

# What rare K decays can tell about the MSSM

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**Abstract.** Supersymmetric contributions to the theoretically clean  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ ,  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$ ,  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 e^+ e^-$  and  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \mu^+ \mu^-$  decays are briefly reviewed. Particular emphasis is laid on the information one could get on the MSSM flavor sector from a combined study of the four modes.

**PACS.** 12.60.Jv Supersymmetric models – 13.20.Eb Decays of K mesons

## 1 Introduction

The FCNC-induced decays,  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ ,  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$ ,  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 e^+ e^-$  and  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \mu^+ \mu^-$ , are very suppressed in the Standard Model (SM), where they can be predicted very accurately. Therefore, these modes are ideal for probing possible New Physics effects[1]. In the present talk, the signatures of supersymmetry, in its simplest realization as the MSSM, are reviewed.

## 2 Rare K decays in the Standard Model

In the SM, the electroweak processes driving the rare K decays are the  $W$  box,  $Z$  and  $\gamma$  penguins[2], see Fig.1a. In this section, the excellent theoretical control reached on these contributions is summarized briefly.

**The  $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$  decays in the SM:** The  $t$ -quark contribution to the Wilson coefficient of the dimension-six FCNC operator  $(\bar{s}d)_{V-A}(\bar{\nu}\nu)_{V-A}$  is known at NLO[2], while the  $c$ -quark one has recently been obtained at NNLO[3]. The matrix-elements for this operator can be extracted from  $K\ell 3$  decays, including NLO isospin corrections[4]. For  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ , residual  $c$ -quark effects from dimension-8 operators, along with long distance  $u$ -quark contributions, have also been computed [5]. For  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$ , the indirect CP-violating contribution (ICPV),  $K_L \xrightarrow{\epsilon} K_1 \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$ , is of about 1% [6], and the CP-conserving one is less than 0.01% [7]. Altogether, the SM predictions are

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{B}(K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu})_{\text{SM}} &= (2.49 \pm 0.39) \cdot 10^{-11}, \\ \mathcal{B}(K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu})_{\text{SM}} &= (7.83 \pm 0.82) \cdot 10^{-11}. \end{aligned}$$

The error on  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$  is mainly parametric, i.e. dominated by  $\text{Im} \lambda_t$ ,  $\lambda_t \equiv V_{ts}^* V_{td}$ . For  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$ , which receives a significant  $c$ -quark contribution, the total error could be reduced with a better knowledge of  $m_c$  and through a lattice study of higher-dimensional operators[8].

**The  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$  decays in the SM:** The situation is more involved because there are a priori three competing processes.

First, the  $t$  and  $c$ -quark contributions, known at NLO[2], generate both the dimension-six vector and axial-vector operators:

$$\mathcal{H}_{eff} = y_{7V} (\bar{s}d)_V (\bar{\ell}\ell)_V + y_{7A} (\bar{s}d)_V (\bar{\ell}\ell)_A.$$

The former produces the  $\ell^+ \ell^-$  pair in a  $1^{--}$  state, the latter in both  $1^{++}$  and  $0^{-+}$  states.

Secondly, the ICPV contribution is related to  $K_S \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$ , which is dominated by the Chiral Perturbation Theory (ChPT) counterterm  $a_S$ [9]. NA48 measurements give  $|a_S| = 1.2 \pm 0.2$ [10]. Producing  $\ell^+ \ell^-$  in a  $1^{--}$  state, it interferes with the  $(\bar{s}d)_V (\bar{\ell}\ell)_V$  contribution, arguably constructively[11,12]. This sign could also be fixed experimentally from  $A_{FB}^\mu$ , the integrated forward-backward, or muon-energy asymmetry[13].

The final piece is the CP-conserving two-photon contribution, which produces the lepton pair in either a helicity-suppressed  $0^{++}$  or phase-space suppressed  $2^{++}$  state. The LO corresponds to the finite two-loop process  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 P^+ P^- \rightarrow \pi^0 \gamma \gamma \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$ ,  $P = \pi, K$ , exactly predicted by ChPT, and produces only  $0^{++}$  states. Higher order corrections are estimated using experimental data on  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \gamma \gamma$  for both the  $0^{++}$  and  $2^{++}$  contributions[11,14].

