SELF-PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING HERBAL MEDICINE: A CONSUMER SEGMENTATION STUDY IN GERMANY

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Background

- Herbal medicine (HM) as popular form of complementary and alternative medicines [1]
- Dominance of preparations for self-medication e.g. in the German market [2]
- Often no information of physicians about self-medication [3]
- Possibility of side or interaction effects with other remedies [4] → Consumers' knowledge concerning HM is crucial to guarantee save usage.

Aim

- **Segment German consumers based on their self-perceived knowledge concerning different topics of HM**
- **Characterize the resulting clusters by sociodemographic variables and wish for further information**

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Method

- Cross-sectional, standardized online survey in Germany in 2018 [5]
- Participants'' evaluation of the own level of knowledge concerning different aspects of HM on a 5-point Likert-type scale
- Analysis of the evaluations of n=2.520 HM users using a two-step cluster analysis to cluster and a X² test to detect differences between the clusters

Self-perceived knowledge clusters

Good self-perceived knowledge: Cluster 4 (25.9%)
- Older, female, from rural areas
- Highest level of knowledge concerning all evaluated HM aspects
- Middle-high information wish

Poor self-perceived knowledge: Cluster 1 (10.6%)
- Young, male, from urban areas
- Low level of knowledge concerning all evaluated HM aspects
- Low information wish

Moderate self-perceived knowledge: Cluster 3 (34.6%):
- Older, female
- High information wish for medicinal effects and side and interaction effects of HM

