CHARACTERIZATION OF LOW-ENERGY ARGON RECOILS WITH THE RED EXPERIMENT

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Physics Background: Low Mass WIMP-Nucleon interaction searches



Ne

0.3

 1×10^{-38}

2

NEWS-G

Particle Data Group 2024

Nuclear Recoil spectrum induced by WIMP



What is the response of Argon to low energy Nuclear Recoils ? IONIZATION CHANNEL

$$Q_y^{NR} = \frac{N_{i.e.}}{E_{nr}} = \frac{(1-r)N_i}{E_{nr}} \qquad \begin{array}{c} N_i = \beta \ \kappa(\epsilon) \\ 1 - r = - \end{array}$$

 $N_i = \beta \kappa(\epsilon) = \beta \frac{\epsilon s_e(\epsilon)}{s_n(\epsilon) + s_e(\epsilon)}$ $1 - r = \frac{1}{\gamma N_i} \ln(1 + \gamma N_i)$

 $\begin{array}{l} r: \mbox{recombination probability} \\ N_i: \mbox{Number of ionizations} \\ \kappa(\epsilon): \mbox{fraction of energy lost in electronic w.r.t nuclear} \end{array}$

DS-50 Collaboration, Phys. Rev. D 104, 082005 (2021)

The average number of electrons produced depends critically on:

- The average energy required to produce a quantum: 19.5 [eV] for Argon, 3.8 [eV] for Silicon.
- The fraction of energy lost in electronic w.r.t nuclear collisions

The fluctuations in the number of electrons depend critically on:

The fluctuations in the energy lost in electronic w.r.t nuclear



The current model used in DS-50 comes from a fit of the AmC spectrum+External Data sets. (β ,y) free parameters.

Issues:

- $\kappa(\epsilon)$ is fixed to Ziegler et al, other $s_n(\epsilon)$ reproduce the data as well.
- · Data is insensitive to the fluctuations of the number of quanta

The current approach to overcome the second issue is to adopt two extreme models of fluctuations.

The seed functions: N_e spectra for mono-chromatic Nuclear Recoils



Needs to be convolved with the experimental resolution. This depends critically on g2 (Number of photons per extracted electron).

g2=23 [pe/e-] in DS-50, it can be improved tuning the Amplification field or the Gas Pocket Height.



Just for illustration, simple model (not actually measured) It is likely that 60% of the times a 100 [eV] recoil leaves a measurable signal in a Argon detector.

To predict the WIMP spectrum we need to measure these seed functions accurately.

Nuclear recoils with energies 20-100 [eV] might have a finite probability to leave a signal in the detector.

Since ionization threshold is ~20 [eV], the detectability of the signal depends on the fluctuations, i.e. the competition between Nuclear and Electronic scatterings.



M. Foxe et al, Astroparticle Physics 69, (2015), p 24-29

What is the actual threshold in Argon based detectors?

DS-50 Collaboration, Physical Review D, 107 (2023) 6: 063001



Analysis Threshold $N_e = 4$ (~500 eV^{nr})

There is a sudden rise in DS-50 background for $N_e < 4$: this is the so called <u>Spurious Electron Background (SE)</u>.

SE happens more frequently after a high energy event.

(1) A great fraction of those events are correlated in time with previous high energy events.

(2) Also they appear at the same (x,y)

(3) SE production is larger when parent has larger size.

(4) SE production is larger when parent had to travel longer distances in LAr





The first 120 days including Getter-Off runs





preliminary



 R_2 : Rate for N_e =2 R_1 : Rate for N_e =1

PRELIMINARY: $R_2/R_1 \sim 0.03$ and does not depend on ΔT or t_{drift} .

This suggest that overlaps might not be the cause of the SE for $N_e > 1$.

A mechanism that duplicate electrons when reaching the top of the TPC?

DS-50 data is compatible with a model in which SE spectrum is a Poisson Distribution (convolved with experimental resolution). The overall normalization depends of the impurity level.

