

The Ergonomic patient handling card® - education scheme

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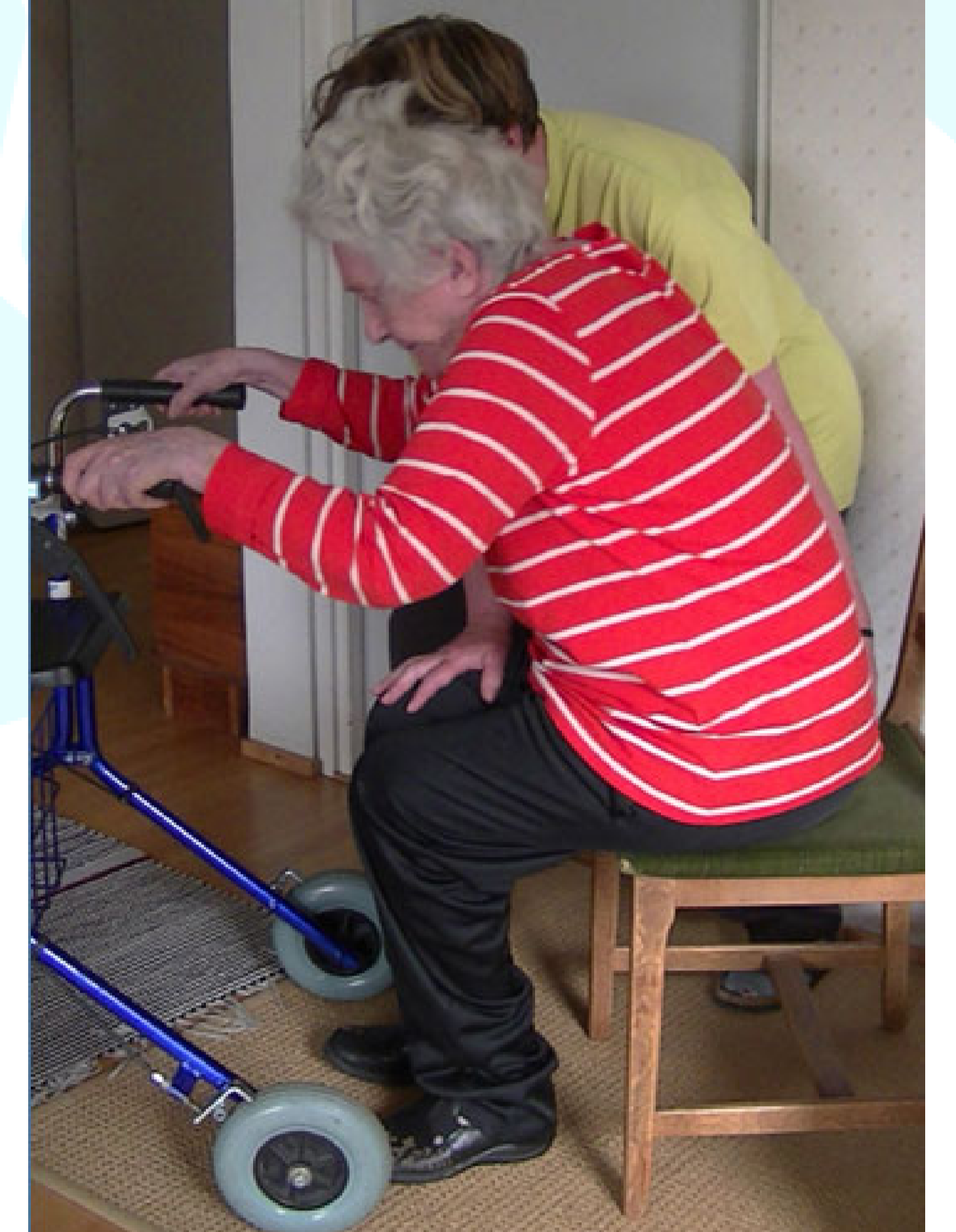


Introduction

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.

