An introduction to SQL
Webinar summary

A tool to support the manipulation of large volumes of data

Providers of NHS services have increasingly large amounts of data about their patients, with the roll-out of patient-level costing (PLICS) across the NHS. The challenge is how to make the most of patient-level cost data to support improvements in patient care and deliver efficiencies.

Costing practitioners can make better use of PLICS data, if they have the skills to manipulate these very large volumes of data. They are often dependent on support from colleagues in the business intelligence function, who may not have the capacity to work with costing teams.

In this webinar, **Seb Kerr, Chief Operating Officer at Prodacapo,** provides a very practical and straightforward explanation on how to use SQL, with no previous knowledge of this tool required.

Seb begins with a bit of background about SQL, which stands for Structured Query Language, explaining that it is a standardised programming language developed around 30 years ago, and is used widely wherever data is held in a structured way; this includes the internet and smart phones, as well as PLICS databases.

The webinar provides the audience with the knowledge and confidence to get started on SQL

Seb tells the webinar audience that if they really want to understand their data and the performance of their organisation, then learning some SQL would be of an enormous benefit for them, and his objective in this session is to provide them with the knowledge and confidence to get started.

Seb explains that learning just 10 of the 1,000 commands in SQL would enable most people to do around 90% of the queries and data manipulation they are ever likely to need.

There are two types of query in SQL, select and action queries. A select query does not change the underlying data, so that is always a safer option! An action query will allow you to delete data records or add new ones, as well as updating your data.

Learning just the few commands covered in the webinar is enough to start using SQL

He starts by working through a very simple SQL query, moving on to some more complex examples, which are clearly set out in the accompanying slides that are available for download. Seb reiterates that if you stick to the query function, you can't do any damage. SQL is a simple language and learning just the few commands he covers in this webinar will be sufficient to start to use SQL.

The simplicity of SQL became apparent when the audience started to ask questions about how to write queries; it doesn't matter how many queries are included in a query, or whether upper or lower case is used.

As SQL is such a widely used language there are many resources available to support users and several of those are listed in the slides.

This webinar was clearly very well received by the audience with feedback comments including:

"Excellent with great illustrations that will be memorable and relatable examples - just need to try it out myself now!"

"Amazing insight into SQL - really happy with content and feel I will be implementing this in due course. Really engaging as in keeping interest, few laughs along the way"

"Straightforward and easy to understand. Very good"

To view the **webinar**, click here ensuring you are logged into your account on the HFMA website. **Accessible to Healthcare Costing for Value Institute members only.**