

'The Ergonomic patient handling card®' - education scheme



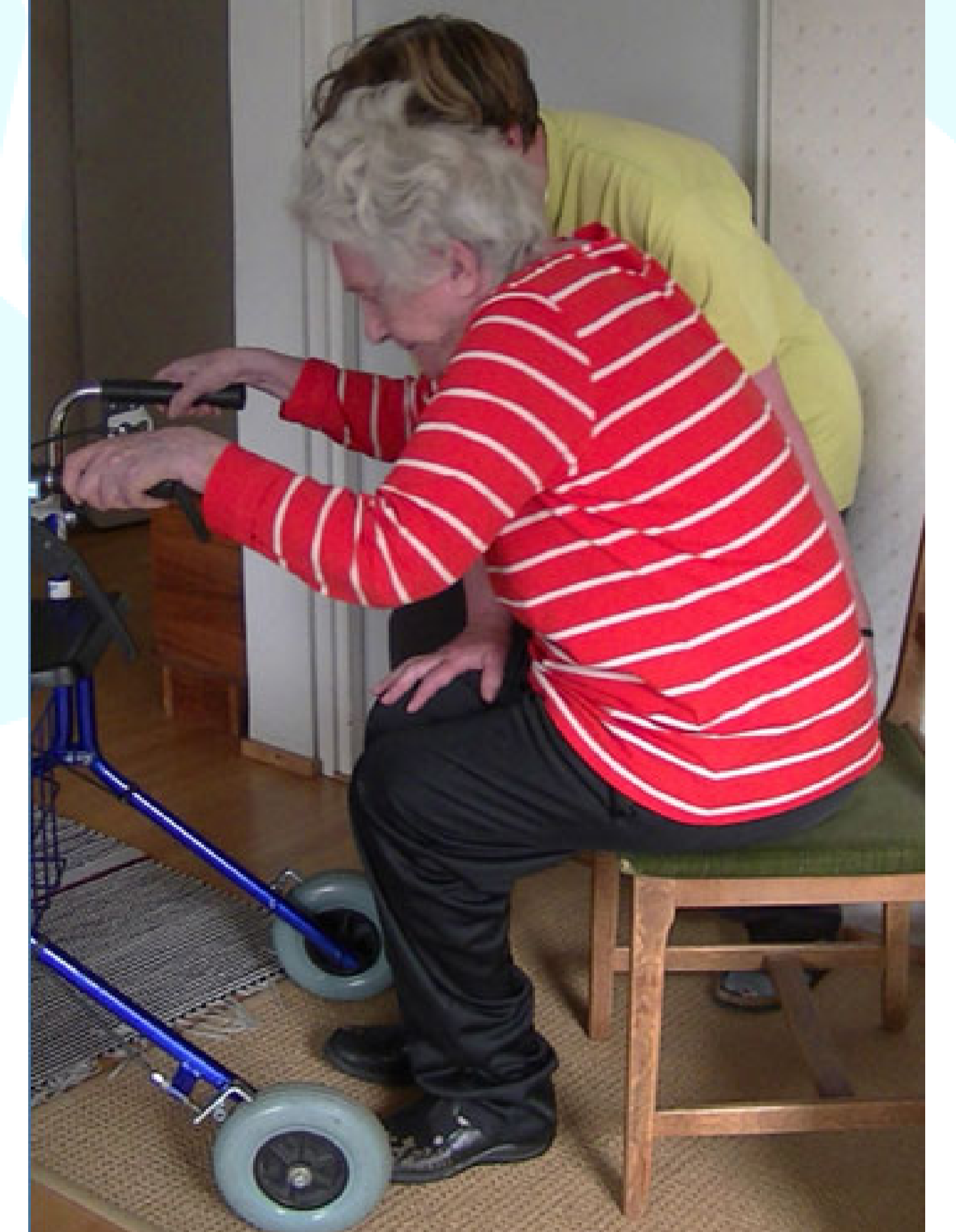
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Introduction

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in nursing persist as the leading and most costly occupational health problem. Based on an earlier project and research evidence, Dr Leena Tamminen-Peter developed for FIOH the 'Ergonomic patient handling card®' - education scheme (hereinafter called the **Card**) to improve the quality and safety of patient handling care, both in nursing schools and at workplaces, in Finland. The development took place from 2007-2009 with the support of the Ministry of Social Affairs & Health, and in collaboration with national experts in ergonomics.

