1,189 sources and new studies every morning for each topic

15 Knowledge Hubs make finding studies easier

With fifteen Knowledge Hubs, "Monitor Versorgungsforschung" operates continuously updated research portals for the German healthcare system. Across all hubs, 1,189 German-language and international specialist databases, study registries, institutions, and routes to full texts are now accessible in one place. Secondly, each hub has its own daily newsletter: the search results are updated daily and curated by AI, so that a new selection of studies with a German summary is added every morning – selected for transferability to Germany.

>> In August, the journal "Monitor Versorgungsforschung" gave all health services researchers – and itself – an early birthday present for its 20th year of publication (2027): the Knowledge Hubs at knowledge-hubs.m-vf.de. Back then there were twelve research portals. There are now fifteen – and the three new ones are built differently from all previous ones.

Two kinds of hubs

The first twelve follow a care topic across all clinical pictures: how care is provided, how people are vaccinated, how things are digitalized and decided. What is selected is whatever changes healthcare delivery – regardless of the disease in question.

The new ones follow a disease area. They read the field's core journals and cover clinical as well as basic research; health services research is one section among others, not the yardstick. Oncology came first, followed by diabetes and cardiology; obesity has been added with the same design. This means eleven topic portals and four indication portals now stand side by side.

The distinction is not a formality; it changes the selection: a topic hub asks what changes healthcare delivery; an indication hub asks what moves the field. The same study may appear in one and not in the other.

The eleven topic hubs:

- Digitalization, AI & Health: digital applications and artificial intelligence in healthcare – searching both medical journals and computer science conference literature.
- Gender-Sensitive Medicine: sex and gender as factors in diagnosis, dosing, and access – and whether a difference stems from biology or not.
- Healthy Aging & Longevity: lifespan and healthy life years, from prevention and geriatrics to aging cohorts.
- Health Literacy: understandable health information, decision aids, and patient involvement – and who is not reached.
- Heat, Climate & Health: extreme weather and climate change and what they mean for healthcare and population health, with a dedicated section for environmental monitoring data.
- Vaccination & Immunization: vaccination rates, vaccine acceptance, and what raises coverage, with notification data and registries.
- Noncommunicable Diseases/NCD: care for the chronically ill, plus programs, guidelines, and the question of what actually



reaches people nationwide.

- Patient Safety: avoidable harm – treatment and medication errors, hospital-acquired infections, sepsis, and medical malpractice law.
- Nursing & Long-Term Care: long-term care and the situation of caregivers, plus expert standards and facility comparisons.
- Mental Health: access, waiting times, community-based services, and coercion – not whether treatment works, but who receives it in time.
- Health Services Research: the field in its full breadth – the first hub in the series.

The four indication hubs:

- Obesity: weight management, drug therapy, and surgery – and the question of who pays for treatment when § 34 SGB V excludes it from statutory coverage.
- Diabetes: type 1 and type 2, complications, glucose technology, and disease management programs, from some thirty core journals.
- Cardiology: heart and circulation from some 35 core journals, from "Circulation" to "Clinical Research in Cardiology" – of all hubs, the one with the strongest European focus.
- Oncology: cancer research and cancer care from some thirty core journals, from "Lancet Oncology" to "Nature."

One search term, many sources

The principle is the same in all hubs and deliberately simple. Users enter a term in the search field at the top, such as "primary care," "heat action plan," or "frailty," and press the gold button "Search all databases" (step 1). All database tiles on the page are then set to this term: clicking a tile opens the ready-made results list in a new tab, without re-entering anything. However, this only applies to databases suitable for a live search.

Together, the fifteen hubs provide access to 1,189 databases. Of these, 563 support direct searching and are labeled "live search." The others, labeled "portal," lead only to the provider's homepage because the provider does not allow linkable result addresses, or they require a license – access then runs through one's own library or institution, as Scopus, Web of Science, Embase, or CINAHL require institutional access. This spares users the disappointment of hitting a paywall behind a supposed search. Whether a tile really supports a live search is not assumed but tested: before inclusion, each address is called up twice, once with a real term and once with a made-up word. If the same page comes back both times, it is classified as a "portal."

Next to the gold button, as step 2, is the red "Show results directly" button. One click, and the hub simultaneously queries the databases that allow direct access to their content. There are currently seven: PubMed, Europe PMC, OpenAlex, Crossref, DOAJ, ClinicalTrials.gov, and Zenodo. The hits are shown merged, 25 per page. Each entry names the database it comes from, duplicates are merged via the DOI, and if a legal open-access version exists, a link leads to the full text. The list can be downloaded as a Word, Excel, RIS, or BibTeX file. After all, the results list is a starting point, not a complete literature search.

The German-English glossary now contains 2,273 search terms. This makes searching enormously easier for all users: anyone entering a German technical term automatically searches international databases using the term under which they actually index, while German-language sources keep the German term. If a translation is missing, an e-mail is generated that can be used to suggest the missing term to the editorial team.

Naturally, the search spaces of the individual portals touch, resulting in overlaps: depending on the hub, 3 to 28 percent of the papers found also fall within the field of another. However, the upper value concerns only health literacy and AI; without the AI hub, the range only extends to 13 percent. In the daily selection, this hardly matters: of 976 studies delivered so far, only 34 appeared in more than one hub.

Radar, careers, feedback

In addition, there is a funding radar: an overview of open funding calls, organized into the same fifteen areas. It is located centrally in the "Health Services Research" hub (wissen.m-vf.de/ausschreibungen.html), and every other hub shows on its homepage how many calls currently concern its area. Searches run twice a week on foerderinfo.bund.de, at the German Research Foundation (DFG) and – internationally – on grants.gov; only research funding is included.

Under the same roof, CuratioHub has recently been added, a career and job portal for health services research, public health, and medicine: one term, and the search runs across the searchable job boards.

And: the Knowledge Hubs are designed as a living service: topic areas and the list of sources can be expanded. A research aid is only as good as the practice that helps shape it. Please send feedback to info@m-vf.de.

Incidentally: thanks to the financial support of our Editorial Advisory Board (see page 3), all MVF content has been available open access for many years. Thank you!

Sponsors and media partners are currently being sought for all hubs. Please e-mail MVF's Editor-in-Chief, Peter Stegmaier, at stegmaier@m-vf.de. <<

The direct links:

- Health Services Research (wissen.m-vf.de)
- Health Literacy (healthliteracy.m-vf.de)
- Nursing & Long-Term Care (pflege.m-vf.de)
- Vaccination & Immunization (impfen.m-vf.de)
- Noncommunicable Diseases (ncd.m-vf.de)
- Gender-Sensitive Medicine (gender.m-vf.de)
- Patient Safety (safety.m-vf.de)
- Mental Health (mental.m-vf.de)
- Digitalization, AI & Health (ki.m-vf.de)
- Heat, Climate & Health (klima.m-vf.de)
- Healthy Aging & Longevity (longevity.m-vf.de)
- Obesity (adipositas.m-vf.de)
- Diabetes (diabetes.m-vf.de)
- Cardiology (kardio.m-vf.de)
- Oncology (onkologie.m-vf.de)

Knowledge Hubs

Here you will find an overview of all hubs and new features such as the funding radar and CuratioHub:
https://knowledge-hubs.m-vf.de/