

# Haven't We Seen This Already?

## Duplicate Records in Weekly Ovid Autoalerts

Tara Landry, Irina Iavorskaia & Dahlal Mohr-Elzeki, McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) Libraries

### Introduction

Email alerts on literature searches are one of several strategies healthcare professionals use to keep up-to-date with the literature and maintain their clinical competence. Unfortunately, the records retrieved are often duplicates of previously identified articles.

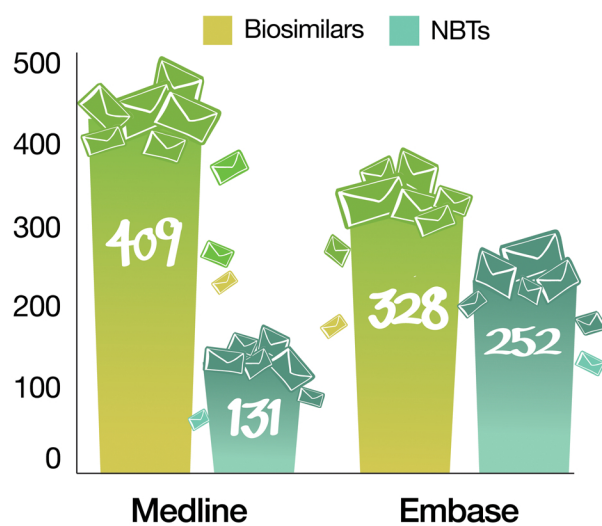


### Methods

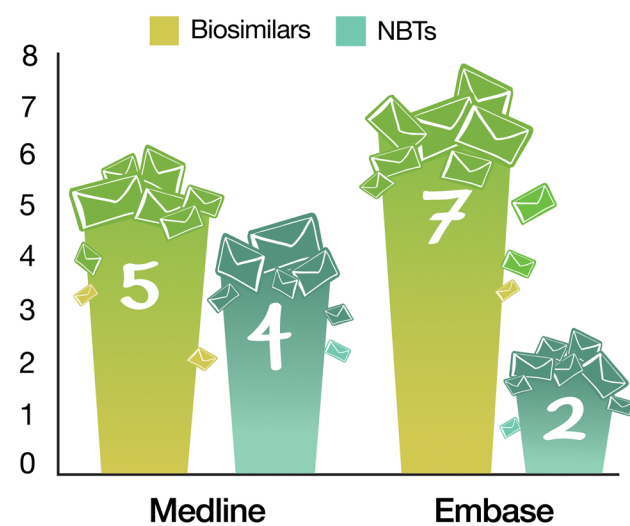
We performed searches in Medline and Embase via Ovid on two topics (use of biosimilars in oncology; non-beneficial therapies in terminally ill cancer patients) and created weekly alerts for each search using Ovid's AutoAlert feature. Between December 2017 and January 2019, each "new" result was analyzed to determine whether it had been previously retrieved by the initial search or in subsequent alerts. If the result had been previously retrieved, the nature of the revision to the initial record (the reason it was identified as "new") was noted.

