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Vacuum-ultraviolet spectroscopy of thorium-229m: En route towards a solid-state nuclear clock

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A unique feature of thorium-229 is its isomeric first excited state with an exceptionally low excitation energy, proposed as a candidate for future nuclear optical clocks serving as a versatile quantum sensor for fundamental physics [1]. A novel approach to populate the isomeric state in radioactive decay using the beta decay of actinium-229 is studied at ISOLDE as an alternative to the 'traditional' alpha decay of uranium-233 [2].

In this contribution, results from recent vacuum-ultraviolet spectroscopic measurements of the isomer's radiative decay using a $A=229$ beam implanted into large-bandgap MgF_2 and CaF_2 crystals are presented [3]. The observation of the radiative decay in such media marks an important milestone in the development towards a solid-state nuclear clock.

[1] E Peik et al., *Quantum Sci. Technol.* 6 034002

[2] M. Verlinde et al., *Physical Review C*, 100, 0

[3] S. Kraemer et al., arXiv:2209.10276 [nucl-ex]

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