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## Directed flow in heavy-ion collisions and softening of equation of state

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We analyze the directed flow ( $v_1$ ) of protons and pions in high-energy heavy-ion collisions in the incident energy range from  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 7.7$  GeV to 27 GeV within a microscopic transport model [1].

Standard hadronic transport approaches do not explain the collapse of directed flow below  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} \simeq 20$  GeV.

By contrast, when we take account of a softening of the equation of state via the attractive orbit scattering [2],

we can well describe the behavior of directed flow data recently obtained by the STAR collaboration [3].

We argue that the observed collapse of directed flow at midrapidity at  $9 \text{ GeV} \leq \sqrt{s_{NN}} \leq 20 \text{ GeV}$  is the evidence for the softening of the QCD equation of state.

We also discuss the possible density region where the softening takes place.

[1] Y. Nara, A. Ohnishi, H. Stöcker, arXiv:1601.07692 [hep-ph].

[2] H. Sorge, Phys. Rev. Lett. 82 (1999), 2048;

P. Danielewicz and S. Pratt, Phys. Rev. C 53 (1996), 249.

[3] L. Adamczyk et al. [STAR Collaboration], Phys. Rev. Lett. 112 (2014), 162301.

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