Acute Monocular Blindness after Carotid Endarterectomy due to Non-arteritic Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy

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A 56 year old non-diabetic male patient with an asymptomatic 90% stenosis of the right internal carotid artery underwent carotid endarterectomy with patch angioplasty. Thirty hours after surgery the patient’s right eye was sore and light perception completely vanished without recovery. Nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy revealed a new occlusion of the external carotid artery (right). Five days after surgery optic disc edema developed so NAION (non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy) was diagnosed (left). This entity has to be distinguished from posterior ischemic optic neuropathy without ophthalmoscopic changes and from central retinal artery occlusion with a “cherry red spot” and surrounding pale retina.