



Data Update

December 2023

Welcome

We wish you a productive end to 2023 and hope you enjoy the upcoming holiday period. The ALSWH Newcastle offices will be closed from the 18th of December 2023 reopening on Monday the 8th of January 2024. The ALSWH Brisbane offices will be minimally staffed during this period.

In this edition

- Spread the word: We're refreshing the 1973-78 and 1989-95 cohorts
- 1973-78 cohort Survey 9 – Data Release
- Key Longitudinal Variable (KLV) datasets
- Linked data update
- EOI deadlines
- Presenting soon? A reminder about your data access obligations!
- Reducing delays in accessing linked data
- Changes to the mean stress derived variable in ALSWH
- Measuring sexual violence in ALSWH surveys
- SEIFA percentiles in ALSWH

Spread the word!

We're refreshing the 1973-78 and 1989-95 cohorts

While the ALSWH Cohorts were representative of the general population of women at the time of their recruitment, changes in immigration to Australia have altered the population's cultural landscape. Many women have migrated to Australia from South, Southeast, and Northeast Asian countries since we started the Study in 1996. We are looking for women from these areas to join the ALSWH 1973-78 and 1989-95 Cohorts.

► Visit the [recruitment page](#) to read the participant information statement and find out if

you or someone you know may be eligible.

► **Contact alswh@newcastle.edu.au** for recruitment materials to share with your friends and colleagues.



New data release: 1973-78 Cohort Survey 9

Data from the ninth survey of women in the 1973-78 cohort is now available to approved researchers. Due to COVID-19, data collection for Survey 9 was open for 18 months (June 2021 to December 2022) while the women were aged 43 to 49 years old.



What's new?

- Finances
 - Sources of income – wages or salary, income or pension from a spouse or partner, savings and investments, government pensions, support from family
 - Shortage of money – have you skipped meals, run out of food, couldn't pay bills, sought assistance, or pawned and sold items
- COVID-19 testing
- Life events – the impact of bushfires or smoke on physical health, mental health, livelihood, and women's experiences, including being trapped or evacuated
- Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

To see the full list of topics covered:

- **Download the [ALSWH Data Map](#)**
- **Download the [1973-78 cohort Data Book](#)**

How do I apply?

The full dataset is freely available to approved researchers via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

- **For more information, visit the [ALSWH website - Applying for Data page](#)**

Key Longitudinal Variable (KLV) datasets



Among the original three cohorts (women born 1973-78, 1946-51 and 1921-26), the different variable names at each survey wave sometimes made it time-consuming to generate “long” datasets for variables that were routinely collected at multiple survey waves, notably some of the sociodemographic and health behaviour variables. The ALSWH data team have streamlined this process for the efficiency of data users by creating the Key Longitudinal Variable (KLV) datasets. These are now available and are intended to save data users time by reducing duplication of work and programming errors.

The KLV datasets include commonly used sociodemographics, health behaviours and other frequently used variables for the four ALSWH cohorts. Further details about the KLV datasets are available in the documentation on the ALSWH website. The KLV datasets and the Participant Status Files will be provided in future data distributions for approved projects.

► [Read more](#)

New Linked data

ALSWH data linkage now includes:

- National Death Index up to June 2023
- Cause of Death up to December 2021
- WA Admitted Patient data to August 2021
- WA Emergency Department data to October 2021
- WA Perinatal Data to December 2020



► For more details on ALSWH’s linked data collections, visit the [ALSWH website - Linked data overview page](#)

EOI deadlines

Interested in using ALSWH data for your project?

Expression of interest deadlines for 2024 are:

- January 31
- March 31
- May 31
- July 31
- September 30



► [Read the data access quick guide](#)

Presenting linked data soon? A reminder about your data access obligations!

Did you know that **presentations, seminars and posters containing results from linked state-based datasets** must be sent for Data Custodian review at least **four weeks** before you present? If your results have already been reviewed as part of a publication or report, they do not need to be reviewed again.



For any presentation or other output, you must submit a copy to alswh@uq.edu.au as soon as possible after the event.