See **arXiv:2407.05813**, such model is used in Profile Likelihood sensitivity estimates for DS-20k.

See back up slide 22 for the current plans for future Argon detectors See back up slide 23 for seasonal modulations (that can potentially be used to set limits with $N_e < 4$) See back up slide 24 for R&D on Spurious Electron Background

Uncertainties in cross section limits

Nuclear Recoil Energy [keVnr] 0.4 1.0 1.5 3.2 393 5 12 55 [cm²] w/o QF 0.08 Data day) Background Model w/ OF σsi × $\sigma_{\chi} = 2 \times 10^{-41} \text{ cm}^2$ **b**y 10-4 Matter-Nucleon × $M_{\gamma}=1.6 \text{ GeV/c}^2$ 0.02 (0.25 Ne M_x=3 GeV/c² $M_{\gamma}=5 \text{ GeV/c}^2$ 0.01 $M_{\chi}=10 \text{ GeV/c}^2$ 1 Events 0.005 Dark 10.0 1.2 2.0 3.0 4.0 5.0 $M_{\chi} [GeV/c^2]$ 100 170 Number of Electrons >x10 uncertainty at 1.2 GeV Solid/Dashed lines correspond to two extreme models of fluctuations. Differences for M_{WIMP} =1.6 [GeV] are noticable.

DS-50 Collaboration, Physical Review D, 107 (2023) 6: 063001

With the current threshold of N_e =4 and for M_{WIMP} <2 GeV, we have systematics due to the shape of the seed functions.

Note: Phonon based detectors are more suitable for M_{WIMP} <1 GeV : lower energy threshold and narrower seed functions.

Migdal effect helps Xenon and Argon searches in the sub-GeV range, but we need experimental evidence of such effect.

See back up slides 25 and 26

ReD goals in the Low Mass range

ReD is a subgroup of the GADM collaboration formed with the initial goal to investigate the directionality sensitivity of the Argon target for High Masses. The current goal is Low Energy NR characterization.

DS-20k Collaboration Eur. Phys. J. C 84:24 (2024)

1) Phase I : measure ionization yield in the 1-10 [keV] range. Data already taken at INFN Sezione di Catania, preliminary results presented in this talk. 2) Phase II: measure the seed functions in the 0.2-1 [keV] range Ongoing at IFUSP and INFN LNS 3) Phase III: R&D in spurious electron background (Mitigation and Characterization) Funding is being requested within the DRD2 collaboration Additionally: Feasibility studies to measure the Migdal effect in Argon Apply calibration methodology to other targets: Silicon (CCDs) and CaWO₄ (CRESST) •

Brazilian FAPESP funding : new neutron source Italian PRIN funding : new TPC

FAPESP

Sub-keV NR energy calibrations are actively pursued by other collaborations. Some of the methods could be adopted for Argon; see back up slide 27

For phase III see back up slide 24 and 26

INFN



Only good topology events. BaF0 && PSci coincidences.

~6% accuracy in $E_{neutron}$ ~7% accuracy in E_{NR} reconstruction.

The shield/collimator made of Boron Loaded HDPE and Lead. The collimator is conical with 2.6 [deg] aperture.

The components

- ²⁵² Cf source : 26 kBq Fission
- Two BaF taggers: fast detectors that providing the **start tag**:
 - Trigger Logic: OR with ~100-200 [keV] threshold. ~40% SF tagging efficiency.
 - Trigger rate for each BaF ~10 [kHz]

Two cameras with 9 1" Plastic Scintillator. EJ-276: good PSD and <0.5 [ns] Time Resolution

~10 [Hz] trigger rate each

5x5x5 cm TPC

24 Top SiPM 4 Bottom SiPM NUV-HD-Cryo from FBK

SiPM channels work in the high occupancy regime.

