

Framework for German Dossier Submissions

Kriss Harris, SAS Specialists Limited

ABSTRACT

When submitting your drug benefit assessments to the German Authority or other (foreign) regulatory agencies, you need to provide your reports in a specific format. These reports are usually in a non-English language, so the characters are different from the English characters that you are used to. The characters contain accents and other special characters, and the numerical results contain commas where you expect decimal points to be, and vice versa. To provide this report, a medical writer typically uses Microsoft Word to copy the results from a Clinical Study Report (CSR) into the document, and includes the appropriate formatting and translations. The copying must be done very carefully, and this process is error prone and very exhaustive. Also, the German authorities might have additional follow-up questions. Therefore, following this process is inefficient. There is a way to make the process more automated, and this paper demonstrated those methods. Firstly, this paper shows you a framework you can use for submitting a German Dossier, such as the time-to-event macros, subgroup analyses, and the processes that you can use to get your data in the right format. Secondly, this paper shows you how you can generate the results in the exact format needed for the German Dossiers. You are shown how to use encoding to read and write special characters, and how to use the REPORT procedure along with the style attributes to get your outputs in the required, correct format.

INTRODUCTION

According to (Gemeinsame Bundesausschuss, 2019) the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA) is the highest decision-making body of the joint self-government of physicians, dentists, hospitals and health insurance funds in Germany. The G-BA must put every new active pharmaceutical ingredient through an early benefit assessment within six months after it is launched on the German market. During the early benefit assessment, the G-BA examines whether the drug is really something new, and if it offers patients greater benefit than comparable treatments that are already available.

For the G-BA to carry out the assessment, pharmaceutical companies are obliged to submit a dossier on the benefit of the product that they want to launch in Germany. This paper will guide you through creating some of the tables required for the dossier.

The benefit assessment is not always performed by the G-BA as they can delegate the benefit assessment to the Quality and Efficiency Institute for Health Care (IQWiG) or third parties, with which you may be more familiar with

The dossiers themselves are in a quite rigid format: the content to go into the document is largely prespecified, and the tables and figures used to display the data is quite fixed. Therefore, it is possible to create standard programs to produce the outputs. However, to produce the standard outputs, first the data needs to be in the right format, and it is preferred that this format is ADaM data standards.

TIME-TO-EVENT

The majority of the work for the dossier assessments are time-to-event analysis, in particularly on subgroups. Output 1 below was extracted from a German Dossier submission. The submitted document is located here: https://www.g-ba.de/downloads/39-261-2732/2016-10-20_AM-RL-XII_Ramucirumab_Magenkarzinom_D-224_BAnz.pdf

Output 1, shows the Overall Survival and Progression Free Survival times for the two treatment combinations. The Kaplan Meier method estimates the survival times, and Cox Regression calculated the Hazard Ratios.

a) Ramucirumab in Kombination mit Paclitaxel

Studie Rainbow: Ramucirumab + Paclitaxel vs. Paclitaxel + Placebo

Endpunkt	Ramucirumab + Paclitaxel		Paclitaxel + Placebo		Intervention vs. Kontrolle
	N	Mediane Überlebenszeit in Monaten [95 %-KI] <i>Patienten mit Ereignis n (%)</i>	N	Mediane Überlebenszeit in Monaten [95 %-KI] <i>Patienten mit Ereignis n (%)</i>	Effektschätzer [95 %-KI] p-Wert Absolute Differenz ^a
Mortalität					
Gesamtüberleben 1					
<i>Primäre Analyse (stratifiziert)^b</i>	330	9,6 2 [8,5; 10,8] 3 256 (77,6) 4	335	7,4 [6,3; 8,4] 260 (77,6)	HR: 0,807 5 [0,678; 0,962] 6 p = 0,0169 7 + 2,2 Monate
Morbidität					
Progressionsfreies Überleben (PFS) 8					
<i>Primäre Analyse (stratifiziert)^b</i>	330	4,4 [4,2; 5,3] 279 (84,5)	335	2,9 [2,8; 3,0] 296 (88,4)	HR: 0,635 [0,536; 0,752] p < 0,0001 + 1,5 Monate

