

Data Discovery How-to Guide

How to search for variables
inside Condor.

March 2025

LEARN HOW TO FIND VARIABLES INSIDE THE DATA
DISCOVERY PLATFORM: **CONDOR**

This help guide will demonstrate how to search for variables on the [Condor](#) platform.

Please note that if you have already searched for variables on NSHD Showcase and have a list of Field-id's noted down, please see the How-to guide "NSHD Showcase and Condor Interoperability" on how to search for these variables on Condor.

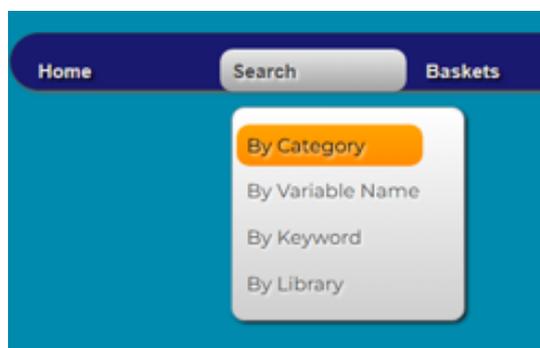
There are multiple options for searching for variables inside the platform:

- **By Category**
- **By Variable Name**
- **Search by**
- **By Library**

Search "By Category"

Use this to navigate your way through hierarchical categories and subcategories of interest to data-fields (i.e. variables) of interest. This will be the most appropriate tool for most researchers wishing to find and select data for their application.

On the Condor homepage, click search and then 'By Category'.



This will take you to the 'NSHD Search by Category' page.

Category Selected:

- Clinical data [51] has 0 items
- Biological samples [52] has 0 items
- Questionnaire data [55] has 0 items
- Specialist questionnaire data [56] has 0 items
- Genomics [53] has 0 items
- Population characteristics [54] has 0 items
- Sub-Studies [57] has 0 items
- Legacy [30] has 0 items

New top-level categories assigned as part of the NSHD metadata enhancement project.

Legacy categories assigned pre- 2010

Categories are being assigned to variables as part of the metadata enhancement project. A list of the questionnaires that have been assigned new categories can be found on the Showcase. See, <https://datashare.ndph.ox.ac.uk/nshd46/exinfo.cgi> for more information on which questionnaires have been cleaned and deposited to the Showcase.

The “Legacy” categories were assigned to variables during the 2006-10 data collection. These were not used for recent data collections so are more reliable for older data. Searching using the legacy categories will often result in large number of variables as these categories are very broad.

Historically, variables could be assigned to multiple legacy categories. In the new hierarchical categories structure, variables will only be assigned to a single category. It is therefore important to look in all parts of the tree that might contain variables relevant to your research question(s).

Navigating the hierarchical categories

Category Selected: ECG at rest, 12-Lead [1104] has 88 items

Selected category will be displayed in this text box

📁 Clinical data [51] has 0 items

📁 Cognitive function [101] has 0 items

- 📄 Childhood cognition[1011] has 4 items
- 📄 Reading comprehension[1012] has 1 items
- 📄 Peg placement[1013] has 1 items
- 📄 Visual memory[1014] has 1 items
- 📄 Memory (word list memory test)[1015] has 49 items
- 📄 Processing speed[1016] has 41 items
- 📄 National audit reading test (NART)[1017] has 1 items
- 📄 Verbal fluency[1018] has 1 items
- 📄 Reaction time[1019] has 12 items
- 📄 Sensory difficulties[1020] has 6 items
- 📄 Memory difficulties[1021] has 5 items
- 📄 ACE-III (cognitive state)[1022] has 56 items
- 📄 Finger tapping[1023] has 5 items
- 📄 Six day word recall[1024] has 5 items

The number of items refers to the number of variables in that category. Note that the parent category may display 0 items, but the sub-categories may contain items (variables).

📁 Imaging [105] has 0 items

📁 Physical measures [110] has 0 items

- 📄 Actiheart monitor[1101] has 124 items
- 📄 Anthropometry [1102] has 0 items
- 📄 Blood pressure[1103] has 102 items
- 📁 ECG at rest, 12-Lead [1104] has 88 items
- 📄 Heart rate variability[11041] has 31 items

The 'folder' icon refers to a parent category with one or more sub-categories inside it. Click on the parent categories to expand and collapse them.

This is an example where both the parent and sub-category contain items (variables).

Search

Press the 'Search' button once you have selected the category.

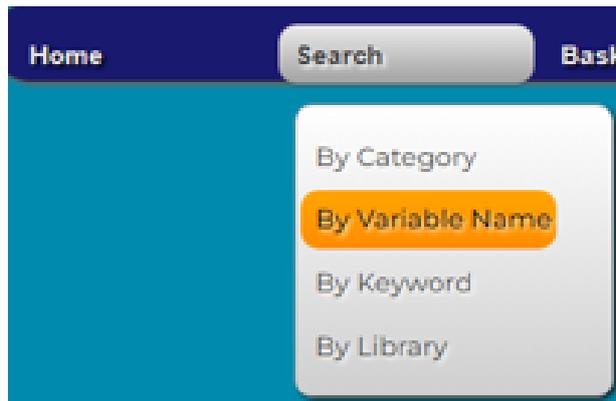
Parent categories may show zero items. Expand these to see subcategory item totals.

Currently selected categories are marked by a black bar to the left of the label. Numbers shown in square brackets are Showcase category labels.

Search by Variable Name

This search is a text search of the NSHD variable name or the field-id from the NSHD Showcase. It is extremely useful in occasions when you already know the name or field-id of the variables of interest.

