Key word search performed in PUBMED

Studies included for abstract review: \( n = 159 \)

Excluded; the study investigated already diseased individuals, the study was not designed to capture data on alcohol cessation (ex-drinkers) or did not distinguish between lifetime abstainers and former drinkers and/or did not investigate cancer of the stomach: \( n = 127 \)

Studies read in full: \( n = 32 \)

Included from manual search of reference lists: \( n = 3 \)

Excluded; the study did not meet the search criteria: \( n = 17 \)

Studies included for review: \( n = 18 \) (1 from 2011 update = 19)

Studies that quantified the effect of duration of abstention of alcohol included in the meta-analysis: \( n = 5 \)