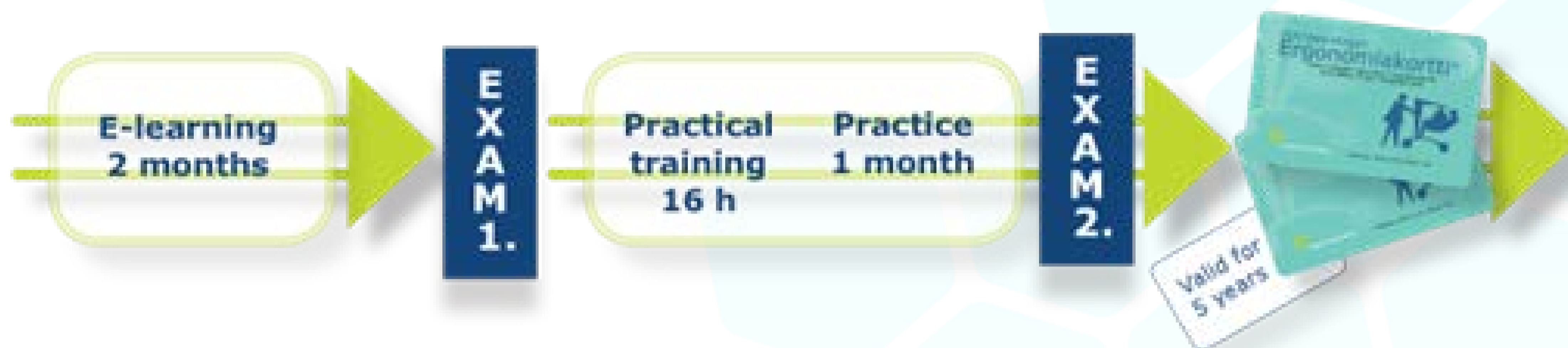
The aims of the Card are:

- to define the competencies, skills, and knowledge levels for safe patient transfers.
- to ensure legislative compliance
- to improve patients' safety and the quality of care
- to improve caregivers' abilities to assess and avoid risks and thus enhance overall safety
- to enable carers to prove their competencies by taking the exam



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The **Card** has been intended for all social and health care professionals and students in the social & health care sectors. The Tool consists of four standardised parts. The **Card** is valid for five years; to keep it valid a one-day refresher training session is required.



Effectiveness of the Card -training

To date, over 7 000 people have passed the **Card** -exam and over 317 persons have undergone the two days instructor training in Finland.

The benefits of the **Card** -training is widely accepted. In workplaces with extensive training, the benefits of the ergonomics and safe working methods are evident. Exemplary from one Southern Finland municipality where the **Card** -training started in 2013 is their 3½ - year statistics, 2013-2016, showing a gradual decrease of sickness absences due to MSDs of 29% (Fig. 1.) The sick leave days reduction is over 12000 days (46766 days in 2013, extrapolated 34692 days in 2016).

