

CABI Global Health, more than just a database: a fresh perspective on global literature with a not-for-profit impact

Jesslyn Thay

CABI, Wallingford, United Kingdom

Abstract

CABI Global Health is a specialized bibliographic database for public health research, developed by CABI, a not-for-profit organization addressing global health challenges. It contains nearly 5 million curated records from peer-reviewed journals, grey literature, and multidisciplinary sources, offering comprehensive coverage of public health issues worldwide. Beyond traditional medical disciplines, it integrates One Health, environmental health, nutrition, and zoonotic diseases, emphasising the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. The database's indexing system, including the CABI Thesaurus and CABICodes, ensures precise literature retrieval. Committed to global knowledge representation, CABI actively indexes research from underrepresented regions, particularly low- and middle-income countries. Available via the CABI Digital Library, EBSCO, Web of Science, and Ovid, CABI Global Health is a vital resource for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners engaged in evidence-based public health decision-making.

Key words: public health; One Health; databases, bibliographic; review.

CABI Global Health is a specialist public health database, produced by not-for-profit CABI, with nearly 5 million records handpicked from leading international multidisciplinary titles, in addition to core public health journals and grey literature, giving users a comprehensive view of international public health at local, national, and regional levels.

CABI is an international not-for-profit organisation founded in 1910, dedicated to addressing global challenges in agriculture, the environment, and public health. CABI's main driver is to provide knowledge, tools, and sustainable solutions to improve lives, empower women and youth, combat climate change, protect biodiversity, and strengthen food security.

Through its partnership of 48 member countries CABI reinvests its revenue into projects that make a real difference, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Every CABI project is designed to empower communities, using evidence, knowledge and research to drive long-term positive change, with a strong com-

mitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through publishing, research, and development work, CABI continues to provide essential data and practical solutions to improve health outcomes, control disease spread, and support healthier, more resilient communities.

CABI Global Health: your key to comprehensive Public Health research

Since the creation of the database in 1995, CABI Global Health has been regarded as a leading resource for researchers, policymakers, and public health professionals worldwide, offering access to over 4.7 million health literature records spanning from the early 1900s to the present day.

For over 30 years the CABI Global Health database has hand-selected relevant content from a wide array of subjects beyond conventional medical health topics, including cross over content from One Health, the en-

Address for correspondence: Jesslyn Thay, CABI Nosworthy Way, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, UK OX10 8DE, United Kingdom. E-mail: j.thay@cabi.org

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vironment, food science, agriculture and plant science, and veterinary health, allowing users to have a truly comprehensive view of global public health challenges. Exploring non-traditional sources is crucial for a complete picture and acknowledging that valuable lessons can be learned from around the world. This is where CABI Global Health differs from competitors and enables users to have a broader global perspective, incorporating knowledge from diverse regions and multiple disciplines from our global scope of serials published in over 110 countries and 50 different languages.

In addition, we acknowledge that many critical insights are found in local studies, policy reports, and other grey literature that may not be indexed in mainstream databases but is indexed CABI Global Health and easily findable with our world-class controlled vocabulary.

Unique insights, unmatched coverage

While CABI Global Health is primarily a public health database containing all the core aspects of health literature, the database has unique content on medical entomology, vector borne disease and zoonoses, key literature in a world rapidly impacted by climate change (Figure 1). Further strengths lie in our nutrition coverage; to get a healthy population you must eat nutritionally valuable food, from field to fork our coverage on nutrition is world class.

CABI Global Health's environmental health coverage is exemplary, with the ability to find all subject-relevant journal sources in one place, with historical literature from the turn of the century around sanitation and hygiene, this is supplemented by our inclusive coverage on water and wastes. Our unique history and perspective bring users crucial information valuable for comprehensive evidence synthesis on a multitude of topics. In a 2023 comparison with PubMed, out of 7754 titles, almost half (47%) were unique to CABI, including African Journal of Clinical and Experimental Microbiology, CABI One Health and Chinese Journal of Food Hygiene. Furthermore, 74% of 7400+ titles indexed on CABI Global Health in 2024, were not found on MEDLINE's title list.

