

## UNDERSTANDING ERROR MESSAGES

With the launch of *The Cochrane Library* enhanced search, quality checks have been introduced to search creation. These checks will identify basic searching issues, such as use of commands not supported by our search, which could impact the effectiveness of a strategy. While these checks will be performed on searches as you enter them, they have also been used to identify search lines in your saved searches with issues.

As a result, some users may encounter search lines with an “Error” message indicating an issue has been found with one or more search lines of a previously saved search. These messages can be seen in two locations

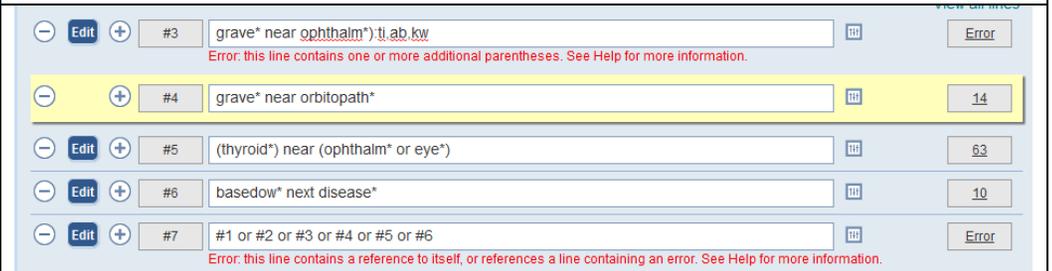
From Strategy Library, use the Export Search  button to view your search. If any issues have been identified, a line will appear at the top of your exported search. The lines with Errors will be identified with the word Error

Search Name: Iridotomy for glaucoma  
 Last Saved: 17/09/2012 02:23:59.151  
 Description:

Warning: Problems were found with one or more of your search lines (specific lines are identified below). For best results, you should review and edit the search lines indicated

ID	Search
#1	MeSH descriptor: [Graves Disease] explode all trees
#2	MeSH descriptor: [Graves Ophthalmopathy] explode all trees
	<b>[**Error**] ==&gt; #3 grave* near ophthalm*):ti,ab,kw</b>
#4	grave* near orbitopath*
#5	(thyroid*) near (ophthalm* or eye*)
#6	basedow* next disease*
#7	#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6
#8	MeSH descriptor: [Radiotherapy] explode all trees
#9	radiotherap* or irradi*
#10	#8 or #9
#11	#7 and #10 from 2011 to 2012

Load the Search using the Load  button. There will be a specific error message in red listed under search lines with issues. Use this following chart to help understand and fix these issues



The screenshot shows a list of search lines with their respective error messages:

- #3: grave\* near ophthalm\*):ti,ab,kw. Error: this line contains one or more additional parentheses. See Help for more information.
- #4: grave\* near orbitopath\* (highlighted in yellow)
- #5: (thyroid\*) near (ophthalm\* or eye\*)
- #6: basedow\* next disease\*
- #7: #1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6. Error: this line contains a reference to itself, or references a line containing an error. See Help for more information.

We encourage all users with saved strategies to review their searches for any of these messages. Detailed information on these messages and resolving these issues can be found below

For users who encounter an error message while inputting a search or who have found a error marked in one of their saved searches, the below chart provides information on the different error messages and possible resolutions

### Basic Search Entry Errors

**On Search Tab and Search Manager: Please enter a search term**

**On MeSH Tab: Please enter a term or select one or more qualifiers**

Issue: Something must be in the search box to run a search.

Solution: From any of the Search boxes, one or more letters must be entered in the search box to conduct a search.

On Search Tab or Search Manager, type an \* in the search box to search all data

### Error: This line contains one or more additional operators

Issue: The search line contained 2 Boolean operators next to each other which is not supported

Example: cancer and and lung

Solution: Remove the extra “and” operator. Applies also to “OR” and “NOT”

Example: headache and near pain

Solution: Remove one of the extra operators. Applies to “next” as well

Example: near NEXT patient

Solution: In the event that you need to search for an operator as part of an actual term, place the operator in quotes - “near” next patient

Example: From Search tab, “And” was selected in pull down and “AND” was typed as the first word in the search box or the last word giving

toothache and and pain

headache and and

Solution: On the Search Tab, never directly type a Boolean operator as the first term or last term in a search line. This will result in duplicate operators being picked up by the system

**Error: This line contains one or more special characters that are not supported when used with field restrictions**

Issue: A colon is a system indication for field label searching. The search expects one or more field labels separated by commas to follow a colon.

