http://www.websurg.com/laparoscopic_appendectomy.htm

An excellent website for the surgeon, detailing every aspect of the procedure. This website is the gold standard for all laparoscopic procedures. It comes from the highly respected EITS institute in Strasbourg. The teaching sections are in video format; therefore, they are best viewed on a broadband internet system for optimum results. The website demonstrates the procedure in real time. To gain access to other aspects of the website requires a quick and straight forward registration process. A great website for the laparoscopic trainee.***

<http://www.pmc.org.pk/laparoscopic.htm>

An interesting article on this website comparing the practice of open appendectomy with laparoscopic appendectomy in a non-industrialised country. It is interesting to see how cost is one of their main limiting factors. The website is displayed as if it was an article in a journal. It has some useful real pictures in the website, but not enough detail for the budding laparoscopic surgeon.*

Carotid artery stenting

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www.clevelandclinic.org

Unfortunately this website does not deliver the commanding and respected impression that was anticipated. The information is not well presented, nor is it in the same depth as patient-information sites provided by other institutions. The links are limited, and the site is biased towards CAS being superior in all respects to CEA.*

www.lancastergeneral.org

This follows a well-established format and the contents are identical to many other sites encountered; it seems that all American hospitals offering CAS have subscribed to the same website designer. It is a patient-focused site, and again provides much detailed information as to who may benefit from CAS, how it is performed, and what to expect in the postoperative period. A comprehensive list of the risks and complications are also explained in depth. Perhaps too much detail is given for the casual reader, or average patient, but it does provide some useful links to other American websites.**

www.vascularweb.org

This is the official site of the Society for Vascular Surgery in the US. It is a patient-orientated site and, as one would expect of such an institution, is very informative with accurate descriptions

of the procedure and the expected risks. The disease process of carotid artery stenosis is explained, with multiple colour diagrams. Alternative treatments, including conservative therapy and carotid endarterectomy are also discussed. Links are provided to other areas of the site explaining the nature and role of imaging techniques prior to the procedure. The website is clear, and gives the patient easily accessible and authoritative information.***

www.carotid.com

This website is well designed and slick-looking, which is expected since it is produced by Boston Scientific. There are two halves to the site; one is for patient information, which remains relatively neutral in its tone. The other is directed towards medical professionals and it is here that there is real bias to the company's products. It provides a good starting point for patients and doctors to start researching CAS, but is in no way definitive.***

www.nice.org.uk

The only British website included in this review is surprisingly good. There is only one link to follow, and that is to a PDF containing an overview of carotid stent placement for carotid artery stenosis. This document was prepared by NICE as part of a consultation exercise assessing the safety and efficacy of CAS. It contains basic information about CAS, its alternatives and a review of those trials published so far comparing the two. Most of the data are lifted directly from a Cochrane Review on the same, but it is all put together in a 'no-frills' document free from any sort of commercial bias, which is rather refreshing.***

www.angioplasty.org

This website has the look of a tabloid newspaper, but the contents of a broadsheet. Again, it is an American production, but if you can see past the glitz and interactive features there is a wealth of useful information here for patients and medics alike. Physicians are kept up-to-date with trials, while patients have a forum to discuss all things to do with angioplasty (coronary and peripheral interventions alongside CAS). There are interviews with world-leading experts, some of them available to download as video files. There are many links to follow, even if those of a commercial bias are ignored.****

www.guidant.com

In terms of overall look and user-friendliness, this website rates highest. Again, it is commercially biased; however, looking beyond that, it has many useful features and resources. When explaining this procedure to patients there is now no need to draw it on the back of a piece of paper – this site has very good looking animations that do exactly that. There is a 'PowerPoint Resource Center' that allows doctors to download pictures and diagrams that can be included in talks, which is very useful. There is also a patient-friendly side to the site, allowing information sheets to be downloaded. The information is pitched at the right level and appears unbiased in its attitude to CEA.****