Global Health Archive: incorporating a legacy to help shape the future

Our vast collection of literature enables users to explore a wealth of modern health and multidisciplinary records yet also search important and valuable historical public health literature, including journals from the Bureau of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases, originally founded in 1908, and which became incorporated into CABI in 1993, strengthening CABI's commitment to public health. Its journals included the *Tropical Diseases Bulletin*, first published in 1912, and

Health and Disease	Infectious Diseases and Epidemiology	Biomedical Sciences and Therapeutics	Public Health Systems and Policy	Environmental and Occupational Health	Nutrition and Food Security	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
Ageing	Bacterial and Viral diseases	Diagnosis and Therapy of Disease	Public Health Emergencies	One Health & Environmental Interactions	Public health Nutrition	Social Determinants and Health Inequality
Chronic Diseases	Tropical and International Health	Pharmacology & Toxicology	Health Education	Environmental Health and Climate Impact	Food Security	Public Health
Mental Health	Zoonotic and Emerging Diseases	Traditional Medicine & Integrative Health	Health Policy & Planning	Occupational Health and Safety	Food Science	Health Promotion and Wellness
Women's Health	Infectious and Vector-borne Diseases		Health Economics	Sanitation, Water, and Hygiene	Clinical Nutrition & Deficiencies	Community Health
Maternal & Child Health	Medical Entomology and Mycology		Healthcare Services	Disaster Health Management		Health behaviours and beliefs
Sexual and Reproductive Health	Medical Microbiology		Population Health and Social Medicine			
Migrant Health	Nosocomial Infections					
	Parasitology					

Fig. 1. The breadth of subject scope of indexed records found in CABI Global Health (2025).

Abstracts on Hygiene and Communicable Diseases, first published in 1926, which CABI digitised, and which can now be accessed online as part of the Global Health Archive.

The Global Health Archive includes records from the 1900s onwards, including community health records and some of the first reports of neglected tropical disease cases. This unique treasure trove of historical literature includes titles such as *Sleeping Sickness Bulletin* which can be accessed as Full-Text content and is not available digitally anywhere else.

The CABI Global Health database and the Archive allow users to explore past research to better understand how historical events, behaviours and practices have influenced current global health issues, while learning from the past can help us make more informed better strategies for current and future health challenges.

Balancing act: ensuring quality while increasing global representation

The CABI Global Health Database carefully selects and indexes relevant content from over 7,500 accepted journals, with the number growing daily (Figure 2). New journal titles are assessed based on strict selection criteria, particularly for open-access titles, following DOAJ guidelines and OASPA membership standards. Journals must adhere to COPE ethics, WAME principles, and a rigorous peer review process. Editors are vigilant over quality, working to identify and exclude predatory journals, paper mills, and hijacked titles. (CABI Digital Library 2024 <https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/databases/review-process>).

Key considerations for journal selection include the

uniqueness of subject content, particularly if the journal covers topics not well represented in existing literature, multi-disciplinary journals may be reviewed by multiple subject experts to ensure relevance.

Additionally, journals offering valuable regional content, especially those underrepresented in established literature, are given special consideration. These factors ensure that the CABI Global Health database remains a high-quality, authoritative resource for researchers and academics.

This also means that publications that do not match CABI's editorial standards for inclusion also need to be rejected from time to time. Rejections are handled case by case, with the journal's editors given advice and feedback on how to improve their internal standards. Publishers are also encouraged to apply for indexing again when CABI's criteria for inclusion have been met satisfactorily.

From data to discovery: how CABI Global Health supports research

On CABI's own CABI Digital Library (CDL) platform exploring our designated Smart Searches enables users to drill down into subjects using our controlled vocabulary in pre-made searches. These strings can be combined with each other, with limiting factors or one's own search strategy as building blocks. CABI Global Health has 30 Smart Searches across varied health topics such as *Pollution*, *Obesity* and *Drug resistance*.

On CDL there is an ability to filter results to "Grey literature" or "Evidence based research" using our Filter feature, the searches behind the buttons were curated by a team of external experts and subject specialists. (Figure 3) Current developments are to ex-

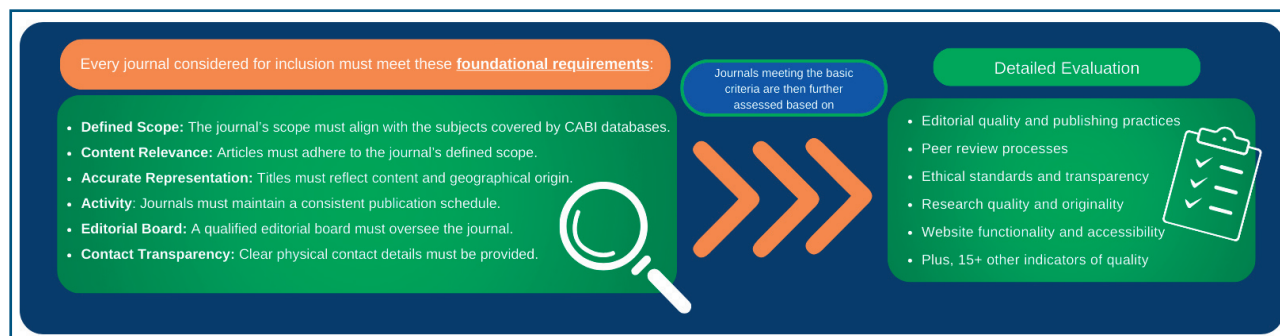


Fig. 2. Brief outline of processes for journal selection for indexing in CABI products.

