# Recent results from the NA62 experiment

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#### Outline

- New results and updates from the physics program with charged kaons at NA62
  - Measurement of the  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$  process
  - Low-energy QCD tests (Chiral Perturbation Theory,  $\chi_{PT}$ )
  - Searches for Lepton Flavour (LF) and Lepton Number (LN) violating decays

1

### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ : a **golden** decay mode



•  $s \rightarrow d$  transition sensitive to the CKM structure of the SM: *loop* + *CKM suppression* 

- Theoretically clean process: *dominated by short-distance physics*
- $K \pi$  Form Factor (FF) extracted from  $K \rightarrow \pi l v_l$ : sub-% precision
- Sensitive to new physics in the lepton sector as well: *involves*  $v_e$ ,  $v_\mu$ , and  $v_\tau$
- Extremely rare process in the SM:

•  $BR_{SM}(K^+ \to \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}) = (7.73 \pm 0.16_{SD} \pm 0.25_{LD} \pm 0.54_{param.}) \times 10^{-11} [arXiv:2105.02868]$ 

•  $BR_{SM}(K^+ \to \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}) = (7.92 \pm 0.28_{theory}) \times 10^{-11} \times \left[\frac{|V_{cb}|}{41.0 \times 10^{-3}}\right]^{2.8} \times \left[\frac{\sin \gamma}{\sin 67^\circ}\right]^{1.39} [arXiv:2109.11032]$ 

### Testing the SM with FCNC: BSM models



- Possibility to distinguish between NP from Majorana vs Dirac neutrinos
- Modifications of the shape of the BR as a function of  $q^2$
- Improved measurement of  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$  important

- Constraints on anomalous *ttZ* couplings
- $\sigma_t$  single-top production
- $T, \delta g_b^L$  –EW precision parameters
- Correlations: EW precision physics and flavour!

### The NA62 experiment @ CERN



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LHC - Large Hadron Collider // SPS - Super Proton Synchrotron // PS - Proton Synchrotron // AD - Antiproton Decelerator // CLEAR - CERN Linear Electron Accelerator for Research // AWAKE - Advanced WAKefield Experiment // ISOLDE - Isotope Separator OnLine // REX/HIE - Radioactive EXperiment/High Intensity and Energy ISOLDE // LEIR - Low Energy Ion Ring // LINAC - LINear Accelerator // n\_TOF - Neutrons Time Of Flight // HiRadMat - High-Radiation to Materials

- Long tradition of kaon experiments at CERN
- NA62 main target:  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \overline{\nu}$  decay measurement
- Broad physics program:
  - Other rare charged kaon decays
  - Precision measurements
  - LFV/LNV searches
  - Exotic searches (FIPs, Dark photon, etc...)

NA62 collaboration ~ 300 physicists from 31 institutions

### The NA62 experimental apparatus

- Secondary beam
  - $75 \pm 1 \text{ GeV/c momentum}$
  - $6\% K^+$  component
  - 60 m long fiducial volume
  - ~ 3 MHz  $K^+$  decay rate



- Upstream detectors (*K*<sup>+</sup>)
  - KTAG: Differential Cherenkov counter for K<sup>+</sup> ID
  - GTK: Silicon pixel beam tracker
  - CHANTI: Anti-counter against inelastic beam-GTK3 interactions

- Downstream detectors  $(\pi^+)$ 
  - STRAW: track momentum spectrometer
  - CHOD: scintillator hodoscopes
  - LKr/MUV1/MUV2: calorimetric system
  - RICH: Cherenkov counter for  $\pi/\mu/e$  ID
  - LAV/IRC/SAC: Photon veto detectors
  - MUV3: Muon veto

### Analysis strategy



- Highly boosted decay:  $(75 \pm 1) \text{ GeV/c } K^+ (\gamma \sim 150)$
- Large undetectable missing energy carried away by the neutrinos
- All energy from visible particles must be detected
- $\pi^+$  momentum range 15 45 GeV/c ( $E_{miss}$  > 30 GeV)
- Hermetic detector coverage and O(100%) detector efficiency needed

#### • <u>Requirements:</u>

- Kinematic suppression  $O(10^4)$
- $\mu^+$  rejection  $O(10^7)$
- $\pi^0$  rejection  $O(10^7)$
- Time resolution *O*(100 ps)



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### Results NA62 Run 1 (2016-18)