Example: cancer:

Solution: Colon indicates a field label should follow. Either remove colon or add field labels

Example: transplant:ti\*

Solution: Wildcards cannot be applied to the field labels. Apply wildcard to the term, transplant\*:ti

Example: cardiology:ti;ab;kw

Solution: Wrong separator is used between field labels. Use commas to separate field labels, cardiology:ti,ab,kw

Example: cardiac:ti,de.

Solution: Period was added to the end of a field limit string. Remove period.

Example: cardiology:ti, ab, kw

Solution: Extra Spaces were used to separate field labels. Field labels are separated by commas only, no spaces.

Example: Search title - Methods for cervical ripening and labour induction in late pregnancy: generic protocol:ti

Solution: If searching for titles containing a colon, remove the colon before searching

**Error: This line contains unsupported use of line references and field restrictions**

Issue: Field limits cannot be applied to combined search lines

Example: (#1 and #2):ti,ab

Solution: Apply the field limits to the referenced search lines not to the combined search

Example: On the Search Tab, search for a line number - #1

Solution: Search Tab does not support the search line numbers. Use Search Manager for this operation

**Error: this line contains unsupported use of field restrictions.**

Issue: On Search Tab, user typed in either field labels.

Example: On search tab, directly key field labels, toothache.ti,ab

Solution: On the Search Tab, where pull downs are provided for adding field labels, users MUST use these pull downs. The Search Tab does not support the direct keying of field labels. Use Search Manager for this operation

**Error: this line contains unsupported use of parentheses and field restrictions.**

Issue: Field limits have been divided by nesting which is not supported

Example: (cancer:kw):ti

Example: (cancer:kw):ti,ab,kw

Solution: Field labels cannot be separated by parentheses. Use cancer:ti,kw.

**Error: This line contains missing or unrequired quotes. See Help for more information**

Issue: There is an unequal number of opening and closing quotes (") or a mixing of double with single quotes (')

Example: "brain

Example: "retinal detachment" and scleral buckle"

Example: "tension headache'

Solution: Always make sure there is an equal number of opening and closing quotes. Always use double quotes and not single quotes

**Error: this line contains one or more additional parentheses**

Issue: There is an unequal number of opening and closing parentheses ( ).

Example: (headache and (pain or discomfort)

Solution: Always make sure that there is an equal number of opening and closing parentheses

**Error: this line contains a reference to itself, or references a line containing an error.**

Issue: A combined line includes itself, which is not allowed or references one or more other search lines with errors.

Example: #7 #5 or #6 or #7

Solution: A Search line cannot reference itself. Remove the or #7

Example: #7 #5 and #6 (but line #6 has an error)

Solution: You must resolve all previous errors for the combined line error to be resolved

**Error: this line cannot reference any subsequent or uncreated lines**

Issue: A combined search line cannot reference line numbers higher than itself

Example: #6 #4 and #5 and #7 and #8

Solution: A combined search line cannot reference line numbers greater than or equal to it

**Error: this line contains missing or unrequired syntax.**

Issue: Search contains Boolean operators as the last term in a line or multiple opening parentheses with no closing parentheses.

Examples: hemipleg\* and

Example: ((brain

Solution: Confirm that search is complete. Either add terms or remove extra Boolean operators or parentheses

**Error: this line contains one or more special characters that are not supported.**

Issue: Many special characters, such as ~, [ ] and !, are not searchable.

Example: ~cancer

Solution: For Searching purposes you may need to remove the special character to search

Example: behavio!r

Solution: Confirm you are using the appropriate symbol for truncation. ? for a single character, and \* for multiple characters

Issue: Some users try searching MeSH by typing command language from other search systems using [ ] or { }. To search a Mesh term on *The Cochrane Library*, you must use the Mesh browser. Searching with these conventions does not accurately search MeSH.

