Using CINAHL to find a double-blind study

Prepared for MEDA 110
Introduction

- CINAHL (pronounced sin-all) stands for “Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature”
- CINAHL is a search engine that contains the full text of over 770 journals
- Almost all journals in CINAHL are scholarly; many of them are peer reviewed.
- These slides show an easy way to use CINAHL for locating a double-blind study.
After you open CINAHL, click on the “Advanced Search” link
Type your topic in the top text box, then type “double blind” in the second text box. Use quotes so that CINAHL will search for an exact phrase.

In the pull down menu adjacent to “double blind”, select the “AB Abstract” field. This will help keep your search results relevant.
Before you click “Search”, use the check box located underneath your search statement to limit your search results to full-text articles only. This eliminates articles that have only their abstracts (i.e. summaries) available.
After you click “Search”, CINAHL will show how many full-text articles were retrieved.

Since you’ll need recent studies, change the sorting of results to “Date Descending”. This gets newer articles on top of the results list.
Effectiveness of guaraná (Paullinia cupana) for postradiation fatigue and depression: results of a pilot double-blind randomized study. (includes abstract); Miranda VC; Trufelli DC; Santos J; Campos MP; Nobuo M; Miranda MC; Schlinder F; Riechelmann R; del Giglio A; Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine, 2009 Apr; 15 (4): 431-3 (journal article - clinical trial, research, tables/charts) ISSN: 1075-5535 PMID: 19388866

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE: Guaraná (Paullinia cupana) has been used medicinally for centuries. The aim of this study is evaluate the effectiveness of guaraná in the treatment of postradiation depress...

Subjects: Breast Neoplasms; Depression; Fatigue; Plant Extracts; Plants, Medicinal; Radiotherapy; Middle Aged: 45-64 years; Female

Database: CINAHL Plus with Full Text

Each record in the results list represents a unique journal article. The title of the article is listed in blue;, details about the authors and the journal itself appear in green, and the beginning of its abstract appears in black.

Clicking on the blue title will get the full abstract. Clicking on the “PDF Full Text” link at the bottom of the record will get the complete article.
Abstract: CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE: Guaraná (Paullinia cupana) has been used medicinally for centuries. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of guaraná in the treatment of postradiation depression and fatigue. DESIGN AND SETTING: This study had a double-blind randomized design with crossover between experimental arms, at Faculdade de Medicina da Fundação ABC. METHODS: We conducted a randomized double-blind crossover trial with 36 patients with breast cancer undergoing adjuvant radiation therapy. We randomized patients to either guaraná 75 mg daily p.o. or to placebo. Patients were switched to the other experimental arm at the middle of the radiation treatment, which consisted of 28 daily fractions of 180 cGy. Evaluations were conducted at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end of radiation therapy. RESULTS: We were unable to show any statistically significant differences between the guaraná and the placebo-treated group with any of the measured scores. Also, within the same group, we did not see any statistically significant associations during either the guaraná- or placebo-treated periods with any of the aforementioned measures. CONCLUSIONS: We were unable to show that patients with breast cancer undergoing radiation therapy derive any advantage with guaraná over placebo for both fatigue and depressive symptoms.

Read the abstract to assess whether an article is actually a double-blind clinical trial, and not a review article that summarizes several studies at once. To identify a double-blind study, look for details such as number of patients studied, the presence of a placebo group, and a statistical analysis of the results.