

The popularity of prolotherapy

Whereas Atkins also considers acupuncture a reliable pain relief method for OA sufferers, he believes prolotherapy to be the most promising alternative treatment available for orthopedic conditions. Also known as sclerotherapy or reconstructive thera-

py, prolotherapy involves a series of injections of a natural substance, such as calcium gluconate, shot directly into an injured or weakened tendon or ligament. The amount of injections a patient requires depends on the severity of the affected area.

The injections cause a "sterile inflammation," or more simply, a rush of blood to the area. The blood rush delivers the oxygen and nutrients that the treatment area requires for strength. After a period of time, which is again area-dependent, blood vessels grow and collagen forms. According to Atkins, the treatment has an 80% to

90% success rate.

Prolotherapy has been in use since the 1950s but it still remains virtually unknown to a vast number of chronic pain sufferers. In a preface for the book, *Prolo Your Pain Away* by Ross A. Hauser, MD, C. Everett Koop, former surgeon general of the United States, attributes the lack of physician awareness of the treatment to skepticism.

When Koop was 40 years old, he was diagnosed by two separate neurological clinics as having incurable pain. He underwent prolotherapy treatment which successfully alleviated the pain. In Hauser's book, Koop writes that prolotherapy is an easy, effective solution for problems that have been "notoriously difficult to treat" with other methods.