Example: neoplasm[Mesh]

Example: neoplasm[mesh:noexp]

Example: neoplasm[economic

Example: neoplasm{majr]

Solution: Always use the MeSH tab to search for MeSH terms. If you have one of these lines, insert a new line under it, click the M button to run a MeSH search, select your term and “Add to Search manager”. Once the new line is created, make sure to include it in all the combined searches that the previous search was included in. Then delete the original MeSH line.

## "ERROR (this MeSH term no longer current, tree number has changed, etc.): Laser Surgery"

Issue: The MeSH term referenced no longer exists.

Example: MeSH term no longer current, tree number has changed, etc.): Laser Surgery"

Solution: If the search line is recognized as a MeSH line, has an "edit MeSH"  button, click this button, reselect your term and "Add to Search Manager". If the search line has an "edit Search"  button, insert a new line below this line, hit the Mesh button  to reselect the MeSH term and "Add to Search Manager". Make sure this new line is included in the same combined searches as your original search line, then delete the original search line.

**Error: This search is being modified in more than one browser session/tab. To avoid errors, make all search changes from the same browser tab.**

Issue: User has one or more browser tabs or sessions open and is actively editing the search in two sessions.

Solution: To avoid conflicts, use only one browser tab for editing searches. Since articles are open in a new tab, close these tabs when after you have read the article. This will reduce the potential for having multiple search sessions open simultaneously

## General System Error Messages

**Sorry, one or more of our services are currently unavailable**

**Sorry, it appears there has been a timeout**

**Sorry, one or more of our services are currently unavailable**

Issue : These are general system errors that will occur if systems are down

**While the following conditions will not result in an ERROR message, they are common errors seen in searches on *The Cochrane Library*. Consider these common issues when reviewing searches for potential errors.**

Character	Example	Cause	How to fix
\$	cancer\$	\$ is not a supported wildcard character.	For best results, replace \$ with a * for multiple characters or a ? for single character search. Example: cancer*
adj	hearing adj aid*	adj is not a supported proximity operator	replace adj with either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• next to search as a phrase with term in this order</li> <li>• near or near/x to search within X words in either order</li> </ul>
: Searching for a title containing a :	Methods for cervical ripening and labour induction in late pregnancy; generic protocol:ti	Since colon, :, precedes a field label, it is not a searchable character.	When searching for article titles that contain a colon, :, remove the colon from your search  Methods for cervical ripening and labour induction in late pregnancy generic protocol":ti
:de	cornea*:de	:de is not a supported field tag	Replace with :kw to limit search to keywords which is the equivalent of descriptors
:ME	SUBSTANCE-RELATED DISORDERS:ME	:ME is not a supported field tag	Either replace with :kw to limit search to Keyword fields or select term from the MeSH Tab
:: Extra Colon used in field limit	infant::ti,ab	Use only one colon for field search	Remove the extra colon infant:ti,ab
Improper use of quotes” “	"amino acid* or malnutrition"	Use quotes incorrectly to group terms with a Boolean operator. Use to search a phrase. Use parentheses to group search terms	Use parentheses (nesting) to group terms and define the precedence for Boolean operators. Use quotes “ “ to search for a phrase Use: (amino acid* or malnutrition)
Missing space	or(mental* #1 and#2 and #3	Always include a space before and after Boolean operators	Always ensure there is a space before and after Boolean operators.
Used a single quote instead of a double quote	"pressure sore*" (Mixed single and double quotes	Used one or more single quotes instead of double quotes resulting in an uneven number of quotes	Replace single quote with double quotes> Ensure all quotes used are double “
<b>MeSH ISSUES WITH USERS ATTEMPTING TO DIRECTLY KEY SEARCHES</b>			
majr limit is applied	"Orthopedic Procedures"majr	Major concept searching of MeSH is not supported	For best results, MeSH terms should be searched using the MeSH browser which allows for term explosion. Alternately terms can be searched, but without term explosion by searching the MeSH term limited to the keyword field (:kw)
Limit to [mesh}	neoplasm[mesh] neoplasm[mesh:noexp]	Direct keying of MeSH searches is not supported	For best results, select MeSH terms using the MeSH tab