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pand filters around evidence types to allow users to focus deeply on areas and types of literature of interest.

CABI Global Health on the CDL benefits from extensive features enabling efficient search retrieval and data export. Searches can be saved in users own collections, as well as being retrievable at any time, they are also easy to edit. Guidance is available in the form of a comprehensive and straightforward helpfile.

CABI's Full Text repository of over 790,000 items and growing, including many human health articles, is made possible by agreement with third party contributors, and has been specially digitised and indexed by

CABI. A significant percentage of the content is not reliably available anywhere else.

One-of-a-kind indexing: using CABI Thesaurus and CABICodes

CABI Thesaurus is CABI's controlled vocabulary, which every record is indexed using, and is designed to facilitate precise and structured searching of life sciences literature. Unique to us the thesaurus includes a vast array of public health terms with similarities to MeSH but with a broader focus on life sciences, animal sciences, food production and agriculture.

CABI Thesaurus has half a million entries and covers

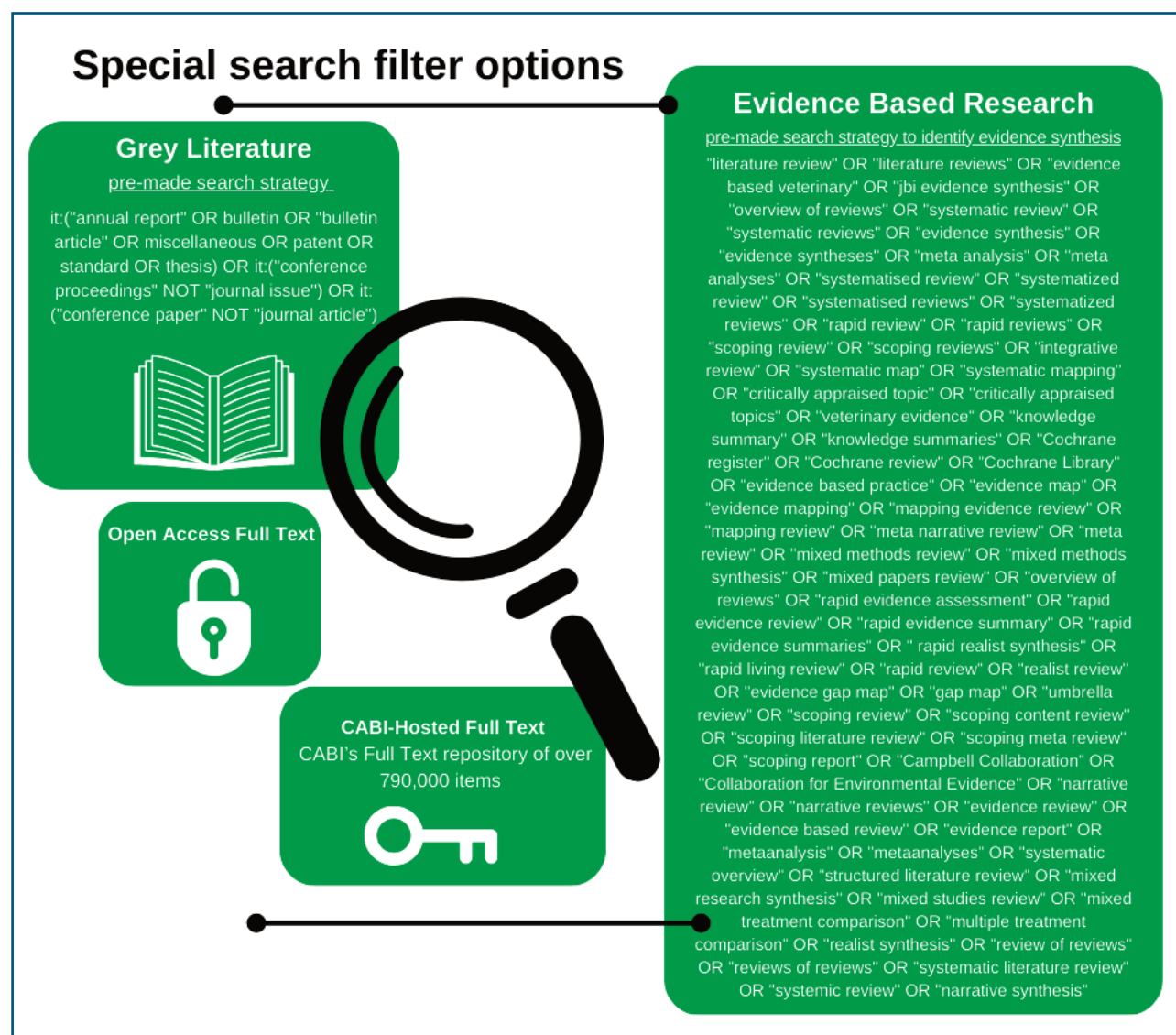


Fig. 3. CDL special search filter options. To see more follow helpfile link at <https://help.cabi.org/cabi-digital-library-help/search/special-search-filter-options#cabi-hosted-full-text>.

organism names, disease states, and geographical locations, encompassing over 189,000 terms and more than 300,000 relationships between them, in addition to offering translations across 11 languages for up to 27,000 concepts.

A new tool has been introduced to improve usability of CABI Thesaurus, with interactive visualization and search building abilities.

Ongoing projects aim to enhance the representation of public health terms and integrate MeSH data to bridge terminology gaps, where applicable, making it easier than ever for systematic reviewers to translate search strategies and strings between databases.

Another completely unique feature to CABI Global Health over other A&I databases are CABIcodes. A classification system of topic codes assigned to broad subject areas, enabling comprehensive subject searches and refined indexing.

The CABIcode system consists of 25 major subject areas, with coverage of all life science disciplines. Under the Human Health category (VV000), there are 24 specialized CABIcodes that focus on specific aspects of health research. Examples include: VV550 for Rural Health, VV210 for Infectious Diseases, and VV100 for Human Nutrition. CABIcodes can be combined with each other to build complex and comprehensive searches and underpin many Smart Searches and “*browse by topic*”.

Looking ahead: commitment to decolonising health literature

As CABI Global Health looks to the future, a key focus is on CABI's commitment to decolonise health literature and provide equal representation for all health literature. This involves ensuring that scientific contributions from all regions of the world, particularly from low- and middle-income countries, are fairly represented.

