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29,513 potentially relevant publications identified

257 publications retrieved and assessed for inclusion

29,256 publications excluded on the basis of title and abstract

150 publications excluded:
- 44 reviews/no original data
- 29 meta-analyses
- 5 pooled analysis
- 12 letter/editorial/comments
- 8 with no measure of the association
- 17 with no exposure of interest
- 27 with no outcome of interest
- 8 ecological studies
- 70 case-control studies

28 potential publications from prospective studies reported on the association between serum beta-carotene and retinol and lung cancer

107 publications with inclusion criteria extracted:
- 101 with cohort, case-cohort or nested case-control design
- 6 from randomised controlled trials

18 publications were included in the meta-analysis:
- 15 on serum beta carotene
- 12 on serum retinol

10 publications were excluded:
- 5 duplicate publications
- 5 publications without enough data