	Background (2018)
Expected SM signal	$7.58(40)_{\rm syst}(75)_{\rm ext}$
$K^{+} \rightarrow \pi^{+}\pi^{0}(\gamma)$	0.75(4)
$K^{+} \rightarrow \mu^{+} \nu(\gamma)$	0.49(5)
$K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^- e^+ \nu$	0.50(11)
$K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^+ \pi^-$	0.24(8)
$K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma$	< 0.01
$K^{\scriptscriptstyle +} \to \pi^0 l^{\scriptscriptstyle +} \nu$	< 0.001
Upstream	3.30 <sup>+0.98</sup> -0.73
Total background	5.28 <sup>+0.99</sup> -0.74

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$$N_{\pi\nu\bar{\nu}}^{exp} = 10.01 \pm 0.42_{syst} \pm 1.19_{ext}$$

- $N_{bg}^{exp} = 7.03_{-0.82}^{+1.05}$
- SES =  $(0.839 \pm 0.053_{syst}) \times 10^{-11}$
- $BR(K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \overline{\nu}) = (10.6^{+4.0}_{-3.4}|_{stat} \pm 0.9_{syst}) \times 10^{-11} [JHEP 06 (2021) 093]$



 $N_{obs} = 20$  3.4 $\sigma$  evidence for  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ 



### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ in Run 2 (2021+)

#### Hardware improvements after LS2

- 4<sup>th</sup> GTK station to improve *K*<sup>+</sup> tracking
- VetoCounter in upstream region to reduce upstream background and Anti0 to reduce muon halo
- HASC calorimeter downstream to reject  $\gamma$  from conversions with the RICH beam pipe
- Cedar-H: Cherenkov detector for *K*<sup>+</sup>-id filled with Hydrogen instead of Nitrogen

Expected events (R1+R2)			
W	ork in pros	2018	2021 + 2022
	$K^+ \to \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu} \ (SM)$	$7.58 \pm 0.40_{syst} \pm 0.75_{ext}$	$10.07\pm0.31$
	$K^+  o \pi^+ \pi^0(\gamma)$	$0.75\pm0.05$	$0.86\pm0.06$
	$K^+  ightarrow \mu^+  u(\gamma)$	$0.64\pm0.08$	$0.93\pm0.20$
	$K^+ \to \pi^+\pi^- e^+ \nu$	$0.51\pm0.10$	$0.84\substack{+0.35 \\ -0.28}$
	$K^+ \to \pi^+\pi^+\pi^-$	$0.22\pm0.10$	$0.11\pm0.03$
	$K^+ \to \pi^+ \gamma \gamma$	< 0.01	$0.01\pm0.01$
	$K^+ \to \pi^0 l^+ \nu$	< 0.001	< 0.001
	Upstream	$3.30\substack{+1.00 \\ -0.75}$	$8.0^{+2.2}_{-1.8}$
	Total background	$5.42^{+1.00}_{-0.75}$	$10.8^{+2.2}_{-1.9}$

Variable	2021 ( $t > 2 \mathrm{s}$ )	2022	$21{+}22$
$(N_{\pi\pi}D_0)/400 \ [\times 10^7]$	3.713	16.374	20.087
$arepsilon_{trig}$	$(83.5 \pm 1.3)\%$	$(86.3 \pm 1.5)\%$	$(85.8 \pm 1.4)\%$
$arepsilon_{RV}$	$(63.0 \pm 0.5)\%$	$(63.8 \pm 0.5)\%$	$(63.6 \pm 0.5)\%$
$A_{\pi\pi}$	aress (*)	$13.525 \pm 0.005\%$	)
$A_{\pi\nu\bar{ u}}$ Work in pro-	n -	$7.7\pm0.2\%$	
$\mathcal{B}_{SES}[ imes 10^{-11}]$	$4.68\pm0.17$	$1.01\pm0.03$	$0.83\pm0.03$
$N^{ m SM,exp}_{\pi uar u}$	$1.80\pm0.06$	$8.28\pm0.24$	$10.07\pm0.31$
$N_{\pi\nu\bar{\nu}}^{\mathrm{SM,exp}}$ per burst	$1.7 \times 10^{-5}$	$2.5  imes 10^{-5}$	$2.3  imes 10^{-5}$

#### Studies ongoing to understand background

scaling between Run 1 and Run 2

10

(\*) CERN-SPSC-2024-012 / SPSC-SR-345

### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ in Run 2 (2021+)