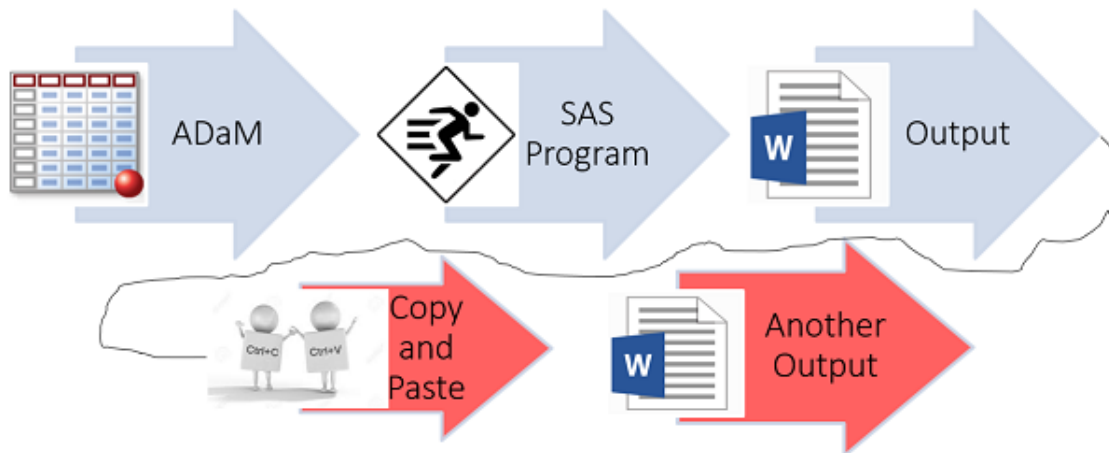
Output 1: Time-to-Event output

- 1 Overall Survival endpoint.
- 2 Median Survival Time.
- 3 Lower and Upper Confidence Intervals of the Median Survival Time.
- 4 Number of patients with the events (percentage of patients).
- 5 Hazard Ratio.
- 6 Lower and Upper Confidence Intervals of the Hazard Ratio.
- 7 Log-Rank p-value.
- 8 Progression-free Survival endpoint.

In Output 1, there are a lot of commas where decimal places would be expected, for example the value of 9,6 (instead of 9.6) for the Median Survival Time in the Ramucirumab + Paclitaxel Group. The format difference is an idiosyncrasy of the German dossier submission.

INEFFICIENCIES IN CREATION OF PREVIOUS GERMAN DOSSIER

The standard method of creating the tables needed for the German Dossier submission, was to copy the values from the necessary tables which were in the Clinical Study Report (CSR) and then paste those values into the tables needed for German Dossier submission. The problem with this approach is that, it is manual, repetitive and prone-to-error. Output 2 illustrates the previous process.



Output 2: Previous Process

TIME TO OVERALL SURVIVAL EXAMPLE

Let us imagine that there was interest in the Time-to-Overall Survival. Typically, SAS would read in the ADTTE dataset, and the LIFETEST procedure, along with the PHREG procedure would calculate the necessary Kaplan Meier estimates, and Hazard Ratios. Then the REPORT procedure would create the Time-to-Overall Survival output according to the specifications. The Time-to-Overall Survival output would then be included in the CSR. The first section of Output 3 shows an example of the typical Time-to-Overall Survival output.

As mentioned previously, the format required for the German Dossier is different from the format required for the CSR. A Medical writer would create an empty German Dossier table i.e. a table without any values but which was in the right format, and then they would open a copy of the CSR, find the correspondent endpoint table and then copy and paste the relevant values into the German Dossier table shell. Output 3 illustrates this process.

Table From CSR

Summary of Overall Survival Intent-to-Treat Population Study A		Drug A (N=197)		Drug B (N=95)	Treatment Effect/Difference / p-value*†
Number of Deaths, n (%)		147 (74.6)		74 (77.9)	
Number of Patients Censored, n (%)		50 (25.3)		21 (22.1)	
Alive, n (%)		45 (22.8)		20 (21.1)	
Lost to Follow Up, n (%)		5 (2.5)		0	
Withdrawal by Subject, n (%)		0		1 (1.1)	
Minimum *a, month		8.30		8.20	
25th percentile (95% CI)		11.47 (10.71, 13.16)		10.98 (8.83, 12.90)	
Median (95% CI)		19.52 (18.02, 21.63)		18.32 (16.37, 20.12)	1.20
75th percentile (95% CI)		23.97 (20.94, 26.99)		22.59 (19.79, 29.85)	
Maximum		32.11		33.82+	
p-value (2-sided) - Log Rank Unstratified					p = 0.0186
- Log Rank Stratified*‡					p = 0.0105
Hazard Ratio (95% CI) - UnStratified					0.563 (0.522, 0.890)
- Stratified*‡					0.563 (0.529, 0.805)

