Top Ten Things To Know
Management of Patients With Extracranial Carotid and Vertebral Artery Disease

1. The anatomy and definitions for both carotid and vertebral arterial disease are discussed to provide the clinician with background information about the cerebral vessels that are targeted for treatment in this clinical practice guideline.

2. The diagnosis and management of asymptomatic carotid artery disease is addressed in this guideline.

3. Extracranial cerebrovascular disease is considered a marker of systemic atherosclerosis, specifically the aorta, coronary arteries and peripheral arteries.

4. A review of the clinical presentation of atherosclerosis of the carotid artery and the characteristics of the atherosclerotic lesions are discussed.

5. This guideline reviews the clinical assessment of persons with focal neurologic deficits associated with large vessel occlusions, e.g. acute ischemic stroke transient ischemic attack, and amaurosis fugax.

6. Cerebral ischemia due to intracranial arterial disease and occlusions and potential management is addressed.

7. Guidelines are given for the diagnosis of extracranial carotid and vertebral arterial disease.

8. Neuroimaging modalities are discussed with recommendations for testing that will best define cerebral occlusive disease for individual patients. These modalities include magnetic resonance angiography, computed tomographic angiography, and catheter-based contract angiography.

9. Medical management of patients with atherosclerotic disease of the extracranial and vertebral arteries is defined and discussed, and includes recognition and control of risk factors.

10. Evidence review (including the recent CREST trial) of and recommendations on the use of surgical (i.e., carotid endarterectomy) or interventional treatments (i.e., carotid artery stenting) in patients with symptomatic and asymptomatic occlusive disease are presented.

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