#### Analysis improvements after LS2

- Signal acceptance improved by 20%, maintaining background rejection at the same level,  $A_{\pi\nu\overline{\nu}}^{2018} = (6.4 \pm 0.6)\%$
- Uncertainty of the Signal Event Sensitivity improved significantly in Run 2 ( $7\% \rightarrow 4\%$ ) due to more precise understanding of the trigger and random veto efficiencies
- Signal yield improved by 50% ,  $N_{\pi\nu\overline{\nu}}$  /burst<sup>2018</sup> = 1.7×10<sup>-5</sup>



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scaling between Run 1 and Run 2

11

### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ in Run 2 (2021+)

- Work ongoing to finalise the first results with Run 2 data (2021+22)
- Data in 2021+22 taken pushing the hardware limit of NA62
- Essential studies performed to understand optimal intensity with best sensitivity to  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$  decays
- Operating at intensities optimized to achieve best Single Event Sensitivity in 2023 and 2024!



### Low-energy QCD tests: $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma (K_{\pi\gamma\gamma})$

• Radiative non-leptonic kaon decays allow tests of Chiral Perturbation Theory ( $\chi_{PT}$ ), describing low-energy QCD processes

• Main kinematic variables: 
$$\mathbf{z} = \frac{(p_{\gamma 1} + p_{\gamma 2})^2}{m_K^2} = \frac{m_{\gamma \gamma}^2}{m_K^2}, \mathbf{y} = \frac{P_K(Q_{\gamma_1} - Q_{\gamma_2})}{m_K^2}$$

• The differential decay rate parametrized in  $\chi_{PT}$ : strong dependence on *z* and weak dependence on *y* only free parameter

$$\frac{d^2\Gamma}{dydz}(\hat{\boldsymbol{c}}, y, z) = \frac{m_K}{2^9\pi^3} \left[ z^2(|\boldsymbol{A}(\hat{\boldsymbol{c}}, z, y^2) + \boldsymbol{B}(z)|^2 + |\boldsymbol{C}(z)|^2) + \left(y^2 - \frac{1}{4}\lambda(1, r_\pi^2, z)\right)^2 |\boldsymbol{B}(z)|^2 \right]$$
  
lowest order loop  
amplitude  $\mathcal{O}(p^4)$   
next to leading order  
loop amplitude  $\mathcal{O}(p^6)$ 

• BR( $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma$ ) and  $\hat{c}$  depend on 8 external parameters fixed using Phys. Lett. B 835 (2022) 137594

## $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma (K_{\pi \gamma \gamma})$ selection

- Analysis using Run 1 data sample
- $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma$  selection
  - one single positive  $\pi^+$  track
  - $K^+ \pi^+$  matching and vertex reconstruction
  - 2 good γ clusters in the LKr calorimeter
  - Kinematic cuts on total E,  $p_T$  and  $m_{\pi\gamma\gamma}$
- Background sources
  - Cluster merging in LKr:

 $K^{+} \to \pi^{+} \pi^{0} \gamma (\pi^{0} \to \gamma \gamma)$  $K^{+} \to \pi^{+} \pi^{0} \pi^{0} (\pi^{0} \to \gamma \gamma)$ 

- Multi-track events with tracks missing (mainly  $K \to \pi\pi\pi)$
- $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0$  used as a normalisation channel to measure  $N_K$



After selection:  $N_K = (5.55 \pm 0.03) \times 10^{10}$   $N_{obs} = 3984$  events  $N_{bg}^{exp} = 291 \pm 14$  events

Phys. Lett. B 850 (2024) 138513

$$K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma (K_{\pi \gamma \gamma})$$
 spectrum

• Reconstructed *z* spectrum of the signal candidates:  $\mathbf{z} = (\mathbf{P}_K - \mathbf{P}_{\pi})^2 / M_K^2$  (better resolution than  $m_{\gamma\gamma}^2 / m_K^2$ )



Model-dependent measurement: MC spectrum reweighted for different values of  $\hat{c}$  and extracting the best-fit value

First evidence that the  $O(p^4)$  description is not compatible with the data:  $O(p^6)$  is required

 $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \gamma \gamma (K_{\pi \nu \nu})$  results

• Model-independent  $BR(K^+ \to \pi^+ \gamma \gamma)$  measurement and the corresponding decay width are computed in ach z bin  $BR(K^+ \to \pi^+ \gamma \gamma)_{\chi_{PT}} = (9.61 \pm 0.15_{stat} \pm 0.07_{syst}) \times 10^{-7}$ 