Table For German Dossier

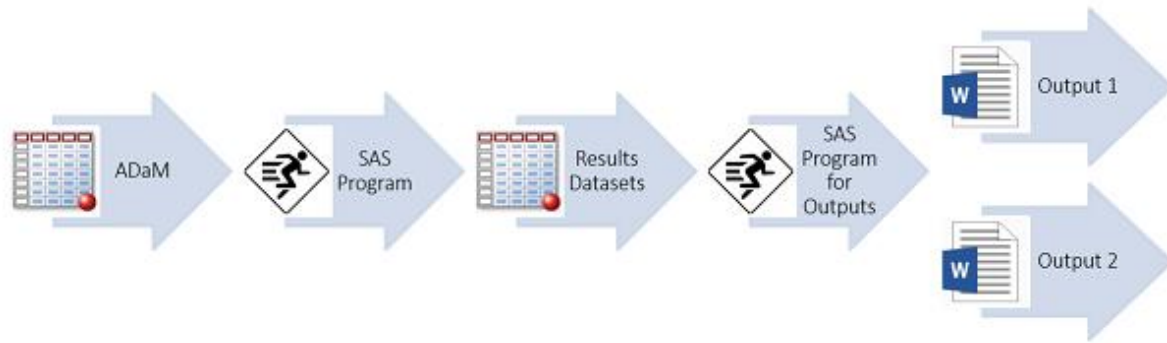
Tabelle 4-1: Ergebnisse für Gesamtüberleben aus RCT DRUG-1 (ITT-Population)

Studie Zielgröße Endpunkt	Drug + BSC		Placebo + BSC		Drug + BSC vs. Placebo + BSC HR [95%KI] p-Wert
	Patienten mit Ereignis n / N %	Median (Monate) [95%KI]	Patienten mit Ereignis n / N %	Median (Monate) [95%KI]	
RCT DRUG-1					
Mortalität					
Gesamtüberleben					
Primäre Analyse (stratifiziert)	147 / 197 74,6	19,5 [18,0; 21,6]	74 / 95 77,9	18,3 [16,4; 20,1]	0,563 [0,522; 0,890] 0,0186
Sensitivitätsanalysen					
Per-Protokoll (stratifiziert)	145 / 195 74,4	18,6 [17,0; 20,8]	73 / 94 77,7	17,5 [15,6; 19,2]	0,723 [0,534; 0,950] 0,0145

Output 3: Copy and Paste Example

IMPROVEMENTS IN CREATION OF CURRENT GERMAN DOSSIER

This process is prone-to-error and inefficient. In addition, decimal places need to be changed to commas and vice versa. Output 4 below shows how it is possible to add more automation in the German Dossier process using SAS to create the German Dossier tables at the same time as the CSR output.



Output 4: New Process

Using the Time-to-Overall Survival output again, in the current process, SAS will store the necessary Kaplan Meier estimates, and Hazard Ratios into a SAS (results) dataset which is then used for both the tables in the right format for the German Dossier (Output 1), and also for the CSR (Output 2).

USEFUL CODE FOR GERMAN DOSSIER OUTPUTS

Program 1 uses the SQL procedure to extract the calculated data needed for the outputs (from the temporarily imported datasets), such as the Median Survival Time and the Hazard Ratios and formats the values to the correct format using commas instead of decimal places.

```

* Median survival time;
proc sql;
  select (scan(trstat1, 1, "("), scan(trstat2, 1, "(") into :Median1_&dataset,
:Median2_&dataset
  from &dataset. ①
  where term = "Median (95% CI)";
quit;
options LOCALE=German_Germany; ②

data statistics;
  set input_dataset;
  Median1_dataset = put(input("&&Median1_&dataset", best.), nlnum5.1); ③
run;

```

Program 1: Extracting Data and Formats

- ① A macro variable is used for the dataset because usually different datasets are created for different endpoints. A so generally there are separate datasets which contain the Median time-to-event, and the Hazard Ratios for Overall Survival, Progression Free Survival, and Overall Survival using a different population flag.
- ②&③ These format the values into the format needed for the German Dossier, i.e. using commas instead of decimal places, so a number originally displayed as 74.6 will be displayed as 74,6.

The TEMPLATE procedure controls the output design. It is not necessary to write the code for the templates from scratch; just update the items that need to change. To see a template style, for example STYLES.RTF, using the following code will allow you to view the template in the log window:

```
proc template;
  source styles.rtf;
run;
```

Please see APPENDIX 1 for the SAS code which is displayed in the log.

