Contribution ID: 175 Type: Oral report

Investigation of double beta decay of 150 Nd to excited states of 150 Sm in NEMO-3

Thursday, 23 September 2021 16:55 (25 minutes)

Results of NEMO-3 experiment for double beta decay of ^{150}Nd to the 0^+_1 and 2^+_1 excited states of ^{150}Sm are reported. The data recorded during 5.25 y with 36.6 g of the isotope ^{150}Nd was used in the analysis. For the first time the signal of $2\nu\beta\beta$ transition to the 0^+_1 excited state is detected with statistical significance exceeding 5 sigma. The half-life is measured to be $T^{2\nu\beta\beta}_{1/2}(0^+_{gs}\to 0^+_1)=\left[1.11^{+0.19}_{-0.14}~(\text{stat})^{+0.17}_{-0.15}~(\text{syst})\right]\times 10^{20}~\text{y}$. Limits on $2\nu\beta\beta$ decay to 2^+_1 level and on $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay to 0^+_1 and 2^+_1 levels of ^{150}Sm are estimated since no evidence was found for the signal of corresponding transitions.

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Session Classification: Section 5. Neutrino physics and astrophysics

Track Classification: Section 5. Neutrino physics and astrophysics.