
Data structures

2

R is designed to handle experimental data

- Although the basic unit of R is a vector, we usually handle data in **data frames**.
- A data frame is a set of observations of a set of variables – in other words, the outcome of an experiment.
- For example, we might want to analyse information about a set of patients. To start with, let's say we have ten patients and for each one we know their name, sex, age, weight and whether they give consent for their data to be made public.

The patients data frame

We are going to create a data frame called 'patients', which will have ten rows (observations) and seven columns (variables). The columns must all be equal lengths.

	First_Name	Second_Name	Full_Name	Sex	Age	Weight	Consent
1	Adam	Jones	Adam Jones	Male	50	70.8	TRUE
2	Eve	Parker	Eve Parker	Female	21	67.9	TRUE
3	John	Evans	John Evans	Male	35	75.3	FALSE
4	Mary	Davis	Mary Davis	Female	45	61.9	TRUE
5	Peter	Baker	Peter Baker	Male	28	72.4	FALSE
6	Paul	Daniels	Paul Daniels	Male	31	69.9	FALSE
7	Joanna	Edwards	Joanna Edwards	Female	42	63.5	FALSE
8	Matthew	Smith	Matthew Smith	Male	33	71.5	TRUE
9	David	Roberts	David Roberts	Male	57	73.2	FALSE
10	Sally	Wilson	Sally Wilson	Female	62	64.8	TRUE

Let's see how we can construct this from scratch.

Character, numeric and logical data types

- Each column is a vector, like previous vectors we have seen, for example:

```
> age<-c(50, 21, 35, 45, 28, 31, 42, 33, 57, 62)
```

```
> weight<-c(70.8, 67.9, 75.3, 61.9, 72.4, 69.9, 63.5, 71.5, 73.2, 64.8)
```

- We can define the names using character vectors:

```
> firstName<- c("Adam", "Eve", "John", "Mary", "Peter", "Paul", "Joanna",  
"Matthew", "David", "Sally")
```

```
> secondName<-c("Jones", "Parker", "Evans", "Davis", "Baker", "Daniels",  
"Edwards", "Smith", "Roberts", "Wilson")
```

- We also have a new type of vector, the **logical** vector, which only contains the values TRUE and FALSE:

```
> consent<-c(TRUE, TRUE, FALSE, TRUE, FALSE, FALSE, FALSE, TRUE, FALSE, TRUE)
```

Character, numeric and logical data types

- Vectors can only contain one type of data; we cannot mix numbers, characters and logical values in the same vector. If we try this, R will convert everything to characters:

```
> c(20, "a string", TRUE)
[1] "20"          "a string" "TRUE"
```

- We can see the type of a particular vector using the **mode** function:

```
> mode(firstName)
[1] "character"
```

```
> mode(age)
[1] "numeric"
```

```
> mode(weight)
[1] "numeric"
```

```
> mode(consent)
[1] "logical"
```

Factors

- Character vectors are fine for some variables, like names.
- But sometimes we have categorical data and we want R to recognize this.
- A factor is R's data structure for categorical data.

```
> sex<-c("Male", "Female", "Male", "Female", "Male", "Male", "Female",  
"Male", "Male", "Female")  
> sex  
[1] "Male"    "Female"  "Male"    "Female"  "Male"    "Male"    "Female"  "Male"  
"Male"    "Female"  
> factor(sex)  
[1] Male     Female Male     Female Male     Male     Female Male     Male     Female  
Levels: Female Male
```

- R has converted the strings of the sex character vector into two **levels**, which are the categories in the data.
- Note the values of this factor are not character strings, but levels.
- We can use this factor to compare data for males and females.

Creating a data frame (first attempt)

- We can construct a data frame from other objects:

```
> patients<-data.frame(firstName, secondName, paste(firstName,secondName) ,  
sex, age, weight, consent)
```

```
> patients
```

	firstName	secondName	paste.firstName..secondName.	sex	age	weight	consent
1	Adam	Jones	Adam Jones	Male	50	70.8	TRUE
2	Eve	Parker	Eve Parker	Female	21	67.9	TRUE
3	John	Evans	John Evans	Male	35	75.3	FALSE
4	Mary	Davis	Mary Davis	Female	45	61.9	TRUE
5	Peter	Baker	Peter Baker	Male	28	72.4	FALSE
6	Paul	Daniels	Paul Daniels	Male	31	69.9	FALSE
7	Joanna	Edwards	Joanna Edwards	Female	42	63.5	FALSE
8	Matthew	Smith	Matthew Smith	Male	33	71.5	TRUE
9	David	Roberts	David Roberts	Male	57	73.2	FALSE
10	Sally	Wilson	Sally Wilson	Female	62	64.8	TRUE

