

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Prolotherapy in South Korea: Interview with Dr. Choi Yung Do

Ross A. Hauser, MD & Choi Yung Do, MD

Dr. Hauser = **Q** (Question)

Dr. Choi Yung Do = **A** (Answer)

Q: Please give your full name.

A: Yung Do, Choi

Q: Could you please explain to us your medical background and how you came to learn Prolotherapy?

A: Medical School: Inje Medical School, Busan
Degree: MD Medical School Graduation: 1991
Internship and Residency Training: Inje University Baek Hospital, 1991-1994
Specialty: Neurosurgery
Special interest/expertise/membership:
Acupuncture, Moxa cauterly, Neural Therapy, Apitoxin (Bee Venom), (KSAT-The Korea Society of Apitoxin Therapy), IMS, (Korea Society of Interventional Muscle and Soft Tissue Stimulation Therapy)

For more than ten years I have devoted my time to study and education in the fields of alternative medicine, such as acupuncture, moxa cauterly, apitoxin therapy, natural medicine, etc.

I have done many surgeries and have tried every kind of medication, but the results were only temporary or led to other problems, and furthermore the cost was very high. I needed something to cut through the conventional medicine so that people could avoid unnecessarily expensive examinations, surgeries or medications. It had to be simple, safe and inexpensive.

Until I found the book *Prolo Your Pain Away!* on the bookshelf of my colleague, I did not give much attention to Prolotherapy. I read it very seriously and realized that this was what I had been looking for. I began to collect articles and books, and I took some lessons from other doctors who had experience in Prolotherapy, regarding techniques.

Q: What has your experience been with Prolotherapy?

A: I have extensive experience with all aspects of alternative therapy, but I am just beginning to understand the chronic pain. I have given over 10,000 Prolotherapy treatments without any significant ill effects, and have effectively relieved pain and suffering. Thank God!

I seldom use a solution other than dextrose or procaine. The single dextrose concentration is enough to cause inflammation and the needle penetrating the certain point of skin, so called acupuncture point, and soft tissue below also can cause inflammation and activate meridian system.

Sometimes I add just a small amount of bee venom (apitoxin) as a proliferant. As you know, Apitoxin is a potent stimulant, causing strong and immediate inflammation.

Recently I begin to use oil based growth hormone locally to induce regeneration of damaged or weakened connective tissue and also expecting systemic effect at the same time.

Q: What conditions do you have the greatest success treating with Prolotherapy?

A: The sacroiliac joint is the greatest weight bearing joint in the human body. Clinically, it has often been observed that distortion of the pelvis directly affects the hip joints, lower extremities, lumbar spine and up to the head and neck. Prolotherapy is the most effective treatment for the sacroiliac joint and its related problems.

Q: Could you go into detail of how Prolotherapy is accepted in South Korea?

A: Prolotherapy has become very popular among doctors in South Korea. Many physicians do Prolotherapy, and it is not difficult to find a practitioner on the internet. I am not sure of what they inject, nor about their level of skill. But there is the beginning of awareness of the effectiveness of Prolotherapy.

What about the patients? Well, health care has now become a consumer product. I think the patients are not interested in what kind a therapy they receive, but only that they require a doctor to detect their pain and remove it. Fortunately, I can find Prolotherapy in the patient's shopping list and also in doctors' recommendations.

Q: Is Prolotherapy becoming the standard of care for treating chronic pain in Korea? Why or why not?

A: Positively yes, because the therapy is very safe, simple and even more it is very effective. Another reason is that many people have become aware of the harmfulness of the long-term use of steroids and of the fact that chronic pain cannot be controlled by steroids in the long run. At present, Prolotherapy seems to be the only substitute for steroid therapy.

Q: What would you like to see for the future in regard to Prolotherapy?

A: What would I like to see in the future? I think 3-D image guidance technology will be used in the field of Prolotherapy, and gene or cell therapy will replace traditional prolo solutions. A stem cell itself, or some kind of genetically programmed substances, will be used to repair the damaged tissue or restore the function of the weak ligaments. It will be very exciting.

Q: Is there a Prolotherapy society that you know of? What is their contact information?

A: As far as I know, there are no official Prolotherapy societies in Korea. Hence, there are no reliable training or certification systems.

Q: As you know, I came across your name because you treated some American Christian missionaries. Do you incorporate faith into your medical practice?

A: I think belief has a direct effect on one's health, and may play a bigger role in the healing process than any other factor. It elicits a relaxation response, a slowed heartbeat, lower blood pressure, and a reduction in stress and anxiety, which have been regarded as a factor affecting health and healing. But people never really think it through.

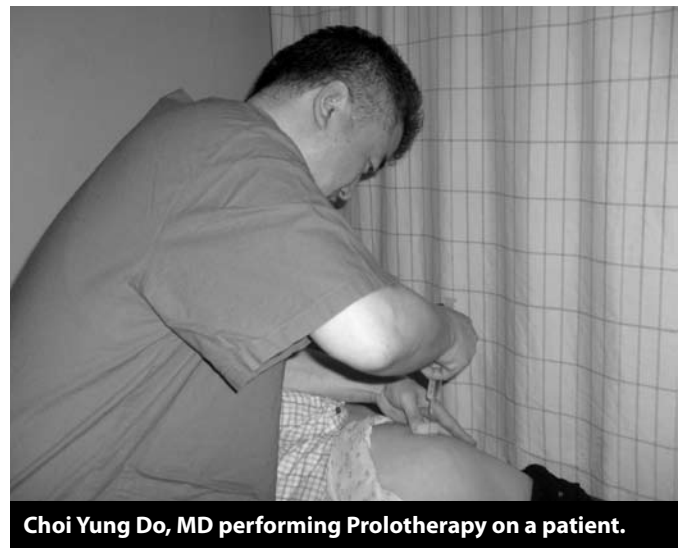
Before, I was possessed by the misconception that modern medicine can exercise control over illness or disease. No, it is not true. Why is it that, as the number of doctors and medical facilities increase, the number of illnesses and patients also increase? Why are so many people suffering from illness and pain in spite of all of the great medical achievements? All I can do, as a doctor, is manage the disease's symptoms. Why do I feel like a fake? Why do I have to pretend to be more than I really am? I am struggling and grappling with all of these questions.

“She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.” Mark. 5:26

I do not have all the answers, but there is one thing I do know. God forgives our sin and heals the sick. We have to acknowledge the power of God that influences every moment of our lives. Our body's organs are under God's constant care, and cannot work independently. It's not the medicines or the surgeries. Only by His grace, do we have the capacity to repair and heal our own cells. We just put a tiny piece of the puzzle in the right place, and walk into the light of God. “I serve and God cures.”

Q: Please sum up your feelings about Prolotherapy and its future success in your home town and around the world.

A: Over many years of clinical experience, I've tried many kinds of therapy. Some were very effective, but not safe, while the cost was high. And some were very safe, but not as effective as I had expected. Of course, there is no master key which can open all doors. Prolotherapy cannot cure all pain. But I've found Prolotherapy to be one of the most effective treatments for curing chronic pain. And there is evidence that Prolotherapy offers many advantages over “conventional” therapy in physiologic or functional outcomes. So I think that its future worldwide success is only a question of time. ■



Choi Yung Do, MD performing Prolotherapy on a patient.