<u>See back up slides 28-31 for</u> <u>details on the TPC analysis</u> Trigger logic: Any BaF && Any Psci ~[Hz] rate

PRELIMINARY:

•

- <u>Data and MC:</u> PSci energy calibrated with ²⁴¹Am, Electronic Quenching was ignored (it is being measured for EJ-276 at USP) <u>MC :</u>
 - ²⁵²Cf spectrum uses FREYA model, Mannhart et al is our default now.
 - EJ-309 nuclear quenching.

BaF0-Psci coincidences

Leaking neutrons refer to neutrons that exit the shield from the front without going through the TPC. The shield needs to be reinforced.

30

40

50

60

80

[sa]

20

10⁻⁶

-10

0

10

TPC cuts

- S1+S2 \rightarrow (f100>0.5 || S1<100) && (t_{TPC} t_{TPC} expected)<15 [ns]
- S2only \rightarrow T_{start} >2500 [sa] && T_{stop} <39000 [sa]
- BG before 1st pulse and after last pulse < 1.5 [spe/us]
- (x,y) in the central 4x4 cm region
- S2 (XYT corrected) < 3000 [spe]

Total number of events (S2 or S1+S2): 2606 **Total selected :** 649 (S2 only) 224 (S1+S2)

Data taking: From Jan 10th to Mar 16th, 2023 ~2.5 Hz, 80 μs waveforms (600 GB/day)

- Good agrement with DS-50 model
- Work in progress to pin down g2 and set the absolute scale.
- Work in progress to clean the data set due to BaF1 tag timing tails.
- See back slides for benchmarks of the reconstruction chain.

Phase II (at IFUSP, Brazil and INFN LNS, Italy)

 Physics goal:
 Nuclear Recoil Energies 0.2-1 [keV]

 Funding already secured.

 Ingredients:

 •
 Neutron source :
 DD generator

 252Cf with higher activity and new taggers (better timing and higher SF tagging eff.)

 •
 New TPC
 :

 •
 Spectrometer
 :

 •
 36 PSci (x2) with better camera design (avoid neutron reflections)

 •
 DAQ
 : new DAQ that allows triggering on Single Electrons using top multiplicity

 Technical goals:
 •
 See back up slide 32 for possible set-ups

• Decrease bad topologies by a factor of 2

Why a DD Generator?

- *Large flux:* adjustable 3e5-1e7 n/s
- <u>Mono-energetic neutrons</u>

Generator chosen: Adelphi DD-107 API with a home made conical flange that host a Silicon Detector to detect ³He

Requirements

- Low X-ray flux
- Efficient Trigger on ³ He with the SiDet.
- Good timing accuracy of SiDet (TOF measurements).
- Narrow neutron cone beam formed when triggering in the SiDet
- SiDet can be operated in long campaigns (radiation damage).

After preliminary measurements at Adelphi, the generator is at USP for characterization.

It will be sent to INFN LNS for Physics Campaign after characterization.

The tagged neutron cone shape: the key issue

Deuterons incident on the target loose energy and suffer deflections. Simple kinematics does not hold.

SRIM is used to evaluate this extra source of spread: 50 keV deuterons incident on a 45 [deg] inclided target Two layers: 1 um Titanium Deuterated (1:1), 2 um Copper

Spatial extent of a tagged neutron beam

Deuterium-Tritium beam striking small target on a sub 2mm spot.

Preliminary measurements at Adelphi

SiDet energy measured with pre-amp (timing) and amp (energy) outputs <u>Color Histogram:</u> one run with SiDet trigger <u>Black dots:</u> PSci-SiDet time coincidences in all runs with PSci trigger.

Time of Flight distributions

<u>Color Histogram:</u>²⁴¹Am run <u>Black dots:</u> PSci-SiDet time coincidences

- <u>Mean TOF</u> compatible with expectations.
- <u>RMS of TOF</u> is ~4.5 [ns]; part of the spread is due to ³He Time of Flight from target to SiDet (nonmonochromatic ³He)

X-Ray Background

X-rays with end point 100 [keV]

 $F_{tagging}$: the fraction of neutrons passing through the PSci that are tagged.

