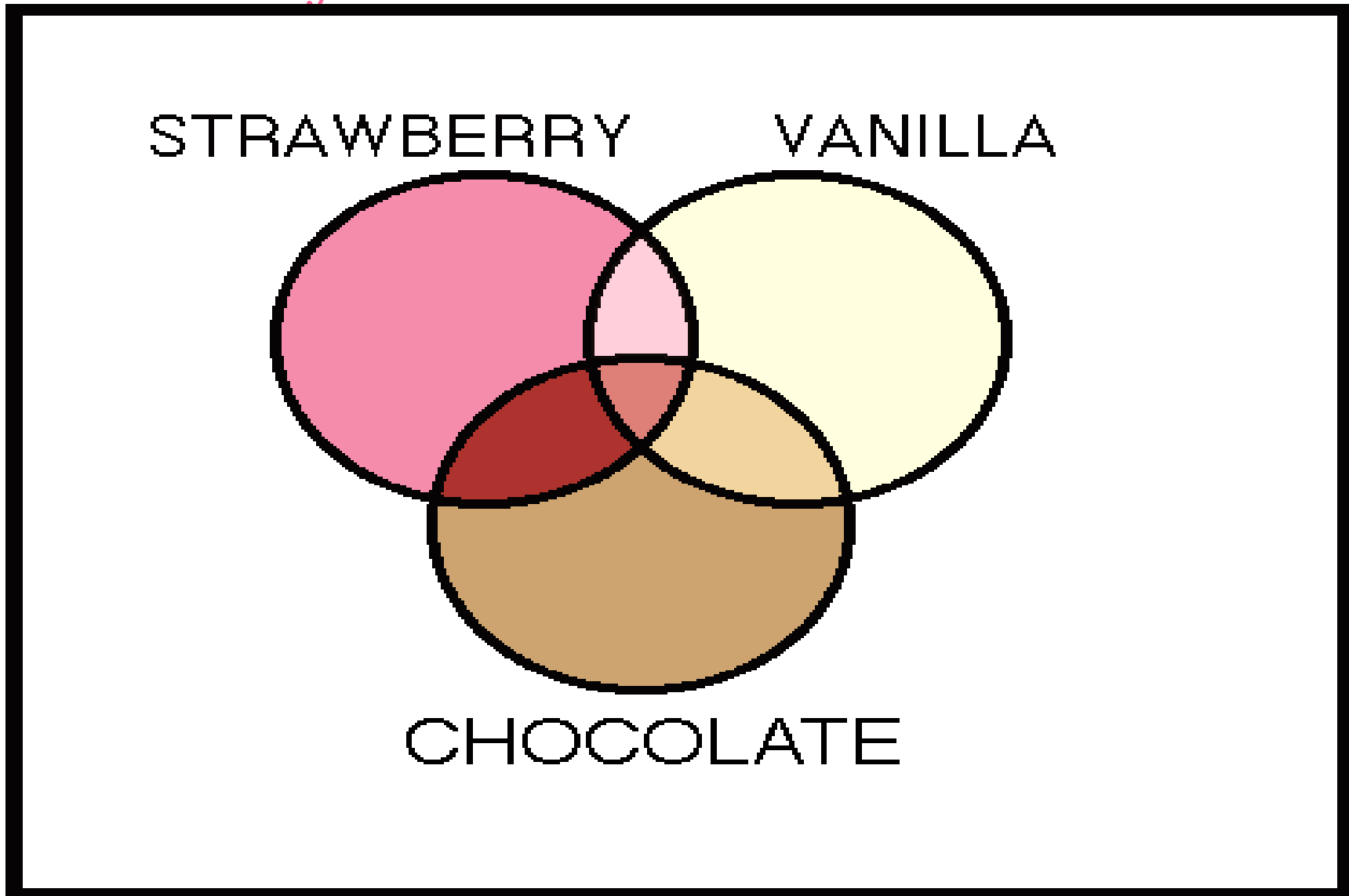
Revise the Search in Light of your Results

- Narrow the search by combining search terms and applying limits
- Broaden the search if the results are too limited by removing keywords and limits