Program 2 below shows an example of how the STYLES.RTF template has been updated to control the margins creating a new template Styles.rtf_gd.

```
proc template;
  define style Styles.rtf_gd;
    parent = styles.rtf;
    *style body from body /
    marginleft = 34.5mm marginright = 34.0mm
    margintop = 18.2mm marginbottom = 14.2mm;
    /* Creating own margins */
    style body from body /
    marginleft = 1in marginright = 1in
    margintop = 1.5in marginbottom = 1in;
run;
```

Program 2: Output Format – Margins and Font Sizes

Program 3, below, is a snippet of the Proc REPORT code used to produce output 3. This code removes some of the borders (by making the right borders have the color white), and makes certain section of the report have bold text. For example, in Output 5, the 1st, 2nd and 5th rows have bolded text and one right border.

```
compute gd_description;
  if order in (1, 2, 5) then do;
    call define(_row_, "style", "style={borderrightcolor = 1
      white font_weight=bold}");
  end;
  else if order = 3 then do;
    call define(_row_, "style", "style={borderrightcolor = 2
      white}");
  end;
endcomp;

compute HR_pvalue;
  if order <= 3 or order = 5 then do;
    call define(_col_, "style", "style={borderrightwidth=3
      borderrightcolor = black}");
  end;
endcomp;

compute Median1;
  if order = 4 or order > 5 then do;
    call define(_col_, "style", "style={borderrightwidth=4
      borderrightcolor = black}");
  end;
endcomp;
```

Program 3: Producing Reports – Controlling Borders and Font Weight

- 1 Makes the font bold, and defines that the right borders are colored in white, for the columns in the 1st, 2nd and 5th rows.
- 2 Defines that the right borders are colored in white, for all the columns in the 3rd row.
- 3 In order to have one right border colored in black, and therefore have the appearance of a border, this code puts a black border on the right hand side of the HR p-value column, for the rows that needed it, i.e. the rows less than 3 and the 5th row.
- 4 This code separates the two treatments by putting a black border on the right hand side of the Median column of the active drug.

Output 5 was created directly from a SAS program, and this is more efficient than using the previous copy and paste process.

Tabelle 4-1: Ergebnisse für Gesamtüberleben aus RCT DRUG-1 mit dem zu bewertenden Arzneimittel (ITT-Population)

Studie Zielgröße Endpunkt	Drug + BSC		Placebo + BSC		Drug + BSC vs. Placebo + BSC
	Patienten mit Ereignis n / N %	Median (Monate) [95%KI]	Patienten mit Ereignis n / N %	Median (Monate) [95%KI]	HR [95%KI] p-Wert
RCT DRUG-1					
Mortalität					
Gesamtüberleben					
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Sensitivitätsanalysen					
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Output 5: Example Output

CONCLUSION

It is better to automate the process as much as possible, than to use the copy and paste method as this is prone-to-error, inefficient, and quite repetitive.

Using the results datasets, in conjunction with German formats, Proc SQL, Proc TEMPLATE, and Proc REPORT, German Dossier outputs can be created in the appropriate format.

Any additional variables required for non-english dossiers should be added to the relevant ADaM datasets, for example German Translation Text of Adverse Events. German Translations of Adverse Events are needed instead of the English names that you may be used to, because this submission is for the German Dossier, and for that reason Ermüdung would need to be displayed instead of Fatigue.

There are further automations that can be done, for example automating the text that goes in front and beneath the table. These will be the next steps, because apparently the text above or below the tables is quite standard, as this just reiterates the results that are in the tables.

REFERENCES

Gemeinsame Bundesausschuss. (2019, 03 28). *Gemeinsame Bundesausschuss*. Retrieved from Gemeinsame Bundesausschuss: <https://www.g-ba.de/english/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would also like to thank Adrienne Bonwick for reviewing this paper.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. Contact the author at:

Kriss Harris
SAS Specialists Limited
italjet125@yahoo.com
<http://www.krissharris.co.uk>

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

```
proc template;
source styles.rtf;
define style Styles.Rtf;
  parent = styles.printer;
  style fonts /
    'TitleFont2' = ("
```



```

    'GraphTitleFont' = ("<serif>, <MTserif>",15pt,bold)
    'GraphAnnoFont' = ("<serif>, <MTserif>",10pt);
style titleAndNoteContainer from titleAndNoteContainer /
width = _undef_;
style cell from container /
linkcolor = colors('link2');
style table from table /
cellpadding = 3pt;
style batch from batch /
rules = none
frame = void
padding = 3pt
cellpadding = 0pt
borderspacing = 0pt;
style Byline from Byline
"Controls byline text." /
frame = void;
class usertext /
width = 100%;
class PrePage /
width = 100%;
style color_list
"Colors used in the default style" /
'link' = blue
'bgH' = grayBB
'fg' = black
'bg' = _undef_;
style GraphBox from GraphBox /
displayopts = "fill caps median mean outliers";
style GraphHistogram from GraphHistogram /
displayopts = "fill outline";
style GraphEllipse from GraphEllipse /
displayopts = "outline";
style GraphBand from GraphBand /
displayopts = "fill";
end;
run;

```