<u>Geant4+SRIM</u> → The assymptotic value of $F_{tagging}$ is 20% (40%) for SiDet-Target distance 20 (10) [cm].

If ³He and neutron direction are not correlated, then $F_{tagging} = 1e-4$

Very good news! We have a beam!

Deviations in that plot are probably due to the crude alignment we were able to do at Adelphi.

X-Ray and Neutron rate are both ~40 [Hz]

Very good news!!

The PSci has no shielding so is seeing all X-ray flux produced in the generator body.

For physics runs we will collimate the beam and only X-rays produced in the target will contribute (very likely much smaller, X-rays are produced by back electrons entering in the body of the generator).

The generator at IFUSP Characterizing the beam and put it in a small collimator hole will be the next challenge.

Neutron Beam shape

Conclusions

- Argon is an attractive target for direct DM searches in the 1.5-5 [GeV] mass range.
- Sub-GeV sensitivity with Migdal effect; but Migdal needs to be measured in similar conditions.
- Very few measurements of the ionization yield response functions. ReD performed the first (based on Kinematics) in the 2-5 [keV] range.
- Very good prospects to constrain the fluctuations of the ionization yield.
- Phase II targeting the 0.2-1 [keV] region is funded and on going
- The DD Neutron Generator provides a high intensity neutron beam that opens the possibility for Migdal detection in Phase III.
- Abatement of Spurious Electron Background is possible through R&D in Phase III.

Other exciting possibilities with small (~10 [kg]) Argon Double Phase TPCs: CEvNS in Nuclear Reactor , slide 33 CEvNS in Spallation source, slide 34

Back Up slides

Future Low Mass searches with Argon

Two approaches : High Luminosity (DS-20K) and Low Background (DS-LM)

<u>High Luminosity</u> approach will be likely limited by SE background and ³⁹ Ar modelling systematics, S2 performance is not optimized for low charges.

Low Background approach needs a dedicated experiment and further ³⁹Ar purification; but it has a lot of flexibility for improvements since its design is not bounded to the design requirements of a High Mass experiment.

Seasonal Modulations in DS-50

arXiv:2311.18647

If temporal stability in future detectors is good enough, seasonal modulations might be another way of using the $N_e < 4$.

Figure 3. Top: background model of each component with their total uncertainties including both shape and amplitude systematics. The amplitude of each component shown here is normalized at 123 d passed since the reference day. Bottom: temporal evolution of the expected rate from each background source within $4-29 e^-$. Also shown are that of WIMP with $3 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ assuming WIMP-nucleon cross-section equal to $3 \times 10^{-41} \text{ cm}^2$ with (QF) and without (NQ) quenching fluctuations (see text for more detail). The blue-shaded period is same as in figure 2.

R&D to mitigate Spurious Electron Background

What can be done to reduce the role of the SE background in Future Argon Low Mass DM Detectors?

- 1) Investigate the origin of this background using dedicated experiments:
 - Measures to alleviate it.
 - Characterize it: build a model and estimate the model uncertainties.
- 2) Reduce the rate per [kg day]: further ³⁹Ar purification.
- 3) Reduce the rate in [Hz]: stricter ΔT cuts wihout loss of exposure.
- 4) For $N_e > 1$: minimize the spillover from $N_e=1$ (e.g. increase g2 and reduce g2(x,y) dependences)

Spurious Electron Background R&D in ReD+ Phase III

A TPC with low rate (~10 [Hz]) would be optimum to characterize impurities. The TPC would need to be shielded.

Action items:

- Purification schemes: to decrease the N_e =1 rate.
- Scan in Amplification Field and Gas Pocket thickness: to characterize R_2 / R_1
- Measure Quantum efficiency of steel grid.
- Grid coating.
- The role of delayed electrons

Synergy: Brazilian researchers at UNICAMP working in purification schemes of LAr for DUNE.

