ACS NSQIP Pediatric PUF Eligibility Requirements / Rules / FAQs

The American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program Pediatric® (ACS NSQIP Pediatric®) Participant Use Data File (PUF) is a research dataset of all cases entered into Pediatric NSQIP in a calendar year. The PUF is de-identified as to hospital, patient, surgeon, state, province, region, etc. Patient information is HIPAA compliant and there are no hospital IDs or pseudo-IDs. The Pediatric PUF uses data from the ACS NSQIP Pediatric July Semiannual Report (SAR) and is historically released in the autumn of each year.

The Pediatric PUF is available to eligible staff (generally understood as hospital employee) at participating and active ACS NSQIP Pediatric hospitals. All PUF requests will be sent to the referenced hospital to confirm eligibility. The ACS will not process any requests without that approval.

ACS NSQIP Pediatric PUF Request and Approval Process

1) PUF request is submitted electronically via the online request form located here: https://www.facs.org/quality-programs/data-and-registries/pediatric/participant-use-data-file/ By entering an online request, the applicant will be able to specify the type, years, and formats of the files they would like as well as agree to the Data Use Agreement (DUA). A request cannot be made without the requestor electronically agreeing to the DUA. Only active Pediatric NSQIP hospitals will appear on the dropdown list of hospitals on the request page.
2) Once the request is received, the verification process will begin. ACS NSQIP will reach out to Pediatric NSQIP staff at the hospital to obtain the official approval. A request cannot be granted without this official internal approval.
3) If the hospital approves the request, it will be processed and the applicant will be notified via email.
4) The applicant will be provided a username, password, and a secure link to download the files. The download window will remain open for 10 days.

Collaboration

Many PUF recipients will ask about sharing the data with collaborators / specialists (e.g., biostatisticians) assisting with the research. We do allow this, and the collaborators also must sign and return the DUA. Once the agreement is signed and returned, the files may be shared. The assisting researcher must maintain junior status on all projects. The original, participating-hospital recipient must remain the lead, primary, or senior investigator on any and all publications, papers, or projects resulting from the data.

ACS NSQIP Pediatric PUF FAQs

When is the PUF released?
The PUF is typically released every autumn. Each PUF contains the data from the previous calendar year (*Example: the data collected during calendar year 2022 was released in the October 2023 PUF*). Construction of each new PUF cannot begin until after the release of the ACS NSQIP Pediatric July Semiannual Report (SAR), which contains the cases from the previous calendar year.

Will I see my hospital's cases in the PUF?
Your hospital's submitted cases, within a particular calendar year, will be included in the corresponding year's PUF. However, we do not provide site identification of any cases in the PUF, even for purposes of hospital self-identification. Sites excluded from the July SAR will not see their cases in the PUF. Audit failures or a low follow-up rate would lead to exclusion from the PUF.

Is the PUF de-identified?
To remain Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant and ensure adherence to contractual non-disclosure agreements with participating sites, all PUF datasets are de-identified as to patient, hospital, performing surgeon, state, region, country, etc.

What is the difference between gaining access to the PUF and gaining access to the Pediatric NSQIP Resource Portal?
The Resource Portal is the main data collection tool for NSQIP, with some reporting capabilities. Access to the Resource Portal is mainly reserved for Surgical Clinical Reviewers (SCRs), Surgeon Champions, and possibly some hospital administrators. The PUF is a research tool made available to other hospital staff and researchers. The intended purpose of the PUF is to provide researchers at participating sites with a data resource they can use to investigate and advance the quality of care delivered to the surgical patient through the analysis of cases captured by Pediatric ACS NSQIP.

If my hospital participates in adult NSQIP but not Pediatric NSQIP, am I eligible to receive the Pediatric PUF file(s)?
If your hospital does not participate in Pediatric NSQIP, you would *NOT* be eligible to receive the Pediatric PUF files. Your hospital must be a participant in a particular program to be eligible for that program's PUF files.