

# New Canadian research helps doctors care for kidney patients

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Research funded by The Kidney Foundation of Canada and led by kidney specialists at Lawson Health Research Institute and The University of Western Ontario will make it possible for doctors to quickly and effectively access information relevant for patient care. These research findings have been released this week in the print version of the renowned *British Medical Journal* (BMJ).

"Our study shows that MEDLINE, the database most used by [doctors](#) to guide patient care, can be filtered in a reliable manner for patient relevant information," says Dr. Amit Garg, a London Health Sciences Centre nephrologist and [epidemiologist](#), Lawson scientist, associate professor with the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at The University of Western Ontario and Clinician Scientist with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Previous attempts to filter the database for a clinical discipline have been limited.

As of February 2009, the MEDLINE multi-purpose electronic database contained information on 18 million articles from 5,363 different journals, with 12,500 new articles added each week.\* Finding relevant information is sometimes like finding 'a needle in a haystack'. A typical MEDLINE search retrieves a lot of irrelevant data and misses highly pertinent articles. One way to improve searching is to filter MEDLINE for a clinical discipline. The research team tested over one million 'renal' filters, using an empiric approach to discover those with high performance.

"This is great news. [Kidney](#) specialists now have a tool to be able to treat their [patients](#) with the best and newest information possible," says Dr. Barbara Ballermann, president of the Canadian Society of Nephrology.

"Using filters is like screening for disease in high risk populations," says Dr. Garg. "Instead of searching the entire MEDLINE database, doctors can now perform their search within a set of articles relevant to the discipline, such as kidney or kidney disease. Our best renal filters exceeded 97% sensitivity and specificity so they can now be programmed into the system, available for everyone to use - not just renal specialists."

"Research is our number one patient service," notes Dr. Brendan Barret, nephrologist and Scientific Co-Chair of The Kidney Foundation of Canada's Research Committee. "Thanks to donor support, we were able to fund this study with its far-reaching implications that directly impact patient services."

Source: University of Western Ontario

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