Altogether, the predicted rates are

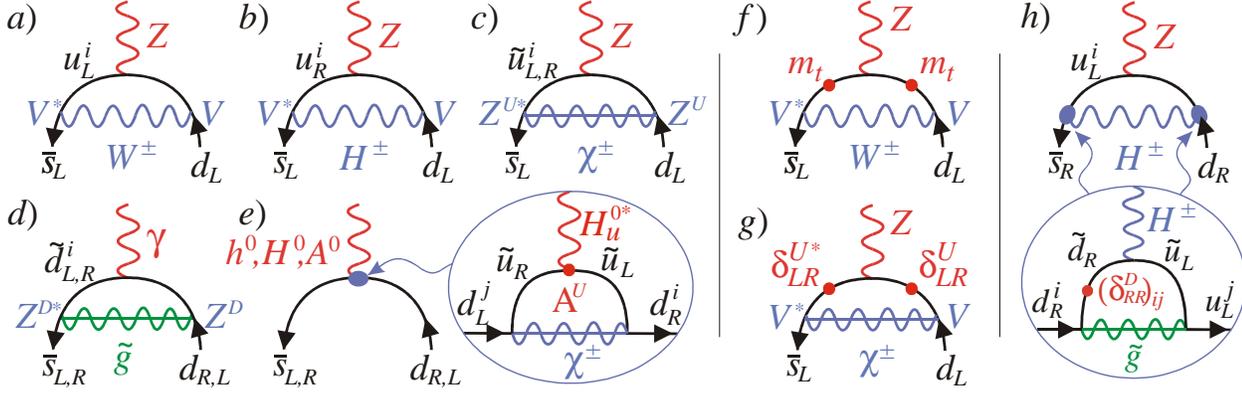
$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{B}(K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 e^+ e^-)_{\text{SM}} &= 3.54_{-0.85}^{+0.98} (1.56_{-0.49}^{+0.62}) \cdot 10^{-11}, \\ \mathcal{B}(K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \mu^+ \mu^-)_{\text{SM}} &= 1.41_{-0.26}^{+0.28} (0.95_{-0.21}^{+0.22}) \cdot 10^{-11}, \end{aligned}$$

for constructive (destructive) interference. The errors are detailed in [11,13,14], and are currently dominated by the one on the  $K_S \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$  rate measurements.

## 3 Rare K decays and supersymmetry

Even though the minimal supersymmetrization of the SM requires one super-partner for each SM particle

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**Fig. 1.** *a – e)* Dominant MSSM contributions to rare  $K$  decays. *f – g)* Dominant sources of  $SU(2)_L$ -breaking in the  $Z$ -penguin. *h)* Schematic representation of the  $H^\pm$  contribution to the  $Z$ -penguin at large  $\tan\beta$ .

(and two Higgs doublets), it is very constrained and involves only a few free parameters. However, SUSY must be broken, and the precise mechanism still eludes us. Therefore, in practice, an effective description is adopted, introducing all possible explicit soft-breaking terms allowed by the gauge symmetries. In the squark sector, there are  $LL$  and  $RR$  mass-terms and trilinear couplings giving rise to  $LR$  mass-terms after the Higgses acquire their VEV's,  $\langle H_{u,d}^0 \rangle = v_{u,d}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}_{soft}^{LL,RR} &= -\tilde{Q}^\dagger \mathbf{m}_Q^2 \tilde{Q} - \tilde{U} \mathbf{m}_U^2 \tilde{U}^\dagger - \tilde{D} \mathbf{m}_D^2 \tilde{D}^\dagger, \\ \mathcal{L}_{soft}^{LR} &= -\tilde{U} \mathbf{A}^U \tilde{Q} H_u + \tilde{D} \mathbf{A}^D \tilde{Q} H_d, \end{aligned}$$

with  $\tilde{Q} = (\tilde{u}_L, \tilde{d}_L)^T$ ,  $\tilde{U} = \tilde{u}_R^\dagger$ ,  $\tilde{D} = \tilde{d}_R^\dagger$ . Obviously,  $\mathbf{m}_{Q,U,D}^2$  and  $\mathbf{A}^{U,D}$ , which are  $3 \times 3$  matrices in flavor-space, generate a very rich flavor-breaking sector as squark mass eigenstates can differ substantially from their gauge eigenstates.

