

Obtaining of the Zr-89 medical isotope in the (γ , αn)-reaction

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The modern medical method of nuclear visualization based on monoclonal antibodies, the new carriers of the radioactive label, is Immuno-PET. For its realization, it is necessary that the biological half-life of the molecule, the label carrier, coincides with the half-life of the radioactive isotope. The ^{89}Zr isotope has optimal physical characteristics for Immuno-PET: it decays with a half-life of 78.41 hours by positron emission and electron capture to the intermediate state ^{89m}Y , which decays to stable ^{89}Y with half-life 15.7 s.

Traditionally, ^{89}Zr is produced with cyclotrons in the (p, n)- and ($d, 2n$)-reactions. However, in both methods, the exclusion of ^{88}Zr isotope impurities with a half-life of 83.4 days and its daughter ^{88}Y isotope with a half-life of 106 days resulting from ($p, 2n$)- or ($d, 3n$)-reactions presents a significant problem.

Therefore, an urgent task is to study the ^{89}Zr yield in various photonuclear reactions.

We irradiated a ^{94}Mo enriched molybdenum target and a tantalum monitor target using an electron accelerator with a 20 MeV maximum electron energy.

The spectra of irradiated targets were measured by Canberra and Ortec gamma spectrometers with ultra-pure semiconductor detectors with a (15–40)% detection efficiency compared to a $3' \times 3'$ NaI(Tl) detector. The energy resolution of the spectrometers was 1.8–2.0 keV on the 1332 keV ^{60}Co γ -line. In the studied spectrum, γ -transitions from ^{89}Zr decay are reliably identified. The bremsstrahlung spectrum was simulated using the Geant4 software code.

As a result, we obtained the integral cross-section for the $^{94}\text{Mo}(\gamma, n)^{89}\text{Zr}$ reaction equal 4.5 mbn \times MeV. The ^{89}Zr yield is 5×10^4 Bq \times $\mu\text{A}\times$ hour. Obtained data are discussed.

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