

The UW Prolotherapy Education and Research Lab (UW PEARL)

Advancing a Promising Treatment for Chronic Pain

How can clinicians decrease the devastating impact of chronic musculoskeletal pain due to osteoarthritis, overuse tendon disorders, and back problems? Is there a safe, effective outpatient procedure for treating these disabling conditions?

Prolotherapy, an injection-based therapy practiced for over a century, offers the potential for effective management. We have created the UW Prolotherapy Education and Research Lab (UW PEARL), a collaboration between primary care and specialty clinicians, to further education and research on this promising treatment.

Why Focus on Prolotherapy?

1. Chronic musculoskeletal pain has grown to epidemic levels.¹
2. Existing therapies, including opioid medications, often do not address the root cause of chronic pain and may result in unwanted side effects.¹
3. National organizations such as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Institute of Medicine have called for new therapies for these conditions.^{2,3}
4. Because prolotherapy stimulates natural healing processes, it is an important step between conservative care and surgery.



David Rabago, MD, and Michael Weber, MD

Evidence suggests that prolotherapy is effective for chronic musculoskeletal pain due to osteoarthritis, overuse tendon disorders and back problems—but more research is urgently needed.

1. <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2011/Relieving-Pain-in-America-A-Blueprint-for-Transforming-Prevention-Care-Education-Research.aspx>

2. <http://archive.ahrq.gov/clinic/tp/oakneetp.htm>

3. <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2009/ComparativeEffectivenessResearchPriorities.aspx>

All references accessed September 9, 2015.

What is UW PEARL?

Directed by David Rabago, MD, a National Institutes of Health-trained clinician-scientist, UW PEARL is an interdisciplinary collaboration of clinicians evaluating prolotherapy for the treatment of chronic musculoskeletal pain.

We have conducted research on knee osteoarthritis, tennis elbow and other overuse tendon disorders. Through our education and research efforts, we hope to increase understanding of the appropriate use of prolotherapy.

Jeff Patterson: A Prolotherapy Advocate and Mentor

Our work began in 2004 with the visionary leadership of Jeff Patterson, DO, who refined the practice of prolotherapy and was a tireless advocate for its use.

His mentorship led to several successful clinical trials reporting prolotherapy's effectiveness.

Sadly, Dr. Patterson's unexpected death in 2014 cut short his participation. To continue this transformative research, we have formalized our efforts as UW PEARL.



Jeff Patterson, DO, teaching prolotherapy in Honduras

PEARL Successes

- We work closely with the **Hackett Hemwall Patterson Foundation (HHPF)**, an international leader in the practice and teaching of clinical prolotherapy, and collaborate with the HHPF on annual prolotherapy education and research conferences.
- We have published numerous **scientific reports** on the effectiveness of prolotherapy for osteoarthritis and tennis elbow. Read the seminal paper at: <http://annfammed.org/content/11/3/229.full>
- While we have received federal, state and local funding to conduct this research, further efforts require additional support not available through granting organizations.

How Can You Help?

Your donation will allow us to continue this important work. Donor funding will specifically support clinician education and translational, team-oriented research of prolotherapy for knee osteoarthritis, overuse tendon disorders, and back pain.

To contribute, please visit <http://supportuw.org/giveto/pearl>

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