Case study: Using Choosing Wisely

Definition
Choosing Wisely™ is a national effort developed to help providers and patients have conversations regarding the correct delivery of care including evidence-based recommendations that can be discussed. Included in this project are “Things Physicians and Providers Should Question”—the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) has identified 5 such practices for this list.

Case Presentation
A 74-year-old woman with a history of hypertension presented to her primary care physician following an episode of syncope that occurred in morning after she completed breakfast. She lost consciousness only briefly and had no associated neurologic symptoms. Cardiac workup has been negative. She has never experienced symptoms of a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA). The patient was referred to the neurology clinic for “rule out stroke.” In the office, her neurologic examination is completely normal. The patient specifically requests a carotid ultrasound based on the advice of friends and family as well as her own research on the Internet. One of the AAN’s Five Things Physicians and Providers Should Question is: “Don’t perform imaging of the carotid arteries for simple syncope without other neurologic symptoms.” In caring for this patient, the physician was able to cite the specific recommendation and point the patient to resources that explain the rationale behind it. The physician offered the patient a chance to participate in joint decision-making and, after reviewing the information provided following the visit, agreed that carotid assessment was not an indicated test in this setting.

Discussion
The Choosing Wisely effort involves multiple subspecialties in addition to neurology and provides a resource that can be used for shared decision making with patients. Further recommendations will be added in the coming years and increasing attention is now focused on dissemination of these recommendations to physicians and patients alike. An AAN working group developed these recommendations in a rigorous fashion and published the recommendations in Neurology® with associated summary of the evidence supporting these statements. Patient decision-making brochures are being developed for many of these metrics.
References

The American Academy of Neurology’s top five Choosing Wisely recommendations.
http://www.choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/american-academy-of-neurology/
http://www.choosingwisely.org/