

Production of $K^*(892)0$ mesons in small collision systems at PHENIX experiment

Tuesday, 21 September 2021 16:15 (25 minutes)

The investigation of nuclear matter effects in relativistic ion collisions, especially quark-gluon plasma (QGP) ones, is one of the main goals of PHENIX experiment [1]. To study the dynamics of collisions at high energies, strange hadron production is considered as a significant tool. Due to its strange quark content, the K^{*0} meson is a good probe for the investigation of such QGP effects as strangeness enhancement and flavor dependence of partonic energy loss [2]. New results of the PHENIX experiment on hadron production and elliptic flow in small collision systems suggested the possibility of QGP formation in such systems [3]. Thus, the measurement of K^{*0} mesons production in small collision systems allows to investigate aspects of QGP formation depending on the collision system size. We have performed analyses of K^{*0} meson production in wide set of small systems such as p+Al, p+Au, and $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV.

In this talk, we present invariant transverse momentum (p_T) spectra and nuclear modification factors (R_{AB}) of K^{*0} meson as a function of p_T measured in p+Al and p/ $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV. Nuclear modification factors of K^0 meson in p+Al and p/ $^3\text{He}+\text{Au}$ collisions are in a good agreement at $p_T < 2$ GeV/c whereas at intermediate- p_T range (2 GeV/c $< p_T < 5$ GeV/c) a hint of ordering is observed. R_{AB} values for K^{*0} , φ , and π^0 mesons fall on the same curve in all centrality bins in favor of strangeness enhancement effect absence.

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Session Classification: Section 4. Relativistic nuclear physics, elementary particle physics and high-energy physics

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