



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's): Use of AHSQC Registry Data by AHSQC Surgeons

### ***How do I access AHSQC registry data?***

You must complete an application (available at <https://www.ahsqc.org/data>) and sign a written data use agreement with AHSQC along with its standard data use terms and conditions.

### ***Who signs the required Data Use Agreement and related standard terms?***

You as an individual surgeon and AHSQC sign the agreement and terms. The agreement is personally between you and AHSQC and does not require that your institution approve or sign the agreement.

### ***Are all AHSQC surgeons entitled to access the AHSQC Registry Data?***

Only those AHSQC surgeons who are in good standing by being active, participating members of the AHSQC are entitled to have access to AHSQC Registry Data. To be in good standing, you must act in good faith and with reasonable diligence to contribute data to the AHSQC from your surgical hernia cases by contributing data to the AHSQC for at least 25 surgical cases with 30 day completed follow up and continuing the same rate of data contribution for the 12 month period following the receipt of any AHSQC datasets.

### ***Do I have to pay a fee to use AHSQC datasets?***

No.

### ***In what form is the data provided?***

Datasets are provided electronically as de-identified data compiled in an IBM SPSS file format. Other formats may be available upon request. Users are free to convert the files to other formats using commercially available conversion software (e.g. Stat/Transfer).

### ***How may I use the AHSQC Registry Data?***

You must disclose to AHSQC your intended research or quality improvement project and that project will be used to define how you are permitted to use the data.

### ***Why am I required to disclose information about industry interest in or funding of my project?***

AHSQC surgeons are not permitted to access AHSQC data on behalf of industry.

### ***May I use discretionary funding, even if received from industry, to conduct my research using AHSQC data?***

Yes, so long as you are not conducting that research for or at the request of the industry member.

### ***Are there projects that AHS will not approve for use of AHSQC Registry Data?***

Yes, AHSQC will not approve a project that is being conducted on behalf of industry, any for-profit enterprise, or for the benefit of any third person (other than a surgeon's institution which is a participant in the AHSQC). Governmental and non-profit funders (independent of industry) are not

considered third parties for this purpose. AHSQC reserves the right to reject any project that is not consistent with AHSQC's mission or policies and any project that is deemed so broad in scope as to provide no reasonable restriction on the use of the data.

***Are there HIPAA and other legal considerations involved in using the AHSQC Datasets?***

Although you will receive data in a de-identified, non-protected health information format, you are prohibited from attempting to re-identify any patient, surgeon or health care facility with that data. You are required to involve your institution's Institutional Review Board with respect to any research use of the AHSQC Data.

***Are there any restrictions related to the minimum size of data reporting?***

Yes, based on federal law and AHSQC's commitments to its participants, you may not use AHSQC Datasets to disclose, publish, or report any outcomes or events which: (i) are less than ten (10) in number, (ii) relate to a geographical area smaller than one of the four Census Bureau Regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, or West) as defined by the United States Census Bureau, or (iii) relate to one participant, surgeon, or site, hospital, or other health care facility.

***Are there requirements I must meet to publish or report on the data?***

So long as your use is permitted under your data use agreement, you are free to publish and report on the data as you wish. In publishing or reporting on data, however, you are required to include the following attribution and disclosure in your publication or report:

The Americas Hernia Society's (AHS) and its Americas Hernia Society Quality Collaborative (AHSQC) and the hospitals and surgeons participating in the AHSQC are the source of the data used herein [*or some appropriate description of the portion of the publication using Registry Data*]; AHS and AHSQC have not verified and are not responsible for the statistical validity of the data, any analyses made, and the conclusions drawn by the authors.

***Who is responsible for the use and content of the AHSQC data?***

You are. The AHSQC has protocols, policies, and procedures in place to test the validity and scientific integrity of data, but as a matter of contract AHSQC disclaims responsibility for and you must accept responsibility for your use of the AHSQC data and any analyses you make and any conclusions you draw from that data.

***What do I do if I suspect there is an error in the data?***

Despite the protocols, policies, and procedures in place to test the validity and scientific integrity of the AHSQC data, it is possible that errors may exist in the data. If you suspect an error in the data, please report your observations to [datahelp@ahsqc.org](mailto:datahelp@ahsqc.org).

***If I have a question about the data, who can I contact?***

You may contact [datahelp@ahsqc.org](mailto:datahelp@ahsqc.org) or find more information at [www.ahsqc.org](http://www.ahsqc.org).