Brainstorm terminology related to epidemiologic studies:

- disease
- incidence
- prevalence
- exposure
- outcome
- study
- distribution
- determinants
- cause
- population
- observation
- surveillance
- hypothesis
- risk
- occurrence
- demographics

Brainstorm ways to articulate your topic in combination with one or more of the above terms:

**Example:**
What is the incidence of induced abortion among teenage girls from low income Hispanic families?

Incidence: abortion, teens
Prevalence: pregnancy loss, teenagers
Risk: termination of pregnancy, adolescents
Occurrence: adolescence
Correlates: Hispanic, Latina(s), low income, poor
Latino(s), poverty
Demographic characteristics: socioeconomic status
race
ethnic differences

*Sample search in PsycInfo or Sociological Abstracts or Social Services Abstracts:*

```
(incidence or prevalence or risk)
and (abortion or termination of pregnancy or pregnancy loss)
and (low income or poverty or socioeconomic status)
and (hispanic or latina* or latina)
) Keywords, KW=
```

*Search Tips:* e.g., wildcard*, exact phrase; use Keywords for a single search of Title, Abstract, Descriptors
NOTE: some of the databases don’t provide multiple search boxes connected by OR so you can either include the OR in your own searches or you can run several searches in which you alternate terms for each part of your research question:

Sample search in Web of Knowledge database using OR to connect alternative terms in one search box:

Search for:

incidence OR prevalence or risk            in  Topic
Example: oil spill* mediterranean

AND   abortion OR "termination of pregnancy" OR "pregnancy loss"            in  Topic
Example: oil spill* mediterranean

AND   hispanic* OR latina* OR latino*            in  Topic
Example: oil spill* mediterranean

Add Another Field >>

Sample search in Web of Knowledge database using single terms:

Search for:

incidence                                         in  Topic
Example: oil spill* mediterranean

AND   abortion                                         in  Topic
Example: oil spill* mediterranean

AND   hispanic*                                         in  Topic
Example: oil spill* mediterranean

Add Another Field >>

NOTE: In both of these examples in Web of Knowledge, the asterisk (*) is used as a truncation symbol in order to retrieve singular or plural forms of Hispanic(s). The asterisk is a fairly universal truncation symbol, so you can use it most other databases to retrieve multiple forms of a word: adolescen* ---- would retrieve adolescent, adolescents, adolescence

What’s the biggest secret to successful research? Being creative and experimenting with various ways to articulate your search. And finally, if you get stuck, ask for help from a friendly librarian!

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