- The **paste** function joins character vectors together.
- We can access particular variables using the **dollar** operator:

```
> patients$age
```

```
[1] 50 21 35 45 28 31 42 33 57 62
```

Naming data frame variables

- R has inferred the names of our data frame variables from the names of the vectors or the commands (eg the paste command).
- We can name the variables after we have created a data frame using the **names** function, and we can use the same function to see the names:

```
> names(patients)<-c("First_Name", "Second_Name", "Full_Name", "Sex",  
"Age", "Weight", "Consent")
```

```
> names(patients)  
[1] "First_Name" "Second_Name" "Full_Name" "Sex" "Age"  
"Weight" "Consent"
```

- Or we can name the variables when we define the data frame:

```
> patients<-data.frame(First_Name=firstName, Second_Name=secondName,  
Full_Name=paste(firstName,secondName), Sex=sex, Age=age, Weight=weight,  
Consent=consent)
```

```
> names(patients)  
[1] "First_Name" "Second_Name" "Full_Name" "Sex" "Age"  
"Weight" "Consent"
```


Factors in data frames

- When creating a data frame, R assumes all character vectors should be categorical variables and converts them to factors. This is not always what we want:

```
> patients$firstName
[1] Adam    Eve      John    Mary    Peter   Paul    Joanna  Matthew David    Sally
Levels: Adam David Eve Joanna John Mary Matthew Paul Peter Sally
```

- We can avoid this by asking R not to treat strings as factors, and then explicitly stating when we want a factor by using **factor**:

```
> patients<-data.frame(First_Name=firstName, Second_Name=secondName,
Full_Name=paste(firstName,secondName), Sex=factor(sex), Age=age,
Weight=weight, Consent=consent, stringsAsFactors=FALSE)

> patients$Sex
[1] Male    Female  Male    Female  Male    Male    Female  Male    Male    Female
Levels: Female Male

> patients$First_Name
[1] "Adam"    "Eve"      "John"     "Mary"     "Peter"    "Paul"    "Joanna"
"Matthew" "David"    "Sally"
```

Indexing data frames

Special cases:

a[*i*,] i-th row

a[,*j*] j-th column

- You can index multidimensional data structures like data frames using commas. If you don't provide an index for either rows or columns, all of the rows or columns will be returned.

```
object [ rows , columns ]
```

```
> e[1,2]
```

```
[1] 6
```

```
> e[1,]
```

```
[1] 1 6
```

```
> patients[1,2]
```

```
[1] "Jones"
```

```
> patients[1,]
```

	First_Name	Second_Name	Full_Name	Sex	Age	Weight	Consent
1	Adam	Jones	Adam Jones	Male	50	70.8	TRUE

Advanced indexing

- As values in R are really vectors, so indices are actually vectors, and can be numeric or logical:

```
> s <- letters[1:5]
```

```
> s[c(1,3)]
```

```
[1] "a" "c"
```

```
> s[c(TRUE, FALSE, TRUE, FALSE, FALSE)]
```

```
[1] "a" "c"
```

```
> a<-1:5
```

```
> a<3
```

```
[1] TRUE TRUE FALSE FALSE FALSE
```

```
> s[a<3]
```

```
[1] "a" "b"
```

```
> s[a>1 & a<3]
```

```
[1] "b"
```

```
> s[a==2]
```

```
[1] "b"
```

Operators

- arithmetic

+, -, *, /, ^

- comparison

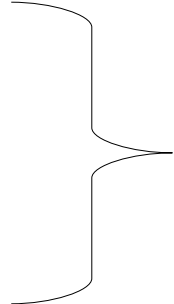
<, >, <=, >=, ==, !=

(equal to, not equal to)



- logical

!, &, |, xor



these always return
logical values !
(TRUE, FALSE)

Exercise

- Create a data frame called **my.patients** using the instructions in the slides. Change the data if you like.
- Check you have created the data frame correctly by loading the original version from this file in the *Day_1_scripts* folder using **source**:

```
> source("05_patients.R")
```
- Remake your data frame with three new variables: country, continent, and height. Make up the data. Make country a character vector but continent a factor.
- Try the **summary** function on your data frame. What does it do? How does it treat vectors (numeric, character, logical) and factors? (What does it do for matrices?)
- Use logical indexing to select the following patients:
 - Patients under 40
 - Patients who give consent to share their data
 - Men who weight as much or more than the average European male (70.8 kg)

Logical indexing answers

- Patients under 40:
`> patients[patients$Age<40,]`
- Patients who give consent to share their data:
`> patients[patients$Consent==TRUE,]`
- Men who weigh as much or more than the average European male (70.8 kg):
`> patients[patients$Sex=="Male" & patients$Weight<=70.8,]`