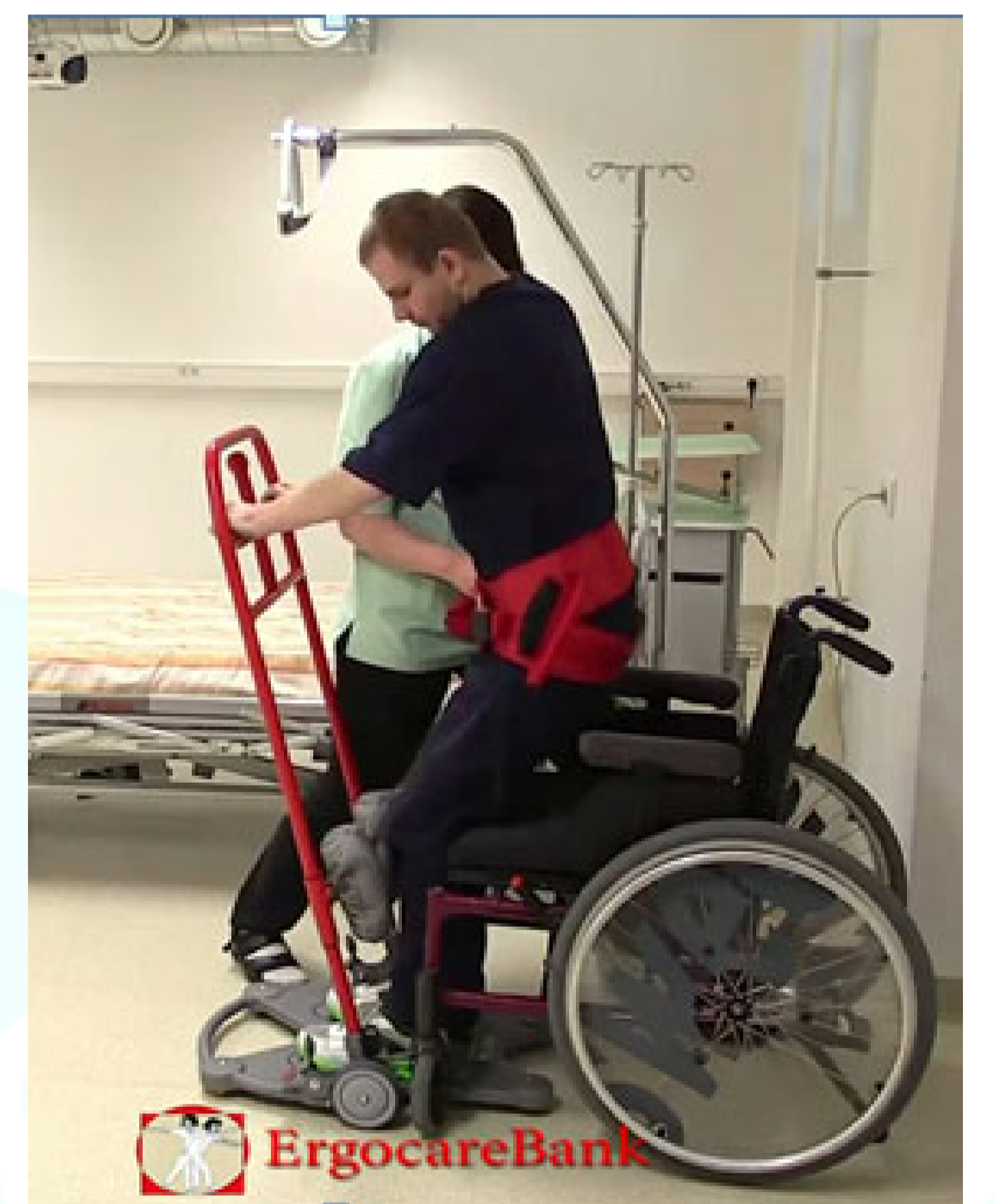
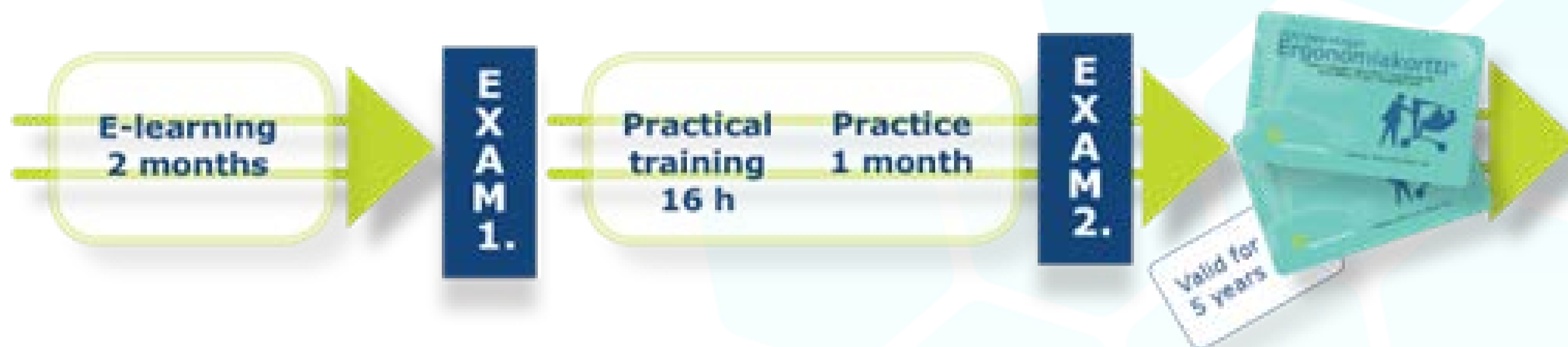
The aims of the Card are:

- 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).