**What to expect from SUSY in rare  $K$  decays:** In the SM, the  $Z$ -penguin is the dominant contribution, and is tuned by  $\lambda_t$  (Fig.1a). The four MSSM corrections depicted in Figs.1b – e (together with box diagrams), represent the dominant corrections, and are thus the only MSSM effects for which rare  $K$  decays can be sensitive probes. Let us briefly describe each of them. First, there is the charged Higgs contribution to the  $Z$ -penguin (Fig.1b), which is, at moderate  $\tan\beta = v_u/v_d$ , aligned with the SM one ( $\sim \lambda_t$ ). Then, there is the supersymmetrized version of Figs.1a – b, with charginos – up-squarks in place of  $W^\pm/H^\pm$  – up-quarks in the loop (Fig.1c), and which is sensitive to the mixings among the six up-squarks ( $Z^U$ ), a priori not aligned with the CKM mixings. Another purely supersymmetric contribution, relevant only for charged lepton modes, is the gluino electromagnetic penguin (Fig.1d), sensitive to down-squark mixings ( $Z^D$ ). The last class of effects consists of neutral Higgs FCNC (Fig.1e), and arises at large  $\tan\beta \approx 50$ . Indeed, the 2HDM-II structure of the Higgs couplings to quarks, required by SUSY, is not preserved beyond leading order due to  $\mathcal{L}_{soft}$ , and the “wrong Higgs”,  $H_u$ , gets coupled to down-type quarks,  $\mathcal{L}_{eff} \supset \tilde{d}_R^j Y_d^{ik} (H_d^0 + \epsilon Y_u^\dagger Y_u H_u^0)_{kj} \tilde{d}_L^i$  [15]. Clearly, once the Higgses acquire

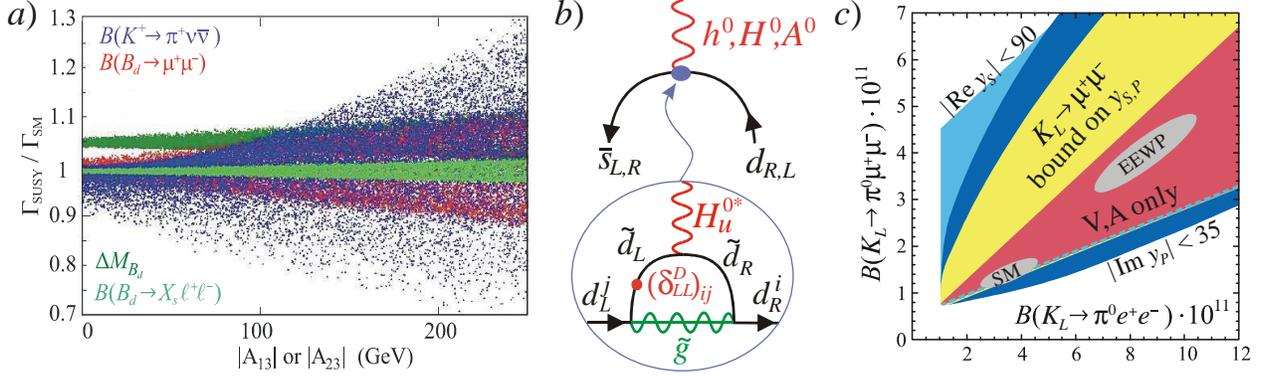
their VEV's, there is a mismatch between quark mass eigenstates and Higgs couplings; both are no longer diagonalized simultaneously and Higgs FCNC are generated[16].

**Bottom-up approach and Minimal Flavor Violation:** There are too many parameters in  $\mathcal{L}_{soft}$  to have any hope to fix them all from rare  $K$  decays. At the same time, however, the observed suppression of FCNC transitions and CP-violating phenomena seem to indicate that only small departures with respect to the SM are possible. Therefore, one starts from a lowest-order basis in which the flavor-breakings due to  $\mathbf{m}_{Q,U,D}^2$  and  $\mathbf{A}^{U,D}$  are minimal. This can take the form of  $mSUGRA$ , alignment of squarks with quarks or the Minimal Flavor Violation hypothesis (MFV). In a second stage, one probes the possible signatures of departures from this minimal setting. The goal being, ultimately, to constrain SUSY-breaking models, which imply specific soft-breaking structures. At that stage, information from rare  $K$  decays, colliders and  $B$ -physics must of course be combined.