### ALERT CHARACTERISTICS

Total Number of Records Retrieved Dec 2017-2019

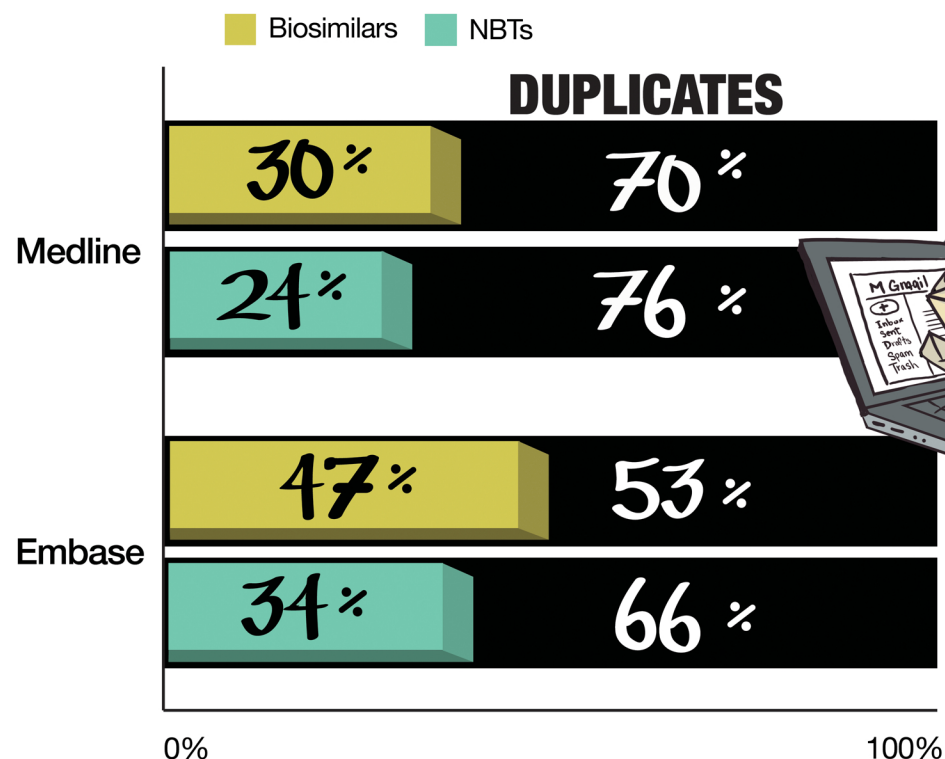


Average Number of Records Received per Week

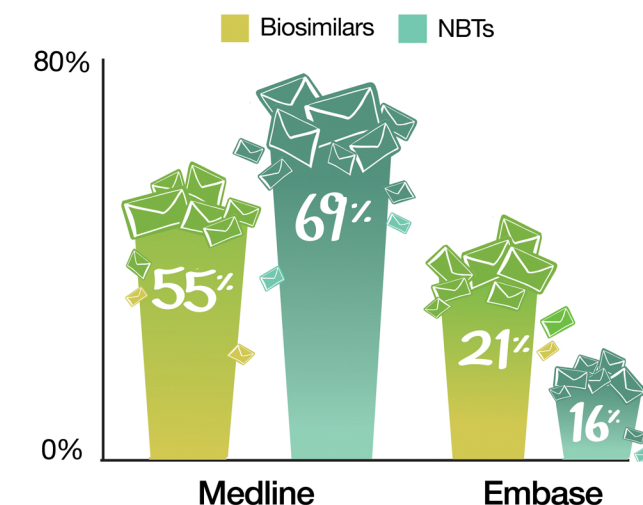


### Results

HOW MANY RESULTS WERE ACTUALLY NEW?

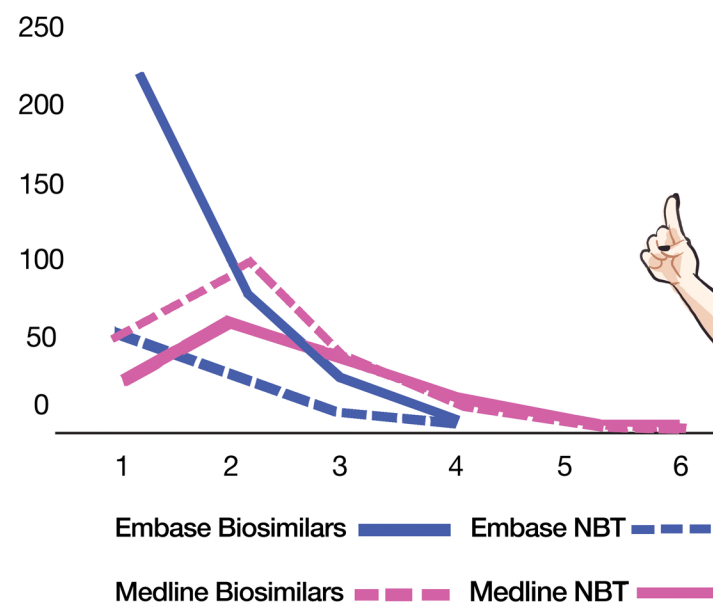


% of Duplicates Received Due to Change in Status (Indexing)



HOW OFTEN WERE RECORDS TYPICALLY RECEIVED?

# of times Individual Records Were Received (Including Original Set)



Most Embase records were received once, whereas most Medline records were received twice or more.

### Conclusion

Given the increasing rate of publication of medical literature (813,598 citations were added to Medline in 2017), email alerts in bibliographic databases can be useful tools to help healthcare professionals keep abreast of their topics of interest. Unfortunately, our study found that the records identified by Ovid's AutoAlert feature largely consisted of previously retrieved records whose status had changed or that had been otherwise edited or revised.

To better ensure the quality of results provided to clients, librarians using Ovid's AutoAlert feature may wish to filter the records received themselves before sending them off to their patrons; however, this option is time-consuming and may prove unsustainable.

1 [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/stats/cit\\_added.html](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/stats/cit_added.html)

**6** = Max. number of times a record was received in Medline  
**4** = Max. number of times a record was received in Embase

artist: Nicole (Nikki) Bilodeau  
 @nikkillustrator  
 nekoclouds@gmail.com  
 nikkillustrator.daportfolio.com