Oxygen: see talk by A. M. Caffer **Nitrogen:** see talk by Dirceu Noriler

Sub-GeV DM detection using Argon through the Migdal Effect

After DM scattering, the nucleus moves and the electron cloud needs to catch up. There is a finite probability that an electron is ejected.

For a 100 [eV] Argon recoil, this probability is $\sim 10^{-3}$

The maximum detectable energy for the same $M_{\mbox{\scriptsize WIMP}}$ is enhanced.

DarkSide Collaboration, Phys.Rev.Lett. 130 (2023) 10, 101001

As expected, for M_{wimp} = 3 [GeV] a Migdal EM Based limit is 10^{-3} weaker than the standard case.

Xenon Migdal constrains using a DT generator

J Xu et al, Phys. Rev. D 109, L051101 (2024)

Argon feasibility studies using a DD generator

MIGDAL with the DD Generator

High Rate Set Up >1000 [evt/h]

Qualifies in terms of rate for Migdal searches with 30 [keV] recoils. Needs to be optimized for BG. Under investigation.

- DD generator operated at 1e7 n/s
- Collimator hole 1 [deg]
- One ring of 1" Psci centered at 42 [deg]
- TPC d=10 cm h=10 cm
- 1 [m] NG-TPC | 0.2 [m] TPC-Camera

Other monochromanic low energy recoil sources

The nuclear recoil caused by

radiative capture of thermal

neutrons can have sub-keV

energies.

TABLE I. Properties of the potential calibration signals and the associated thermal neutron capturing on tungsten isotopes with subsequent single γ -emission: Q-value Q, recoil energy $E_{\rm R}$, natural abundance Y, thermal neutron capture cross section $\sigma_{n,\gamma}$, branching ratio for single γ -emission $BR_{1\gamma}$, and figure of merit FOM.

^{186}W	^{184}W	^{183}W	^{182}W	
5467.0	5794.1	7411.2	6190.7	Q (keV) $[12]^{\rm a}$
85.8	96.1	160.2	112.4	$E_{\rm R}~({\rm eV})$
28.42	30.64	14.31	26.50	$Y (\%) 12^{a}$
37.88	1.63	9.87	20.31	$\sigma_{n,\gamma}$ (barn) [13]
0.263	1.477	5.829	13.936	$BR_{1\gamma}$ (%) 12 ^a
283.1	73.8	823.3	7500.6	FOM

Is there any similar channel for Argon?

CRESST Phys. Rev. D 108, 022005 (2023)Using a AmBe source 50 [Hz].

The ReD TPC Analysis flowchart

Deconvolution Method

Benchmarks of the reconstruction chain (Using only the Packet Information)

Run 2299 Cf252+Am241 (Inner Pixels)

Possible setups for Phase II

Set Up B

- DD generator operated at 1e7 n/s
- Collimator hole 1 [deg]
- One ring of 1" Psci centered at 3.8 [deg]
- TPC d=10 cm h=10 cm
- 1 [m] NG-TPC | 1 [m] TPC-Camera

CEvNS in Nuclear Reactor

Reactor neutrinos provide a good source of ~200 [eV] nuclear recoils, which can also test neutrino interactions in a kinematic region not observed before.

Astroparticle Physics 69, (2015), p 24-29

IEEE Transactions on Nuclear Science (Volume: 51, Issue: 5, 2004)

If we target a high S/N measurement:

- It requires the use of UAr.
- It requires suppressing the Spurious Electron Background
- It requires a shallow depth location to avoid Cosmogenics and ³⁹Ar activation
- · It requires abatement of neutron and gamma backgrounds

Otherwise, find a optimum background for Reactor On/Off measurement

1.3 kL of water doped with 0.2% gadolinium chloride (GdCl3) by mass Angra dos Reis Reactor, Brazil arXiv:2407.20397v2

Other places where to measure Nuclear Recoils