Here we adopt MFV as the lowest order basis, i.e. we impose that the SM Yukawas  $\mathbf{Y}_{u,d}$  are the only sources of flavor-breaking[17]. In practice, this means that  $\mathcal{L}_{soft}$  terms can be expanded as ( $a_i, b_i \sim O(1)$ , and  $A_0, m_0$  set the supersymmetry-breaking scale)

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{m}_Q^2 &= m_0^2 (a_1 \mathbf{1} + b_1 \mathbf{Y}_u^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_u + b_2 \mathbf{Y}_d^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_d \\ &\quad + b_3 (\mathbf{Y}_d^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_d \mathbf{Y}_u^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_u + \mathbf{Y}_u^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_u \mathbf{Y}_d^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_d)), \\ \mathbf{m}_U^2 &= m_0^2 (a_2 \mathbf{1} + b_4 \mathbf{Y}_u \mathbf{Y}_u^\dagger), \\ \mathbf{A}^U &= A_0 \mathbf{Y}_u (a_4 \mathbf{1} + b_6 \mathbf{Y}_d^\dagger \mathbf{Y}_d), \end{aligned}$$

and similarly for  $\mathbf{m}_D^2$  and  $\mathbf{A}^D$ , such that all FCNC's and CP-violation are still essentially tuned by the CKM matrix. For example, the dominant contributions to the  $Z$ -penguin are those breaking the  $SU(2)_L$  gauge-symmetry[18,19]. In the SM, this breaking is achieved through a double top-quark mass insertion (Fig.1f). Similarly, in the MSSM, it is the double  $\tilde{t}_L - \tilde{t}_R$  mixing via the  $\mathbf{A}^U$  trilinear terms which plays the dominant role (Fig.1g in the sCKM basis)[20]. Within MFV, this gives a factor  $m_t^2 \lambda_t |a_4 - \cot\beta \mu^*|^2$  [21], still enhanced by  $m_t^2$  and tuned by  $\lambda_t$ .



**Fig. 2.** a) Sensitivity of  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$  to  $\mathbf{A}^U$  terms, compared to  $B$ -physics observables. b) Schematic representation of the neutral Higgs FCNC beyond MFV, at large  $\tan \beta$ . c) Impacts of dim-6 FCNC operators in the  $\mathcal{B}(K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \mu^+ \mu^-)$  vs.  $\mathcal{B}(K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 e^+ e^-)$  plane.

## 4 Supersymmetric effects in $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$

**SUSY effects in the (axial-)vector operators,**  $(\bar{s}d)_{V \pm A}(\bar{\nu}\nu)_{V - A}$ , cannot be distinguished since only  $(\bar{s}d)_V(\bar{\nu}\nu)_{V - A}$  contributes to the  $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$  matrix-element. All MSSM effects are thus encoded into a single complex number,  $X^\nu \equiv y_L^\nu + y_R^\nu$  [19]:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{H}_{eff} &= y_L^\nu (\bar{s}d)_{V - A} (\bar{\nu}\nu)_{V - A} + y_R^\nu (\bar{s}d)_{V + A} (\bar{\nu}\nu)_{V - A} \\ &\rightarrow (y_L^\nu + y_R^\nu) (\bar{s}d)_V (\bar{\nu}\nu)_{V - A}. \end{aligned}$$