Editors at CABI are committed to ensuring that high-quality research from underrepresented regions is indexed in CABI Global Health, using internationally recognised selection criteria. CABI has a strength in sourcing literature written in local language in addition to studies conducted in source countries and written by native academics.

Of the 7000+ indexed titles, 2373 are published in the Global South, including BRIC countries. While maintaining a focus on high-quality science, we are looking

to also increase our content from North and Sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to increasing representation from Latin America and Pan American nations and providing access to more literature from across Central Asia.

Beyond journals: exploring grey literature for a complete picture

CABI Global Health is committed to ensuring that grey literature, which includes important research outputs such as reports, policy documents, conference papers, book chapters, protocols, briefings, guidelines, and situational data, is widely accessible alongside traditional academic publications.

CABI editorial team recognise the value of these often overlooked resources and actively sources and identifies additional content, enhancing the database collection to provide a more comprehensive view of health challenges worldwide. There are currently over 113,700 grey literature articles sourced and indexed from key health organisations and globally recognised institutes.

How to access CABI Global Health, CDL and other platforms

CABI Global Health is available directly on CABI's own platform CABI Digital Library (CDL). Here users can benefit from using the curated search filters and Smart searches, as well as Full Text PDF links and other intuitive advanced user features like ‘search alerts’, account search history and sharing projects.

CDL functionality also caters to expert users with the ability to curate searches of up to 64,000 characters in both Advanced Search and the main keyword search. Users who are working in evidence can easily export their own selected records or up to 100,000 search results in one go (either as .ris, .csv, Text, bibText, or EndNote.)

Furthermore, CABI Global Health is also available on EBSCO, Web of Science Collections and Ovid platforms. Unique features like CABI Thesaurus and CABIcodes can still be utilised on third party platforms.

CABI Global Health: striving to empower future generations

Since formation in 1995 CABI Global Health remains committed to advancing its mission of providing high-

quality, inclusive, and accessible health information. We are constantly working to improve CABI Global Health, from frequently assessing scope and coverage, to ensuring journals are of repute before indexing, as well as expanding the controlled vocabulary and enhancing functionality of the database.

CABI Global Health will continue to be a key resource for librarians, providing researchers, students, and practitioners with essential health literature. By advancing access to knowledge and supporting evidence-based decision-making, CABI Global Health will help equip future generations to tackle our ever-changing world's global health challenges. So here is to the next 30 years of CABI Global Health.

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*Need to be a CABI subscriber to access

