

# Modeling $N_{\text{ch}}$ distributions and $p_{\text{T}}$ spectra in high-energy pp collisions with DNNs

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During the data-taking campaigns Run 1 and Run 2 of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the ALICE collaboration collected a large amount of proton-proton (pp) collisions across a variety of center-of-mass energies ( $\sqrt{s}$ ). This extensive dataset is well suited to study the energy dependence of particle production. Deep neural networks (DNNs) provide a powerful regression tool to capture underlying multidimensional correlations inherent in the data. In this contribution, DNNs are used to parameterize recent ALICE measurements of charged-particle multiplicity ( $N_{\text{ch}}$ ) distributions and transverse momentum ( $p_{\text{T}}$ ) spectra. The model architectures are defined and validated using a Bayesian-Optimization hyperparameter search on PYTHIA simulations for a wide  $\sqrt{s}$  range and then trained on the ALICE data. An ensemble method is used to predict the observables of interest, extrapolating the measurements towards higher  $N_{\text{ch}}$  and  $p_{\text{T}}$  values as well as to unmeasured  $\sqrt{s}$  from 0.5 to 100 TeV. We demonstrate that the predicted  $p_{\text{T}}$  spectra can serve as a reference for future heavy-ion measurements, e.g. the O–O campaign planned in LHC Run 3, where no dedicated pp data-taking at the same  $\sqrt{s}$  is currently foreseen.

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