Boolean

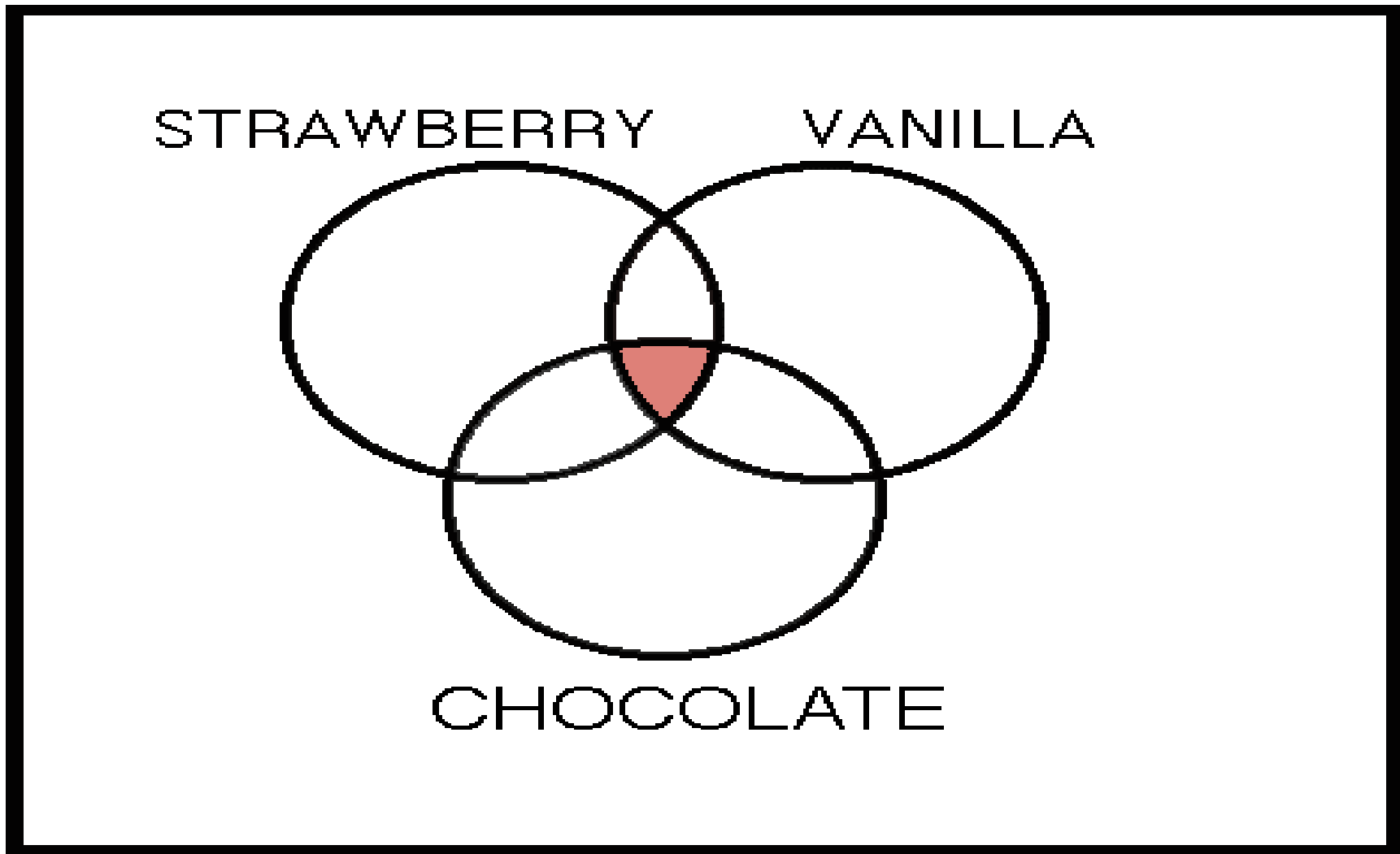
- AND
- OR
- NOT

strawberry OR vanilla OR chocolate



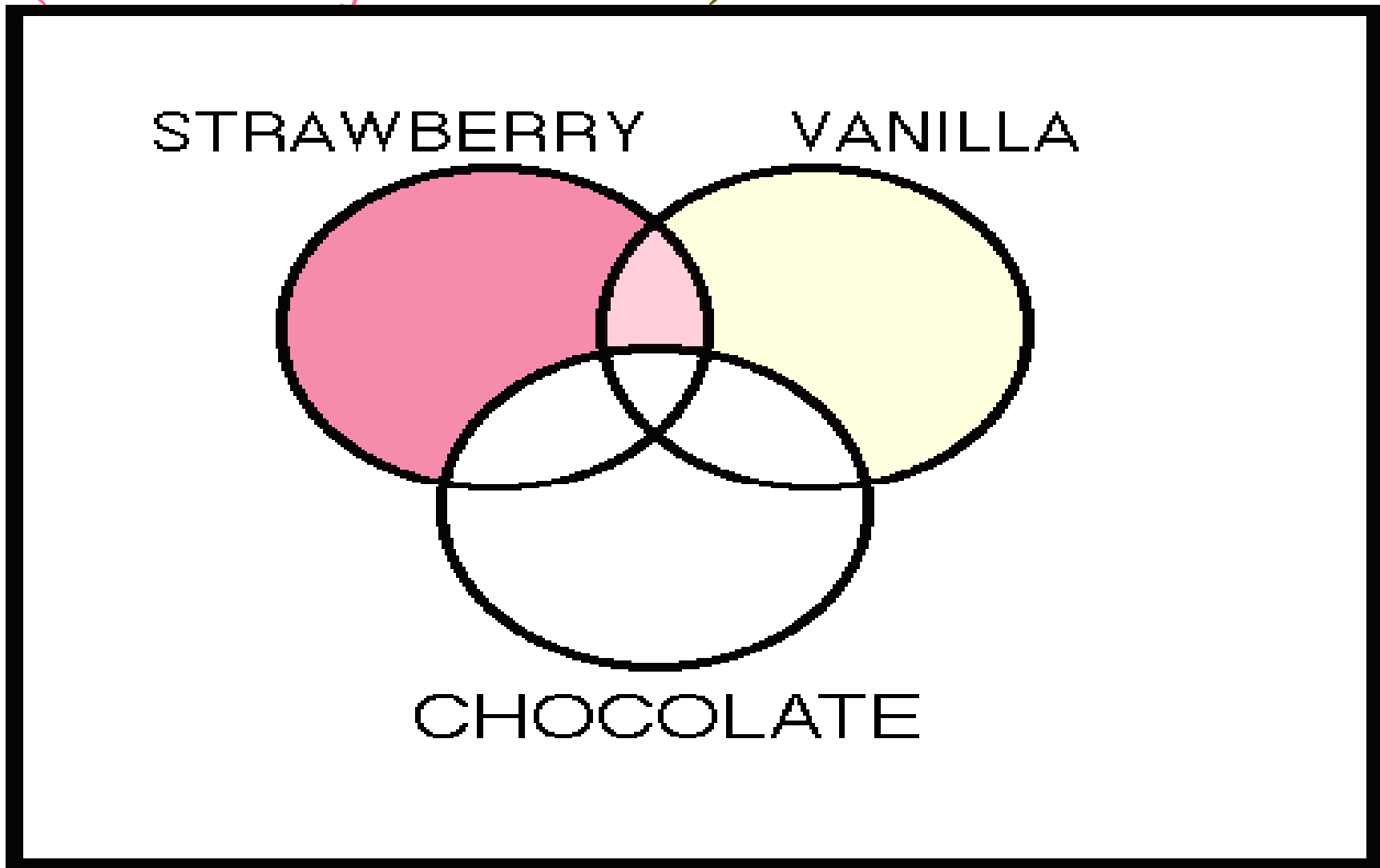
Strickland, Jennifer and Henderson, John R. (October 10, 2005). *Boolean Logic*. Retrieved September 22, 2007, from <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/course/expert.html>.

strawberry AND vanilla AND chocolate



Strickland, Jennifer and Henderson, John R. (October 10, 2005). *Boolean Logic*. Retrieved September 22, 2007, from <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/course/expert.html>.

(strawberry OR vanilla) NOT chocolate



Strickland, Jennifer and Henderson, John R. (October 10, 2005). *Boolean Logic*. Retrieved September 22, 2007, from <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/course/expert.html>.

BEYOND BOOLEAN (TRUNCATION AND WILD CARDS)

- **Truncation** is a searchable shortened form of a word.
 - **adolescen* will cover**
 - adolescence
 - Adolescent
 - adolescents, etc...
- **Wild card characters are useful because of alternate spellings and other quirks in the English language.**
 - **behavio?r, will cover**
 - behaviour
 - behavior
 - **Wom*n should pick up**
 - women
 - woman

Quotation Marks

Using quotation marks for a phrase forces the database to return results where those words appear together.

Without Quotations = 57,360 results

