Reviewer's report

Title: Carotid Endarterectomy and Carotid Artery Stenting Utilization Trends over Time

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2012

Reviewer: George Howard

Reviewer's report:

The authors have offer an interesting paper on an important topic. Suggestions are offered to (hopefully) improve the paper and are considered by the reviewer to be minor.

1. Perhaps it should be noted that the decline in revascularization is even more striking in the face of the “graying of America.”

2. In the discussion of age, the evidence for a likely higher risk of CAS at older ages is stronger that the authors present, as it was not only present in ICSS but also present in a meta-analysis of all the European trials (Lancet. 2010;376:1062–1073), the lead-in for CREST (Hobson RW. J Vasc Surg 2004;40:1106–11) and the randomized cohort of CREST study also (shown in reference 13, and describe in more detail by Voeks JH. Stroke. 2011 Dec;42(12):3484-9). Strongly making the case that stenting is more dangerous among the elderly is important given the subsequent findings of age predicting increasing use of CAS.

3. CREST has also recently demonstrated that stenting may be at higher risk in women (Howard VJ. Lancet Neurol. 2011 Jun;10(6):530-7), a finding that is important since Table 4 seem to show that women are more likely to go to CAS.

Level of interest: An exceptional article

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

The only potential conflict that I have is that i am a CREST investigator (and feel bad that two of my suggestions are to reference CREST more) and that I received $5K to help Abbott prepare for the FDA meeting for the broadening of the indication. I do not consider this a big conflict, as all of my comments to the authors are to point out the dangers of CAS.