 $BR(K^+ \to \pi^+ \gamma \gamma)_{MI} = (9.46 \pm 0.19_{stat} \pm 0.07_{syst}) \times 10^{-7}$ 

16

Comparison between model-independent measurement and  $O(p^6)$  parametrisation in  $\chi_{PT}$ 



 $\hat{c}$  value depends on the external parameter values. To test the consistency of the result with the old measurements  $\hat{c}$  is also evaluated with the external parameter values used by E878 (triangle) and NA48/2-NA62-2007 (square)

Search for ALPs in  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ a$ ,  $a \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$  decays

- Hidden sector scenario in which axion-like particle (ALP) couples to gluons: BC11 (if  $m_a < 3m_{\pi}, a \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ )
- Peak search in  $m_a = \sqrt{(P_K P_\pi)^2}$ : 287 hypotheses, 207-350 MeV/c<sup>2</sup> range, 0.5 MeV/c<sup>2</sup> step
- $m_a$  resolution:  $0.2 2.0 \text{ MeV}/c^2$  across the mass range
- Upper limit at 90% CL using  $CL_s$  method set to  $N_s$  (number of signal events) in each bin



Assuming **prompt**  $a \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$  **decay** ( $\tau_a = 0$ ) we get an upper limit on the branching ratio

$$BR(K^+ \to \pi^+ a) = \frac{N_S}{N_K \cdot A_S}$$

If we assume  $\tau_a \neq 0$  a signal acceptance loss function is considered increasing with  $\tau_a$  due to vertex displacement  $(f_G^{-1} \sim \tau_a^{-0.5})$ 

### LFV/LNV searches: $K^+ \rightarrow \mu^- \nu e^+ e^+$

Lepton flavour or lepton number violating decay depending on the neutrino flavour:  $v_e$  or  $v_\mu$ 



#### Potential observation will provide

- Evidence for BSM models involving flavour violating ALPs and Z' (LFV)
   v<sub>\*</sub>
   Evidence for Majorana neutrino (LNV)
  - **Past upper limit**   $BR(K^+ \rightarrow \mu^- \nu e^+ e^+) < 2.1 \times 10^{-8}$

#### Selection •

- Exactly three well separated downstream tracks (STRAW) forming a vertex with  $Q_{vtx} = +1$ •
- Particle identification of the track candidates  $(\mu^-, e^+, e^+)$ •
- Photon veto downstream of the vertex (against Dalitz decays) •  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0_D, K^+ \rightarrow \pi^0_D e^+ \nu (\pi^0_D \rightarrow \gamma e^+ e^-)$

Analysis using Run 1 dataset

### $K^+ \rightarrow \mu^- \nu e^+ e^+$ analysis and result

- $m_{miss}^2 = (P_K P_\mu P_{e1} P_{e2})^2 = m_\nu^2$
- Signal region:  $(-6 \times 10^{-3} < m_{miss}^2 < 4 \times 10^{-3})$ GeV/c^2
- $K^+$  in the fiducial region:  $1.97(2)_{stat}(2)_{syst}(6)_{ext} \times 10^{12}$
- $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ e^+ e^-$  used for normalization

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• Same 3-track vertex selection + beam constraint  $(|P_{beam} - P_{vtx}| < 2\text{GeV}/c)$ 



Particle identification of the track candidates  $(\pi^+, e^+, e^-)$ 

Lower	Signal	Upper
< 0.07	< 0.07	$1412~\pm~11$
$0.01~\pm~0.01$	$0.16~\pm~0.02$	$867~\pm~1$
< 0.03	$0.06~\pm~0.03$	$1.5~\pm~0.3$
$0.01~\pm~0.01$	$0.01~\pm~0.01$	$0.14~\pm~0.03$
$0.02~\pm~0.01$	$0.01~\pm~0.01$	$0.02~\pm~0.01$
< 0.01	< 0.01	$0.05~\pm~0.02$
$0.04~\pm~0.02$	$0.26~\pm~0.04$	$2281~\pm~11$
0	0	2271
	$\begin{tabular}{l} Lower \\ < 0.07 \\ 0.01 \ \pm \ 0.01 \\ < 0.03 \\ 0.01 \ \pm \ 0.01 \\ 0.02 \ \pm \ 0.01 \\ < 0.01 \\ 0.04 \ \pm \ 0.02 \\ 0 \end{tabular}$	$\begin{array}{c c} \text{Lower} & \text{Signal} \\ < 0.07 & < 0.07 \\ 0.01 \pm 0.01 & 0.16 \pm 0.02 \\ < 0.03 & 0.06 \pm 0.03 \\ 0.01 \pm 0.01 & 0.01 \pm 0.01 \\ 0.02 \pm 0.01 & 0.01 \pm 0.01 \\ < 0.01 & < 0.01 \\ < 0.01 & < 0.01 \\ 0.04 \pm 0.02 & 0.26 \pm 0.04 \\ 0 & 0 \end{array}$