At moderate  $\tan \beta$ , chargino penguins are the dominant MSSM contributions because of their quadratic sensitivity to up-squark mass-insertions (Figs.1c, 1g). Within MFV, this means, given the  $m_t$  enhancement present in the  $\delta_{LR}^U$  sector, that  $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$  are particularly sensitive. Still, a significant enhancement would require a very light stop and chargino[21], mostly because of the constraint from  $\Delta\rho$ [22]. Any enhancement  $\gtrsim 5\%$  would thus falsify MFV if sparticles are found above  $\sim 200\text{GeV}$ , and if  $\tan \beta \gtrsim 5$  (to get rid of the  $H^\pm$  contribution). Turning on generic  $\mathbf{A}^U$  terms, the largest deviations arise in  $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$ , see Fig.2a[21]. Further, the decoupling is slower than for observables sensitive to chargino boxes like  $\varepsilon_K$ . All in all, given that  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \nu \bar{\nu}$  has already been seen, how large the effect could be for  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$ ? By an extensive, adaptive scanning over the MSSM parameter space, Ref.[23] has shown that the GN model-independent bound[24] can be saturated, which represents a factor  $\sim 30$  enhancement of  $\mathcal{B}(K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu})$  over the SM.

At large  $\tan \beta$ , the chargino contributions may no longer represent the dominant effect. While the Higgs FCNC obviously does not contribute (Fig.1e), higher order effects in the  $H^\pm$  contribution to the  $Z$ -penguin (Fig.1h), sensitive to  $\delta_{RR}^D$ , can become sizeable beyond MFV[25]. Further, this contribution is slowly decoupling as  $M_H$  increases compared to tree-level neutral Higgs exchanges, as for example in  $B_{s,d} \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ .

**SUSY effects in other dimension-six operators,**  $(\bar{s}d)(\bar{\nu}\mathbf{1}, \gamma_5)\nu$  and  $(\bar{s}\sigma_{\mu\nu}d)(\bar{\nu}\sigma^{\mu\nu}(\mathbf{1}, \gamma_5)\nu)$ , require active right-handed neutrinos and will not be discussed here[26]. Another possible class of operators, since the neutrino flavors are not detected, are

$(\bar{s}\Gamma^A d)(\bar{\nu}^i \Gamma^B \nu^j)$  with  $i \neq j$  and  $\Gamma^{A,B}$  some Dirac structures. In the MSSM, such lepton-flavor violating operators arise only from suppressed box diagrams, and cannot lead to significant effects[27]. However, they could be sizeable in the presence of R-parity violating terms[27, 28].

## 5 Supersymmetric effects in $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$

Though the SM predictions for these modes are less accurate than for  $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$ , they are sensitive to more types of New Physics operators[13]. Indeed, the final-state leptons are now charged and massive. Therefore, besides electromagnetic effects, common to both the muon and electron modes, the relatively large muon mass opens the possibility to probe a whole class of helicity-suppressed effects.

**SUSY effects in the QCD operators,** i.e. in the chromomagnetic  $\bar{s}\sigma_{\mu\nu}dG^{\mu\nu}$  or four-quark operators, have no direct impact on  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$ . Indeed, as said in Sect. 2, the two-photon CPC piece is fixed entirely in terms of the measured  $K \rightarrow \pi\pi\pi, \pi\gamma\gamma$  modes[11, 14], while the ICPV contribution is fixed from the measured  $\varepsilon_K$  and  $K_S \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$  rate[9]. At the low scale  $\mu \lesssim m_c$ , new physics can thus explicitly enter through semi-leptonic FCNC operators only.

**SUSY effects in the SM operators,** which are the vector and axial-vector operators, can in principle be disentangled thanks to the different sensitivities of the two modes to the axial-vector current (as discussed in Sec. 2, it also produces  $\ell^+ \ell^-$  in a helicity-suppressed  $0^{-+}$  state). Various MSSM contributions can enter in  $y_{7A}$  and  $y_{7V}$ . First, chargino contributions to the  $Z$ -penguin (Fig.1c) enter as  $y_{7A}, y_{7V} \sim (\delta_{RL}^U)_{32}^* (\delta_{RL}^U)_{31}$ , and are thus directly correlated to the corresponding contribution to  $K \rightarrow \pi \nu \bar{\nu}$ [21, 29]. Within MFV, the maximal effect for  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \ell^+ \ell^-$  is about one third of the one for  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0 \nu \bar{\nu}$ , hence may be inaccessible due to theoretical uncertainties. Secondly, gluino contributions to the electromagnetic operator  $\bar{s}\sigma_{\mu\nu}dF^{\mu\nu}$  (Fig.1d) can be absorbed into  $y_{7V} \sim (\delta_{RL}^D)_{12}$ . Even if directly correlated with  $\varepsilon'/\varepsilon$ , sizeable effects in  $K_L \rightarrow$

**Table 1.** Sensitivity of rare  $K$  decays to MSSM effects, with and without MFV, and with moderate and large  $\tan\beta$ . The dominant contributions come from single,  $(\delta_j^i)_{12}$ , and/or double (e.g.  $(\delta_j^i)_{32}^*(\delta_j^i)_{31}$ ) mass insertions (see text).

