A guide to International Pharmaceutical Abstracts (IPA)

What is IPA?

IPA – or International Pharmaceutical Abstracts - is a database that covers pharmaceutical science and health related literature from 1970 to the present. Abstracts of presentations at major pharmacy meetings are also included.

What can I do with it?

You can use this database to find references and abstracts for articles dealing with drug therapy, toxicity, pharmacy practice, legislation, regulation, technology, utilization, information processing, education, economics, and ethics as related to pharmaceutical science and practice.

How do I get to it?

To get to IPA:

1) Go to www.shirp.ca
2) Click on the “Search for articles on your topic” link under the heading “Find an Article”
3) Scroll down the page until you see “IPA” in the alphabetical list
4) Click on the heading above the description
5) If you are accessing this database from outside of a health region facility, you may be asked to log in if you haven’t done so already.
The main search screen for IPA is made up of:

1) Search History: keeps track of what you’ve looked for and how many results you got.
2) Search Box: allows you to search for specific words in the item records.
3) Limits: allow you to limit your results to items that fit specific criteria. More limits are available by clicking on “Additional Limits”.

This example illustrates searching IPA for articles on **medication reconciliation** as it relates to **patient safety**. It is usually a good idea to look for different concepts one at a time, and link them using the Search History later on. Type the first concept - *medication reconciliation* - in the search box, then click the “Search” button.
The results of the search are listed in the search history.

Repeat this process for the next concept, patient safety.
The results of the search are listed in the search history below the previous search.

To combine all of the terms for your search, check off the searches you want to combine and click on the “And” button. When you use AND your final results will only list records that contain all of those words.
The results of the combined search are listed in the Search History. Scroll down the page or click on “Display” to view the results.

Scroll through the list to see which articles interest you. If there is an “Ovid Full Text” link, or a “PDF Full Text” link, click on it to read the whole article. If there is no full text link available, click on the yellow “Find it!” button to find out if we have a subscription to the journal.
When you click on the “Find it!” button, a new window will open. If we have a subscription to the journal, you will see a message saying that full text is available. Click on the link to go to the journal.

In this case, we get the record for the article. Click on the PDF Full Text link to bring up the full article.
If we do not have a subscription to the journal you need, clicking on the “Find it!” button will bring up a new window with a link to request the article. Click on the link to get to an online request form.

The information about the article will automatically be entered in the form. Fill in your information and click on the “Send Request” button to place your request. A paper copy of the article will be obtained and mailed to you.