The screenshot shows a PubMed search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'All Databases', 'PubMed', 'Nucleotide', and 'Protein'. The search bar contains 'PubMed' in a dropdown menu and 'practice guideline' in the text input. Below the search bar are buttons for 'Limits', 'Preview/Index', 'History', 'Clipboard', and 'Details'. The 'Display' section shows 'Summary' in a dropdown menu, 'Show 20' in a dropdown menu, and 'Sort' in a dropdown menu. At the bottom, it displays 'All: 57360' and 'Review: 16850' with a small icon.

Items 1 - 20 of 57360

- 1: [Terra SM.](#)
What Can Claims Data Tell the Case Manager?

With Quotations = 13,180 results

The screenshot shows a PubMed search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'All Databases', 'PubMed', 'Nucleotide', and 'Protein'. The search bar contains 'PubMed' in a dropdown menu and '"practice guideline"' in the text input. Below the search bar are buttons for 'Limits', 'Preview/Index', 'History', 'Clipboard', and 'Details'. The 'Display' section shows 'Summary' in a dropdown menu, 'Show 20' in a dropdown menu, and 'Sort E' in a dropdown menu. At the bottom, it displays 'All: 13180' and 'Review: 2287' with a small icon.

Items 1 - 20 of 13180

- 1: [Terra SM.](#)
What Can Claims Data Tell the Case Manager?

Need Help?

Contact a librarian, we are here to help!

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