Use of Thrombin injections for bleeding gastric and ectopic varices

In Lothian it is recommended that we use ‘thrombin’ from “Tisseel, Baxter” [2,500iu total strength] for gastric and ectopic bleeding varices.

Make up the thrombin with the CaCl$_2$ solution and dilute further with 5mls of NaCl 0.9% to a final volume of 10ml and a concentration of 250 units of thrombin per ml.

For gastric varices it is suggested to inject 2-3mls at one or 2 sites depending upon size and degree of bleeding. Don’t try to use the last ml in the needle as this requires to flush with further fluids thus diluting the effect.

We recommend repeating the thrombin injections twice more at 1-2 weekly intervals. Re-bleeding seems rare after 3 sessions.

Using Endoscopic Ultrasound to detect thrombosis of varices and/or to target varices is useful in some patients.