

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
SOPS® Database
Information and Instructions for Requesting De-Identified SOPS Database Data

This document is for individuals interested in requesting de-identified SOPS data from the AHRQ SOPS Database.

Introduction

The Surveys on Patient Safety Culture™ (SOPS®) Database is a central repository for SOPS survey data. The SOPS Database is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and managed and administered by its contractor, Westat.

The SOPS Database is populated with SOPS data through the voluntary participation of organizations that have administered a SOPS survey and are willing to submit their SOPS data for inclusion in the Database. Because participating organizations (i.e., hospitals, medical offices, nursing homes, community pharmacies, and ambulatory surgery centers) voluntarily submit data to the SOPS Database, the Data do not constitute a nationally representative sample.

AHRQ and its contractor, Westat, may grant researchers access to de-identified respondent- and organization-level data from the SOPS Database, for research purposes. The de-identified data do not identify or permit re-identification of individual respondents or participating organizations. The data elements include:

- 1. SOPS Survey Response Data:** Survey data submitted at the individual respondent level by participating organizations according to specifications provided by the SOPS Database. These data include all responses to SOPS survey questions but do not include information identifying respondent names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Note: The Database does not collect any “other specify” responses or open-ended comments.
- 2. Survey Administration and Site Characteristics Data:** Information regarding survey administration, such as mode of administration, response rates, and dates of administration are included. Characteristics of the sites are also included such as ownership and region and other characteristics specific to the survey setting (e.g., bed size, number of providers). Please note that in some cases, certain site characteristics may be removed from the de-identified data files to prevent identification of individual sites.

Process for Requesting SOPS Database De-Identified Data Files

Researchers interested in obtaining data must submit:

1. A completed De-identified Research Abstract Form and
2. A signed Data Release Agreement.

All completed Research Abstract Forms are reviewed by AHRQ and its contractor, Westat, in accordance with the criteria outlined below. The review period for de-identified data requests is up to 45 days.

De-Identified Research Abstract Form Contents

Research abstracts should include the following information:

1. Title of the proposed research project.
2. Statement of the purpose of the proposed research.

3. Hypotheses for the proposed research.
4. Description of the methodology and analytic methods.
5. Expected project timeline.
6. Expected outcomes of the research and how results will be presented.
7. Any funding sources to complete the project.
8. Specific data files requested (i.e., hospital, medical office, nursing home, community pharmacy, or ambulatory surgery center) and the year(s) requested.
9. Key personnel involved.

Conditions for Denying a Request for De-Identified Data

Requests for access to de-identified data files may be denied under any of the following conditions:

1. If the central purpose of the study is not for research. Valid purposes for using de-identified data do NOT include the use of data for public reporting, proprietary, commercial, or competitive purposes, or to determine the rights, benefits, or privileges of organizations participating in the Database. An example of commercial or competitive purposes includes, but is not limited to, combining the requested Database data with other data sources to report together for commercial or public reporting purposes.
2. If the research objectives are not feasible using the requested data.
3. If the data processing required to produce the requested data files places an unusually heavy burden on Database staff.

If there are concerns about a submitted Research Abstract Form raised during the review process, the comments of the reviewers will be sent to the Requester. Data Requesters may make modifications and re-submit the Research Abstract Form for review.

Publication Requirements

Individuals receiving data are required to include the following acknowledgment in any report, publication, or presentation using SOPS Database data:

“The Surveys on Patient Safety Culture™ SOPS® data used in this analysis were provided by the SOPS Database. The SOPS Database is funded by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and administered by Westat under Contract No. GS-00F-009DA/75Q80123F80005.”

Copies of all publications and presentations using SOPS Database data must be sent to Westat.

Disclaimer

Approval of data access does not constitute endorsement by AHRQ or Westat of the proposed research project, study findings, or recommendations of the research team.

Applying for De-Identified SOPS Data and Contact Information

Researchers interested in obtaining de-identified SOPS data from the SOPS Database must submit a completed Research Abstract Form and signed Data Release Agreement. These forms are available on the AHRQ website (<https://www.ahrq.gov/sops/databases/research-datasets.html>). Completed forms should be emailed to SOPSPResearchData@westat.com (Subject Line: SOPS De-identified Data Request).

Surveys on Patient Safety Culture Research Databases
Westat
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Email: SOPSPResearchData@westat.com