MSSM scenario	$K \rightarrow \pi\nu\bar{\nu}$	$K_L \rightarrow \pi^0\ell^+\ell^-$
MFV, $\tan\beta \approx 2$	Best sensitivity, but maximal enhancement < 20-25%	Less sensitive, but precisely correlated with $K \rightarrow \pi\nu\bar{\nu}$
MFV, $\tan\beta \approx 50$	Negligible effects ?	
General, $\tan\beta \approx 2$	Best probes of $\delta_{LR}^U$ (quadratic dependence in $\delta_{LR}^U$ )	$\delta_{LR}^U$ : correlated with $K \rightarrow \pi\nu\bar{\nu}$ $\delta_{LR}^D$ : correlated with $\varepsilon'/\varepsilon$ (but cleaner)
General, $\tan\beta \approx 50$	Good probes of $\delta_{RR}^D$ (slow decoupling as $M_H \rightarrow \infty$ )	Good probes of $\delta_{RR,LL}^D$ , correlated with $K_L \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ (but cleaner)

$\pi^0\ell^+\ell^-$  are still possible[30]. Finally,  $H^\pm$  contributions arise at large  $\tan\beta$  (Fig.1h), with  $y_{7A}, y_{7V} \sim (\delta_{RR}^D)_{12}$ , and are directly correlated with those for  $K \rightarrow \pi\nu\bar{\nu}$ [25].

**SUSY effects in the (pseudo-)scalar operators**, which can be helicity-suppressed or not:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{H}_{eff} = & y_S (\bar{s}d) (\bar{\ell}\ell) + y_P (\bar{s}d) (\bar{\ell}\gamma_5\ell) \\ & + y'_S (\bar{s}\gamma_5d) (\bar{\ell}\ell) + y'_P (\bar{s}\gamma_5d) (\bar{\ell}\gamma_5\ell) . \end{aligned}$$

The first (last) two operators contribute to  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0\ell^+\ell^-$  ( $K_L \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-$ ). In the MSSM at large  $\tan\beta$ , they arise from Higgs FCNC[31], and are thus helicity-suppressed (Fig.2b). Sizeable effects for the muon mode are possible beyond MFV, where they are sensitive to  $(\delta_{RR,LL}^D)_{12}$  and  $(\delta_{RR}^D)_{23}(\delta_{LL}^D)_{31}$  mass-insertions. Also, even if this contribution is correlated to the one for  $K_L \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ , given the large theoretical uncertainties for this mode, a factor  $\sim 4$  enhancement is still allowed (Fig.2c)[13]. On the other hand, helicity-allowed contributions to these operators do not arise in the MSSM. They could appear in the presence of R-parity violating couplings, but, barring fine-tuning, their effects must be small to avoid overproducing  $K_L \rightarrow e^+e^-$  [13].

**SUSY effects in the (pseudo-)tensor operators**,  $(\bar{s}\sigma_{\mu\nu}d)(\bar{\ell}\sigma^{\mu\nu}(\mathbf{1}, \gamma_5)\ell)$ , the last possible dimension six semi-leptonic FCNC operators, are helicity-suppressed in the MSSM[32] and, being also phase-space suppressed, do not lead to any significant effect [13]. Further, they cannot arise from R-parity violating couplings.

## 6 Conclusion

The  $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+\nu\bar{\nu}$ ,  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0\nu\bar{\nu}$ ,  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0e^+e^-$  and  $K_L \rightarrow \pi^0\mu^+\mu^-$  decay modes are the only theoretically clean windows into the  $\Delta S = 1$  sector. If SUSY is discovered, the pattern of deviations they could exhibit with respect to the SM (see Table 1) will be essential to constrain the MSSM parameter-space, and hopefully unveil the nature of the SUSY-breaking mechanism.

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