The Conditions of Use and Publishing section on the ALSWH website provides:

- Acknowledgement statements for ALSWH survey data
- Acknowledgement statements for linked data
- Information about the approvals processes
- A lay summary template to help you start disseminating your research

► [Review the conditions of use for publishing and presenting linked data](#)

Reducing delays in accessing linked data

Please be aware that it may take several months for us to obtain approvals for new researchers and new projects from external HRECs and Data Custodians on your behalf. While we make every effort to expedite them, these processes are largely outside our control. **If your project has a tight timeline, using linked data may be unsuitable.** Submission of new researchers and projects to all relevant HRECs and Data Custodians typically involves multiple sequential steps.



What we are doing on your behalf

1. We supply ALSWH survey data for your project as soon as possible so you can work with that in the meantime. We can also supply the linked datasets sequentially, as the approvals come through, rather than waiting for every approval (please let us know if you would like this option).
2. Researcher and project amendments must be submitted in batches to streamline processing by the HRECs and Data Custodians. After each EOI round closes, we endeavour to lodge these as soon as possible.
3. We provide you with templates where external HRECs and Data Custodians require lengthy/ detailed project-specific application forms.
4. We negotiate with the responsible HRECs to process amendments out of session.

However, our amendments sometimes necessitate protocol changes or requests for refreshed data, which require lengthier processing. Also, HREC and Data Custodians' processes frequently change, which impacts our procedures and timelines.

5. We are currently adding details of linked data submissions and approvals into the ALSWH Data Portal so you can easily review the status.

What you can do

1. Carefully consider whether and what linked data are required for your project (see [Data access quick guide – ALSWH](#))
2. Factor linked data approval times into your project time frame and additional data processing time (for example, to harmonise data from different states).
3. Limit the number of researchers requesting access to the linked datasets on your EoI.
4. Ensure that your EoI includes all the information and level of detail required for review by an external HREC. Including a literature review and a clear and detailed description of how the linked variables will be used is essential.
5. Avoid requesting sensitive variables unless absolutely necessary, and be aware of the [additional processing requirements](#).
6. Take care completing the forms sent to you for signing/witnessing, and return them promptly so as not to hold up the whole batch.
7. If you plan to use the SURE facility to access your data, please contact them directly about setting up your workspace.

Changes to the mean stress derived variable in ALSWH

ALSWH asks questions about the participants' stress in various areas of their life. These questions are used to derive the mean stress variable for analysis. ALSWH developed this series of questions based on discussions with key informants, including psychologists, sociologists, and women of all ages.

Mean stress variables have been derived for all the waves in the 1946-51 and 1973-78 cohort surveys, most of the 1989-95 cohort waves and the first two waves of the 1921-26 cohort.

The ALSWH Data Management Group queried the derivation method and decided that a 'Not Applicable' response is not equivalent to "Not at all stressed" and should be set to missing. A change was made to all relevant datasets, and anyone receiving ALSWH data will receive the new mean stress values in all datasets. ALSWH's advice regarding the interpretation of mean stress before 2022 may no longer be valid as the values have changed.

► [Read the article \(Section 7.1 of ALSWH Technical Report #45\)](#)

► [For more information see 'Stress' under Section 2.7 of the ALSWH Data Dictionary Supplement](#)



Measuring sexual violence in ALSWH surveys

ALSWH surveys include measures of different types of sexual violence that a woman may experience in her lifetime. Sexual violence is a complex issue, and the survey instruments used to measure it are also complex. This section seeks to provide an overview of these measures, their subtleties, and practical advice on using these measures based on past research.

► [Read the article \(Section 7.2 of ALSWH Technical Report #45\)](#)



SEIFA percentiles in ALSWH

ALSWH data currently include the geo-coded variables ARIA+, Modified Monash Model (MMM), and Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). Other geo-coded variables have been used previously. SEIFA is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage.

Note: SEIFA describes characteristics of all people living in the same local area as an ALSWH participant; in many situations, you may want to use characteristics of the women themselves, such as level of education or occupation. This article describes how ALSWH has changed the way SEIFA variables are presented in the ALSWH datasets.

► [Read the article \(Section 7.3 of ALSWH Technical Report #45\)](#)



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