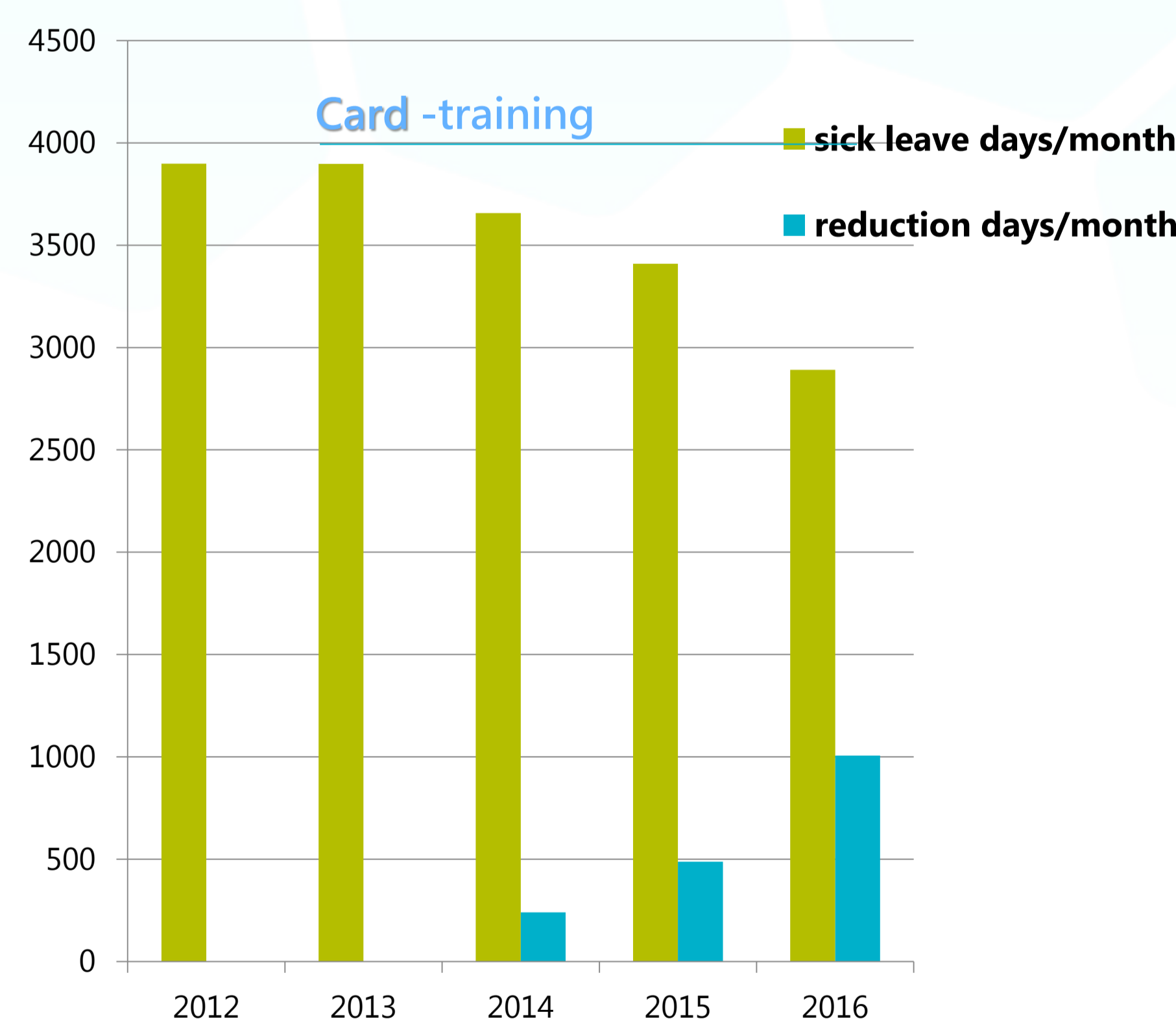


Figure 1. Carer's (n= 1850) in one month from 2013 to 8/2016 average sick leave days due to MSDs and reduction days due to absence or diminished MSDs.

In vocational education, one-third of schools has a **Card** -instructor, however, the **Card** -training is only in eleven collages compulsory and in all others optional or supplementary.

In future, a collaboration between the nursing schools and workplaces is imperative to ensure ergonomics patient handling practices for carers' throughout their whole working career and thus improve their health- and working abilities.



Pictures of different ergonomic safe patient handling techniques adopted based on patients' functional capacities.

