

Spelling mistakes in searches: some suggestions

An aide-memoire to accompany my video, Spelling mistakes in searches, available at <https://youtu.be/Ol87brZ3aDc>

These suggestions are experience-, rather than evidence-based, but I hope they may prove useful.

1. Vowels: vowels are a fruitful area for error. Try using wildcards in place of vowels to see if you can find unorthodox spellings. Two vowels together may be incorrectly transposed at the keyboard, and the error may escape the eyes of proof-readers. I am indebted to Alan Fricker of King's College London for the surprising number of uses of daibetes for diabetes
2. Double consonants: a single consonant may be used instead of a double. Words with two or more sets of double consonants are particularly prone to being misspelt.
3. Names: anyone with a name more unusual than Brown, Jones or Smith can attest to how easily names can be mangled, so consider, if searching for an eponymous condition, possible variations. Of course, remember the British English practice of using a possessive, e.g. the British English form Crohn's disease is not used in American English, who prefer Crohn disease.
4. Sometimes the variation is justifiable, as in the case of Korsakoff (he of the syndrome). Transliteration conventions vary, so the Russian terminal -off may also be -ov, a terminal -sky may be rendered as -ski. Transliteration from other non-Roman scripts may similarly vary: Arabic and Chinese, for example.
5. While use of eponyms in medical terminology is now discouraged, whatever view you take (and I personally regret their disappearance) they still occur in the literature, so should be included in search strategies.

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