lookfor — Search for string in variable names and labels

Description

Lookfor helps you find variables by searching for `string` among all variable names and labels. If multiple `strings` are specified, `lookfor` will search for each of them separately. You may search for a phrase by enclosing `string` in double quotes.

Quick start

Search variable names and variable labels for the phrase “my text” regardless of case

```
lookfor "my text"
```

Search for “word1” or “word2”

```
lookfor word1 word2
```

Syntax

```
lookfor string [ string [ ... ] ]
```

Remarks and examples

Example 1

Lookfor finds variables by searching for `string`, ignoring case, among the variable names and labels.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r16/nlswork
(National Longitudinal Survey. Young Women 14-26 years of age in 1968)
. lookfor code
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>format</th>
<th>label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>idcode</td>
<td>int</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>NLS ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ind_code</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>industry of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occ_code</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>occupation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three variable names contain the word `code`.

```
. lookfor married
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>format</th>
<th>label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>msp</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>1 if married, spouse present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nev_mar</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>1 if never married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two variable labels contain the word `married`.

```
. lookfor gnp
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>format</th>
<th>label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ln_wage</td>
<td>float</td>
<td>%9.0g</td>
<td>ln(wage/GNP deflator)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

`lookfor` ignores case, so `lookfor gnp` found GNP in a variable label.

**Example 2**

If multiple strings are specified, all variable names or labels containing any of the strings are listed.

```
. lookfor code married
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>format</th>
<th>label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>idcode</td>
<td>int</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>NLS ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>msp</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>1 if married, spouse present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nev_mar</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>1 if never married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ind_code</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>industry of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occ_code</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>occupation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To search for a phrase, enclose `string` in double quotes.

```
. lookfor "never married"
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>format</th>
<th>label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nev_mar</td>
<td>byte</td>
<td>%8.0g</td>
<td>1 if never married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stored results**

`lookfor` stores the following in `r()`:

Macros
- `r(varlist)`  the varlist of found variables

**References**


**Also see**

[D] `describe` — Describe data in memory or in file

[D] `ds` — Compactly list variables with specified properties