Poor to moderate self-perceived knowledge: Cluster 2 (28.8%)
- Young, male
- High information wish for medicinal effects and side and interaction effects of HM
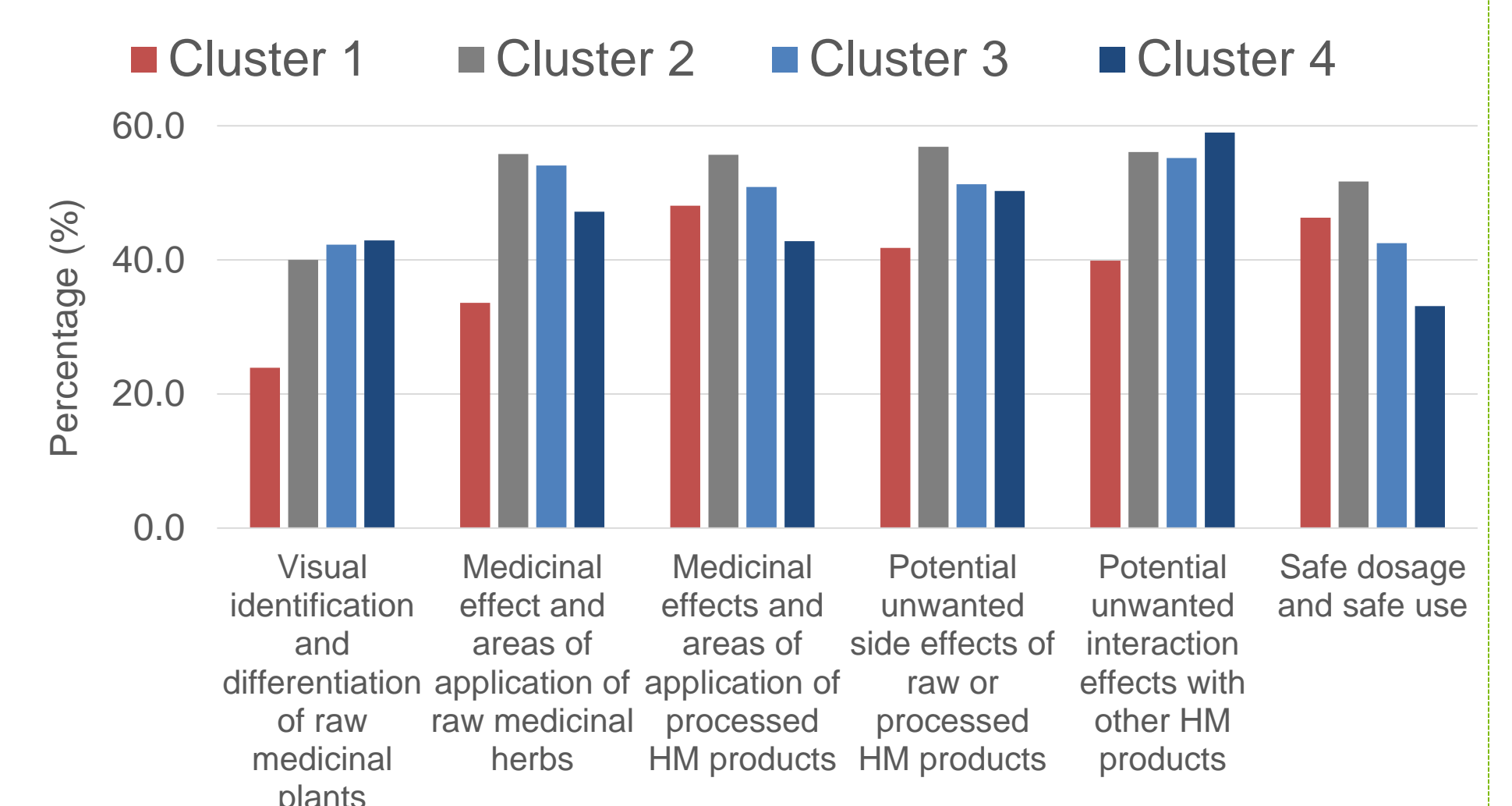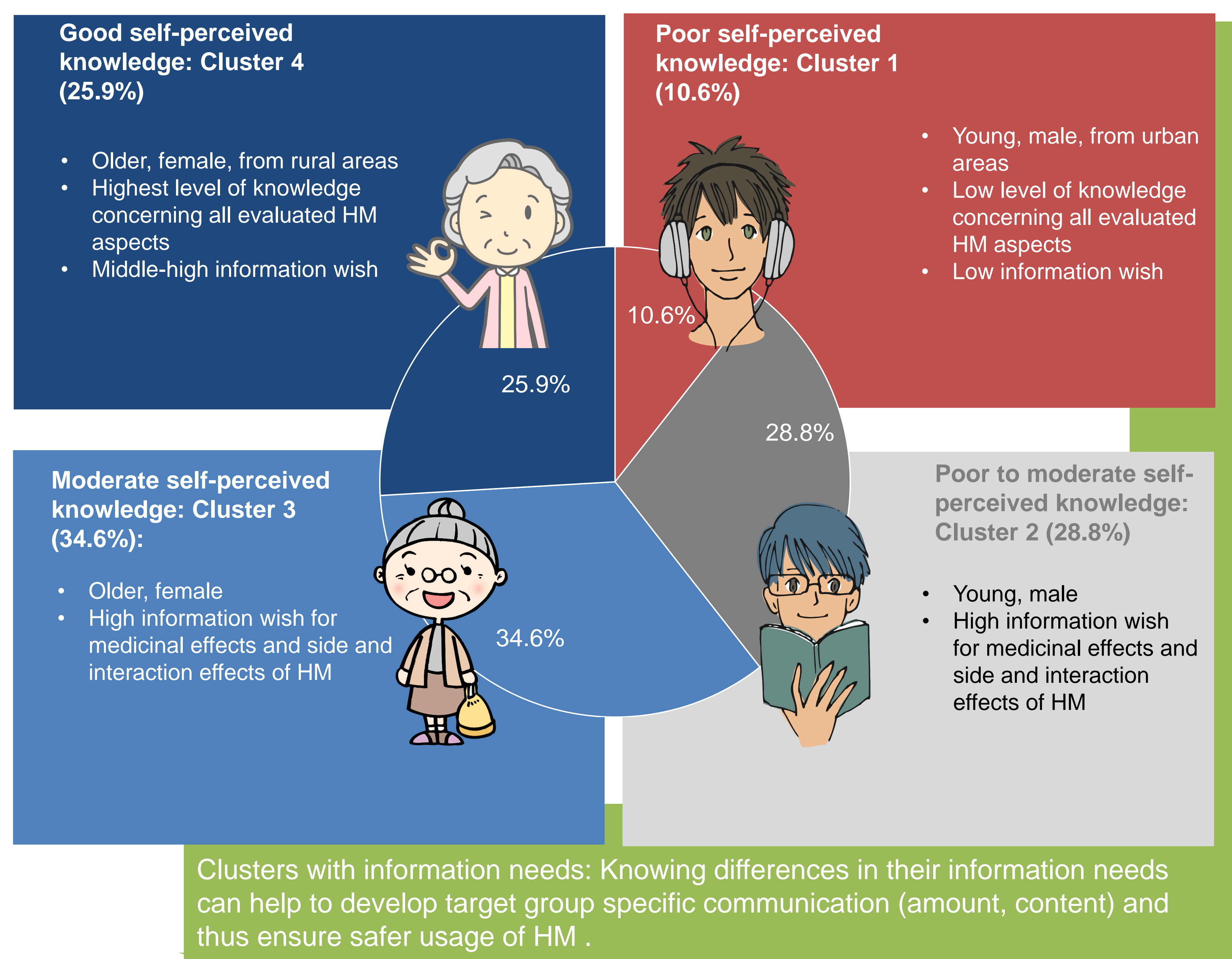
10.6% · 28.8% · 25.9% · 34.6%

