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Two Body Weak Decays Studies in an Ion Storage Ring

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We have studied in a heavy ion storage ring at GSI Darmstadt, Germany the orbital electron capture decays of H-like 140Pr,142Pm and 122I ions and found that the time dependence of the electron capture rate is not exponential but time modulated with a period of T= 7.06(8) s, 7.10(22) s and 6.04 s for 140Pr,142Pm and 122I, respectively, in the laboratory system of the ions moving with 071% of speed of light (Lorentz factor γ = 1.43). The modulation amplitude is a= 0.20(3) for all three nuclei . Such modulation periods correspond to a small energy difference of 8.6x10-16 eV for a quantum beat type phenomenon. We attribute it to flavor mixing of massive neutrinos with a squared mass difference of 2.22(3)x 10-4 eV². It is 2.75 times larger than reported by the KamLAND neutrino oscillation experiment. The difference will be discussed in terms of neutrino mass modification by vacuum polarisation of lepton-W boson pairs in the high Coulomb field of the daughter nuclei.

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