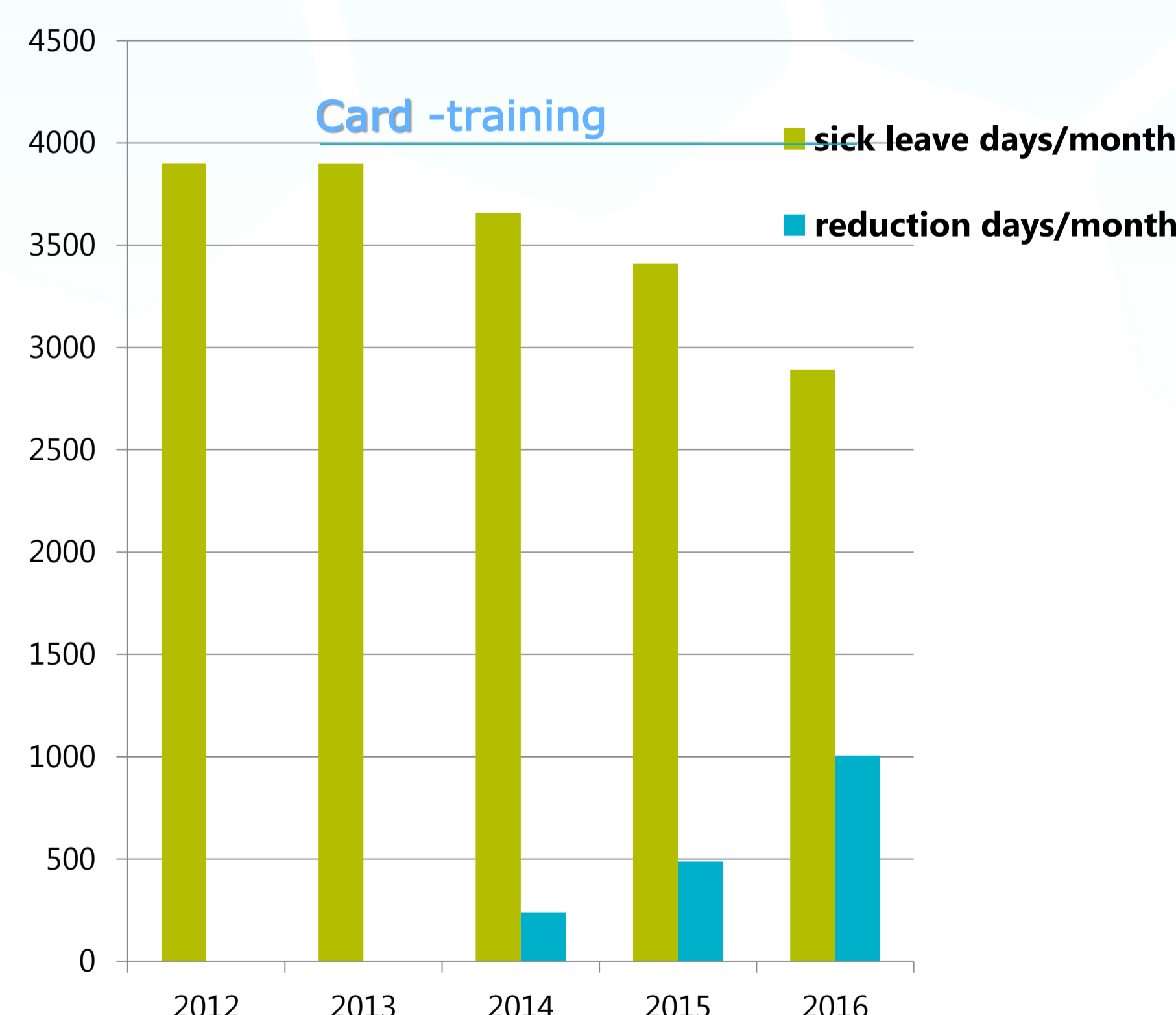


Figure 1. Carer's (n= 1850) in one month from 2013 to 8/2016 average sick leave days due to MSDs and reduction days due to absence or diminished MSDs.



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

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.



Finnish Institute of Occupational Health