Figure 1: Share of respondents which wish to be better informed about different aspects of HM (n=2.520)
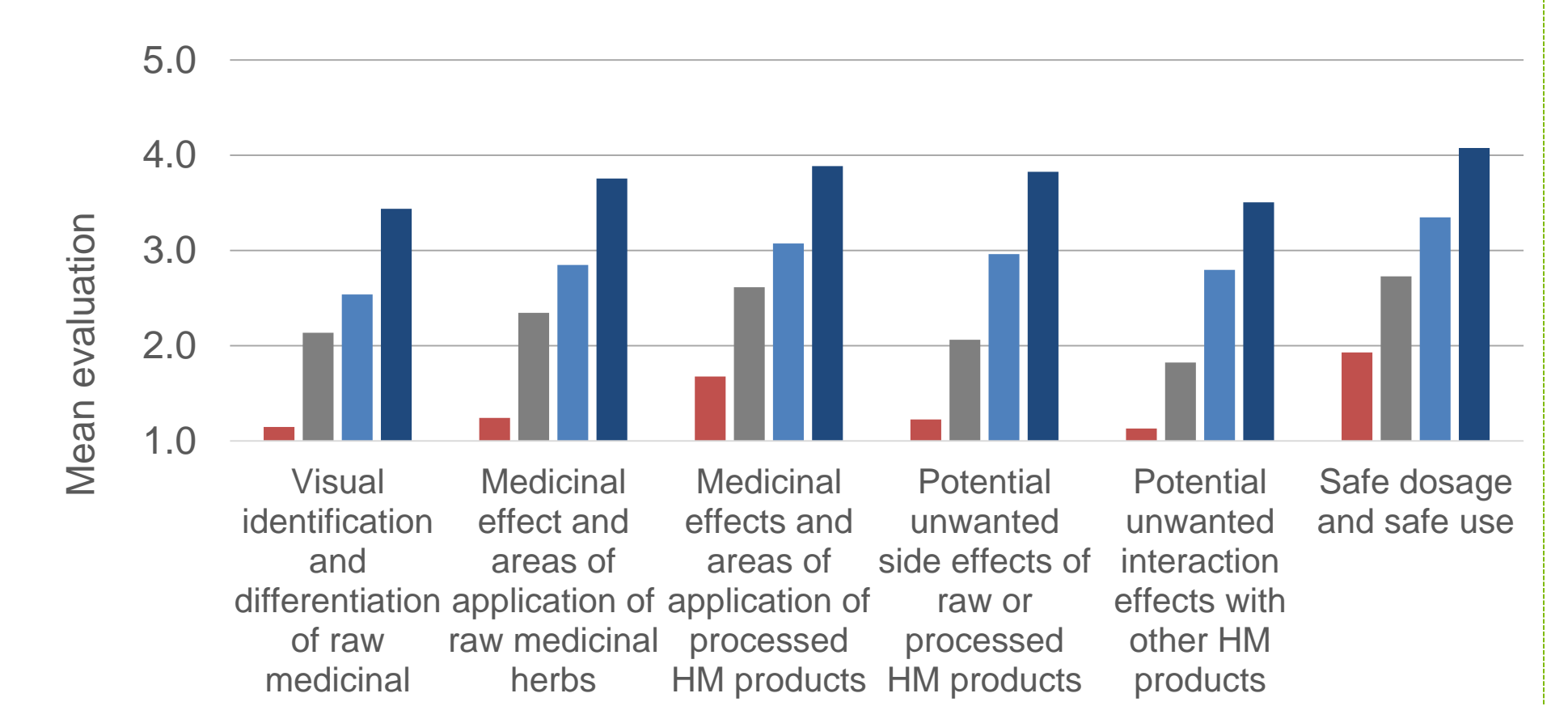

Figure 2: Mean self-perceived knowledge concerning different aspects of HM by cluster (1=very bad, 5= very good; n=2.520)

Clusters with information needs: Knowing differences in their information needs can help to develop target group specific communication (amount, content) and thus ensure safer usage of HM .

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Take Home

- German consumers differ in their level of self-perceived knowledge concerning HM
- A high information need regarding all aspects of HM is observed for younger, male individuals from urban areas
- Individuals from clusters with a poor to moderate or moderate self-perceived knowledge are especially interested in more and specific information concerning HM

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