On the Condor homepage, click search and then 'By Variable name.'



This will take you to the NSHD 'Variable Name Search' page.

NSHD Variable Name Search

Variable name(s): *

* Multiple **space or comma delimited** variables can be added, eg, SEX CHIL A11R57

If you wanted to search for the following variables on Condor:

- **Childhood cognition** – variable name **cogchild** shared by an NSHD researcher
- **Plasma total testosterone** - Field-id **6273** identified from the NSHD Showcase

- **Home ownership at age 68 years** – variable name **own14x** identified from the NSHD annotated questionnaire
- **General health** – Field-id **8639** identified from the NSHD Showcase

You can search for the above variables in a single search

NSHD Variable Name Search

Variable name(s): Search

* Multiple space or comma delimited variables can be added, eg, SEX CHIL A11R57

Click search to see results

Variable	Description
cogchild	Childhood cognition (standardised) score: derived from ages 8, 11 and 15 years
ghi09	How is your health in general? - at age 60-64 years
ghi14x	How is your health in general? - at age 68 years
ghi22x	How is your health in general? - at age 76 years
ghi23x	How is your health in general? - at age 77 years.
own14x	Does your household own or rent your accommodation - at age 68 years
testo_53	plasma total testosterone at 53 years in nmol/L
testo_63	plasma total testosterone at 60-64 years in nmol/L

For more information on how to copy field-ids from the NSHD Showcase to Condor, please see the How-to guide “NSHD Showcase and Condor Interoperability”.

Search “By Keyword”

The keyword search can be used to carry out simple or complex searches within Condor. The search returns exact matches from the variable name, label, field-id or value labels and is not case sensitive.

On the Condor homepage, click search and then ‘By Keyword’.



This will take you to the ‘NSHD Key Word Search’ page.

NSHD Key Word Search

You can search by keyword or Showcase category labels

Keyword: Soundex?

It’s important to note that whilst searching by keyword, if your term is broad then this will result in a large number of hits and can slow the process of variable selection. In the search menu, you also have a [Soundex](#) option. This is a broader, phonetic-based search, which will give results containing

keywords that sound similar to your search term(s), and results in many more hits.

The keyword search function has been updated in the latest Condor release to be more intuitive and flexible. The default setting for a multi-term search is now an ***implied OR search***. e.g. if you make a standard keyword search for blood pressure, the results will be any variable with the word blood OR the word pressure in the variable name or label.

You can use the modifiers – + and “ next to one or more search terms to change the focus of a keyword search.

Modifier	Use	Example
+	Inclusion	+blood +pressure will find results with blood and pressure anywhere in the variable name or description
-	Exclusion	blood –pressure will find results including blood but excluding pressure
“	Exact match	“blood pressure” will find results with both words next to each other

Combinations of the above multipliers can also be used, e.g. “blood pressure” –diastolic will exclude all variables with diastolic in the description, from the “blood pressure” search results.

N.B. Please do not specify Boolean search terms e.g. AND, OR, NOT in a keyword search, as they will give many unexpected results!

Search “By Library”

Searching by library is another useful search that is available to researchers. The library file is the name given to variables that were grouped together. In earlier years these groupings included variables related to a particular topic from one or more data collections. After 2010, the library files contained a section of a particular questionnaire, for example the library ‘Alcohol14; contains all the variables on alcohol use collected in 2014 postal questionnaire.

Please note that only the libraries after 2006-10 have contextual names, the legacy libraries do not. However, there is a brief description listed in the dropdown menu for each file to help the researchers.

On the Condor homepage, click search and then ‘By Library’.



This will take you to the ‘NSHD Key Word Search’ page.

NSHD Search by Library File

Library File: ALL

ace23 : ACE-III cognitive examination at age 77 years (2023 Home visit)
ACEIII15 : ACE-III cognitive examination at age 69 years (2015 Home visit)
ACRPain14 : Chronic or widespread pain asked at age 68 years (2014 Postal questionnaire)
Actiheart09 : Derived actiheart activity data at age 60-64 years (2006-10 data collection)
active8215 : Summary of leisure activity at ages 36, 43, 53, 60-64, 68-69 years (Longitudinal)
ad823 : AD8 Dementia screening interview at age 77 years (2023 Home visit)
AdultMH : Adult mental health at ages 36, 43, 53, 60-64, 68-69 years (recodes)
age : Age at data collections from age 4 to 53 years (Longitudinal)
AgeAtQ09 : Age at data collection for 60-64 years sweep (2006-2010 data collection)
ageatq23 : Age at data collection for 77 years sweep (2023 Home visit)
Age_at_quest14 : Age at data collection for 68 years sweep (2014 Postal questionnaire)
Age_at_quest15 : Age at data collection for 69 years sweep (2015 Home visit)

About NSHD

The MRC National Survey of Health and Development (NSHD) has informed UK health care, education and social policy for more than 70 years and is the oldest and longest running of the British birth cohort studies. Today, with study members in their seventies, the NSHD offers a unique opportunity to explore the long-term biological and social processes of ageing and how ageing is affected by factors acting across the whole of life.

MRC NATIONAL SURVEY OF HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT,
UNIT FOR LIFELONG HEALTH AND AGEING,
FLOOR 5, 1-19 TORRINGTON PLACE
LONDON,
WC1E 7HB
UK

TEL: +44 (0) 20 7670 5700
FREEPHONE: 0800 952 0249

EMAIL: MRCLHA.ENQUIRIES@UCL.AC.UK