1. Literature search by electronic and hand searching 496 studies identified 2. Initial screening by title, abstract and key words 430 studies excluded 66 relevant studies selected 51 studies excluded 3. Final screening by full text reading 33 did not report the effect size of association 18 reported the effect size 15 studies selected 9 combined former smokers with non-smokers 10 cross-sectional studies 5 combined former smokers with current 5 cohort studies smokers 4 did not meet the criteria for comparison and 4. Data abstraction and quality appraisal outcome 8 high-quality studies 6 cross-sectional and 2 cohort studies 7 moderate-quality studies 4 cross-sectional and 3 cohort studies 6. Analysis for causal association using 8 high-quality studies 8 studies reported significant association 8 studies reported decreased risk of former smokers 4 studies reported dose–response relationship 7. Evidence synthesis