

Solution to Exercise 2: The QES-REC-CHK triplet

Key Point(s):

- For text fields it is frequently better to make them 'upper-case text' as 'm' is not the same as 'M'.
- In the CHK file, it is always better to make all fields 'Must enter', except for automatically calculated variables. Then you will not have any missing values for the variable.

Tasks:

- o *Open the existing A_EX02.QES file and complete it*
- o *Create the A_EX02.REC file (overwrite the existing one)*
- o *Edit the A_EX02.CHK file, make all fields Must enter fields, and try to enter legal values where appropriate (and as defined in the data documentation sheet).*

Solution:

The questionnaire would look as follows:

```
This is the questionnaire for the laboratory register
```

```
serno ####  
labdate <dd/mm/yyyy>  
sex <A>  
age ###  
reason <A>  
res1 #.#  
res2 #.#  
res3 #.#
```

EpiData Entry software is not case-sensitive, but the definition of values for character fields obviously is. Nevertheless, you make it best a habit to use lower-case for field names as some statistical packages are case-sensitive when it comes to field names.

The questionnaire looks a bit ragged and it will be so in the data entry form as well, but there is an easy way to line it up properly. Choose the field with the longest name. Here, four have the same length, thus go anywhere on the line with the field REGDATE, choose "Edit" "Align fields" and you get the following much nicer outline:

This is the questionnaire for the laboratory register

```
serno      #####
regdate    <dd/mm/yyyy>
sex        <A>
age        ###
reason     <A>
res1       #.#
res2       #.#
res3       #.#
```

If the QES file is open, use **CTRL+T** to look how the data entry from will look:

This is the questionnaire for the laboratory register

serno	<input type="text"/>
regdate	<input type="text"/>
sex	<input type="text"/>
age	<input type="text"/>
reason	<input type="text"/>
res1	<input type="text"/>
res2	<input type="text"/>
res3	<input type="text"/>

The *.REC file we created can be looked at in a text editor (like NotePad™ that comes with Windows™) and we see the following:

```
9 1 VLAB Filelabel: Exercise 2: The QES-REC-CHK triplet
_label1 1 1 30 0 0 0 0 112 This is the questionnaire for the laboratory register
#serno 1 3 30 11 3 0 4 112 serno
_regdate 1 4 30 11 4 11 10 112 regdate
_sex 1 5 30 11 5 3 1 112 sex
#age 1 6 30 11 6 0 3 112 age
_reason 1 7 30 11 7 3 1 112 reason
#res1 1 8 30 11 8 101 3 112 res1
#res2 1 9 30 11 9 101 3 112 res2
#res3 1 10 30 11 10 101 3 112 res3
```

While this is perhaps not very informative to you at this point in time, you may note the simplicity of it. Have you ever tried to look at a spreadsheet in a text editor? You cannot, as it will not load and all you see is some gibberish. In contrast this is a straight simple text file and its file size is just 613 bytes. In comparison, a Microsoft Word® file containing the single letter “a”, nothing else, weighs in at 24,576 bytes...

For the *.CHK file, the entering of ranges and legal values took perhaps a bit trial and error. But basically it is very simple. For the field REGDATE we just entered:

```
01/01/2000-31/12/2005,01/01/1800
```

and for AGE

0-120,999

We can open the A_EX02.CHK file (CTRL+O, "Files of type", "EpiData check file (*.chk)") it is just a text file after all. It looks as follows:

```
serno
  RANGE 1 9999
  MUSTENTER
END
```

```
regdate
  RANGE 01/01/2000 31/12/2005
  LEGAL
    01/01/1800
  END
  MUSTENTER
END
```

```
sex
  LEGAL
    M
    F
    9
  END
  MUSTENTER
END
```

```
age
  RANGE 0 125
  LEGAL
    999
  END
  MUSTENTER
END
```

```
reason
  LEGAL
    D
    F
    9
  END
  MUSTENTER
END
```

```
res1
  RANGE 0.0 1.0
  LEGAL
    2.0
    3.0
    4.0
    5.0
    6.0
    9.0
  END
  MUSTENTER
END
```

```
res2
  RANGE 0.0 1.0
  LEGAL
```

```
    2.0
    3.0
    4.0
    5.0
    6.0
    9.0
  END
  MUSTENTER
END

res3
  RANGE 0.0 1.0
  LEGAL
    2.0
    3.0
    4.0
    5.0
    6.0
    9.0
  END
  MUSTENTER
END
```

Note that the capitalization versus the use of lower-case letters is used here only for easier visualization of the program flow (see note above about EpiData not being case-sensitive).

We will learn very soon how to edit the *.CHK file directly to experience its tremendous power.