

# Finding legal decisions about pharmacy practice: an exploratory approach for pharmacy students and residents

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## Objective

To identify and compare the content of legal databases for decisions regarding pharmacy practice.

## Methods

- Descriptive study
- **Six descriptive criteria used** to compare current Canadian accessible legal databases :
  - Editor
  - Date of creation
  - Pricing structure for access
  - Content
  - Search engine
  - Functionalities
- **Systematic searches with pre-determined chain of characters** with following keywords
  - "pharmac\*"
  - "pharmacie"
  - "pharmacien"
  - "pharmaceutique"
  - "médicament"
- **Decisions from the following courts were retrieved:**
  - two Federal Courts : Supreme Court (SC) and Federal Court (FC)
  - three Provincial Courts : Quebec Superior Court (QSC), Tribunal des Professions (TP) and Conseil de discipline de l'Ordre des Pharmaciens du Québec (CD)
- **A sum of the numbers of retrieved decisions per chain of characters** were calculated describe the relative prevalence of each term in the databases

## Results

Four legal databases were identified and analysed :

- **CanLII** : Canadian Legal Information Institute
- **SOQUIJ** : Société québécoise d'information juridique
- **LexisNexis Quicklaw**
- **La Référence**

Database Variables	CanLII	SOQUIJ		Quicklaw	La Référence
		For the public	For the professionals		
Price	Free	Free	\$	\$	\$
Free try	NA	NA	7 days	14 days	14 days
Truncation character	*	NA	*	!	!
Search options	+	+	+++	+++	++
Other functionalities	++	+	++	+++	+++

Table 1 - Main characteristics of each legal database

	Database Courts	CanLII	SOQUIJ		Quicklaw	La Référence
			For the public	For professionals		
Federal Courts	SC	1876	2000	1881	1878	1976
	FC	1997	2008	1975	1877	1967
Provincial Court	QSC	2002	2001	1892	1973	1970
	TP	1986	1985	1974	NA	1976
	CD	2002	2001	1974	NA	NA

Table 2 - First year of archives of court decisions per legal database

Legend: SC : Supreme Court, FC: Federal Court, QSC: Cour d'appel du Québec, TP: Tribunal des professions, CD: Conseil de discipline de l'Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec, NA : not applicable

Databases Terms	CanLII	SOQUIJ		Quicklaw	La Référence
		For the public	For professionals		
Pharmac*	9129	NA	6661	7037	5214
Pharmacien	3511	2753	3334	2452	2421
Pharmacie	2669	1651	2039	1713	1500
Pharmaceutique	2332	1563	1905	2327	1311
Médicament	17736	8450	10023	9020	9175

Table 3—Sum of retrieved decisions by chain of characters for five courts (SC, FC, QSC, TP, CD) using the different legal information databases

## Conclusion

CanLII has been identified as our first choice as a court decision database. The search strategies used should be refined to increase their relevance . Pharmacy students and pharmacy residents should be formally exposed to CanLII and different search strategies during both Pharm.D. law course and M.Sc. management course to increase their ability to retrieve relevant decisions related to pharmacy practice.