#### After signal selection: $N_{obs} = 0$ events $N_{bg}^{exp} = 0.26 \pm 0.04$ events

Phys. Lett. B 830 (2023) 137679  $BR(K^+ \to \mu^- \nu e^+ e^+) < 8.1 \times 10^{-11} @90\% CL$ 

Improvement by a factor 250 over previous searches

 $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ e^+ e^- e^+ e^- decays$ 

• Heavily suppressed SM process with  $BR = (7.2 \pm 0.7) \times 10^{-11}$  (outside  $\pi^0$  pole) [PRD 106, L071301]

Topologies at leading QED/ChPT order:



- Dark sector probe:
  - $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ aa$  with  $a \rightarrow e^+e^-$  QCD axion, e.g.  $m_a = 17 \text{ MeV}$ ,  $BR = 1.7 \times 10^{-5}$
  - $K^+ \to \pi^+ S$  with  $S \to A'A'$  dark scalar and  $A' \to e^+e^-$  dark photon  $(m_S > 2m_{A'})$

[arXiv:2012.02142] [arXiv:2012.02142]

• Goals to search for: 1) SM process ( $K_{\pi 4e}$ ) 2) QCD di-axion 3) Dark cascade

### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ e^+ e^- e^+ e^-$ analysis

- Complete Run 1 data set analyzed
- Signal ( $K_{\pi 4e}$ )
  - Kinematic PID of positive tracks
  - Conditions on  $m_{\pi 4e}$ ,  $m_{miss}^2(1)$
  - $m_{4e}$  outside the  $\pi^0$  mass region
- Signal ( $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ aa$  "Dark")
  - Same selection as  $K_{\pi 4e}$
  - Choice of the optimal  $e^+e^-$  mass pair
- Normalization:  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0_{DD}(2)$ 
  - 5 track topology and PID as for  $K_{\pi 4e}$
  - Kinematic condition on  $m_{4e}$



After signal selection:  $N_{obs} = 0$  events  $N_{bg}^{exp} = 0.18 \pm 0.06$  events

### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ e^+ e^- e^+ e^-$ results

#### $K_{\pi 4e}$ SM

- Acceptance from MC
- Resonant amplitude negligible for selected events

#### $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ a a$

- Uniform phase space
- Mass scan with 5 MeV/ $c^2$  step

#### $K^+ \to \pi^+ S, S \to AA$

- Di-axion *aa* mass scan
- (*m<sub>A</sub>*, *m<sub>S</sub>*) distribution smoothing
   (low MC statistics)



#### Conclusions

$K^+ \to \pi^+ \gamma \gamma$	NA62 Run 1	PLB 850 $(2024)$ 138513
$X^+ \to \pi^+ e^+ e^- e^+ e^-$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	PLB 846 (2023) 138193
$K^+  o \mu^- \nu e^+ e^+$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	PLB 838 (2023) 137679
$K^+ \to \pi^0 e^+ \nu \gamma$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	JHEP 09 (2023) 040
$K^+ \to \mu^- \nu e^+ e^+$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	PLB 838 (2023) 137679
$K^+ \to \pi^-(\pi^0) e^+ e^+$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	PLB 830 $(2022)$ 137172
$K^+  o \pi^+ \mu^+ \mu^-$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	JHEP 11 (2022) 011
$^{0} \rightarrow \mu^{-} e^{+}$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	PRL 127 (2021) 131802
$K^+ \to \pi^+ \mu^- e^+$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	$\mathrm{PRL}\;127\;(2021)\;131802$
$X^+ \to \pi^- \mu^+ e^+$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	PRL 127 (2021) 131802
$K^+ \to \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$	$\rm NA62~Run~1$	JHEP 06 (2021) 093

- The NA62 experiment is in full steam
- New results and many new analyses to come
- Work ongoing to finalise the flagship  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$  analysis, with Run 2 data (2021+22)
  - Significantly improved sensitivity with respect to Run 1
  - Stay tuned for results in the near future

#### NA62 will take data until the end of 2025

Many new exciting measurements and searches to come with the full data set!