
Поиск тяжёлых нейтрино в ближнем детекторе ND280 эксперимента T2K

Константин Горшанов

Институт ядерных исследований Российской академии наук
(ИЯИ РАН)

Сессия-конференция секции ядерной физики ОФН
РАН, посвящённая 70-летию В.А. Рубакова



Российская Академия Наук
Секция ядерной физики

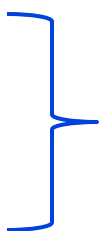
Москва, 21 февраля 2025 г.



Physics motivation

New physics beyond SM:

- $m_\nu \neq 0$
- Baryon asymmetry of the Universe
- Dark Matter



ν MSM-model [1,2]:

- 3 right-handed neutrinos $N_I, I = \{1,2,3\}$
- ν & N_I – Majorana particles
- $m_{N_1} \sim keV$ could be dark matter
- $m_{N_{2,3}} \sim MeV - GeV$ could generate baryogenesis

Left-handed flavor eigenstates as combination of light (ν_i) and heavy (N_I) mass eigenstates:

$$\nu_\alpha = \sum_{i=1}^3 V_{\alpha i}^{PMNS} \nu_i + \sum_{I=1}^n \Theta_{\alpha I} N_I \quad (\alpha = e, \mu, \tau; i = 1,2,3; I = 1,2,3)$$

- Assuming $M_2 \sim M_3 \equiv M_N, |U_\alpha|^2 = \sum_{I=\{2,3\}} |\Theta_{\alpha I}|^2$

HNL search methods:

Study meson decay
($H^\pm \rightarrow l_\alpha^\pm N$) kinematics

Used in E949, NA62, etc.

Sensitive to U_α^2

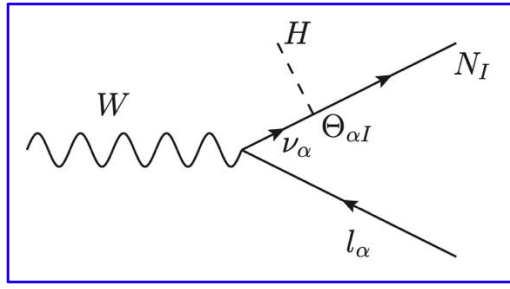
Search for **HNL** decays in a detector, study **daughter kinematics**

CERN-PS-191; can probe in neutrino experiments

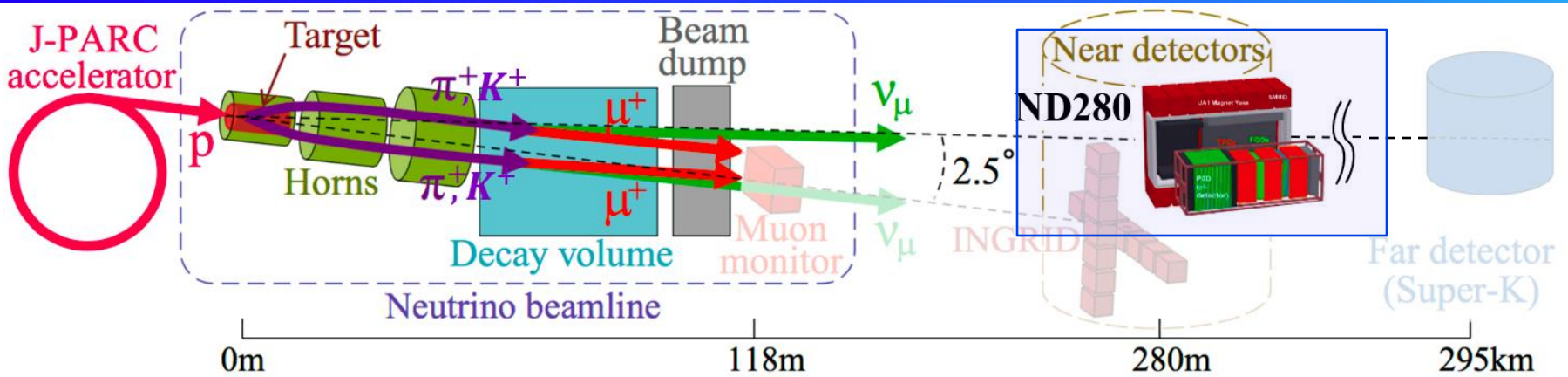
Sensitive to $U_\alpha^2 U_\beta^2$

Heavy Neutral Leptons (HNLs) or heavy neutrinos

Feynman representation of HNL contributions

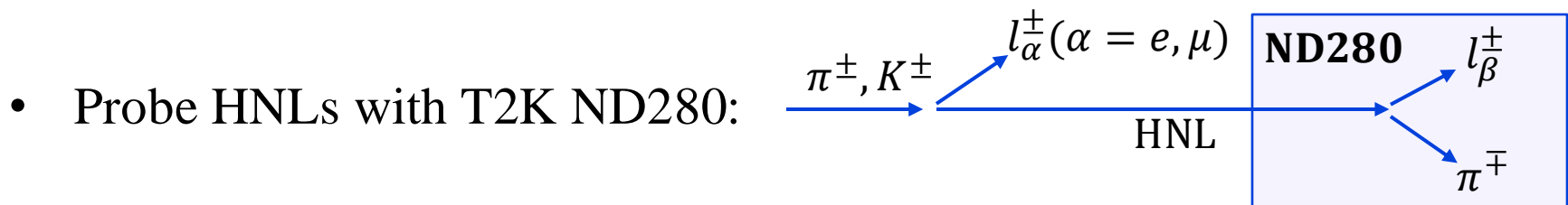


T2K experiment

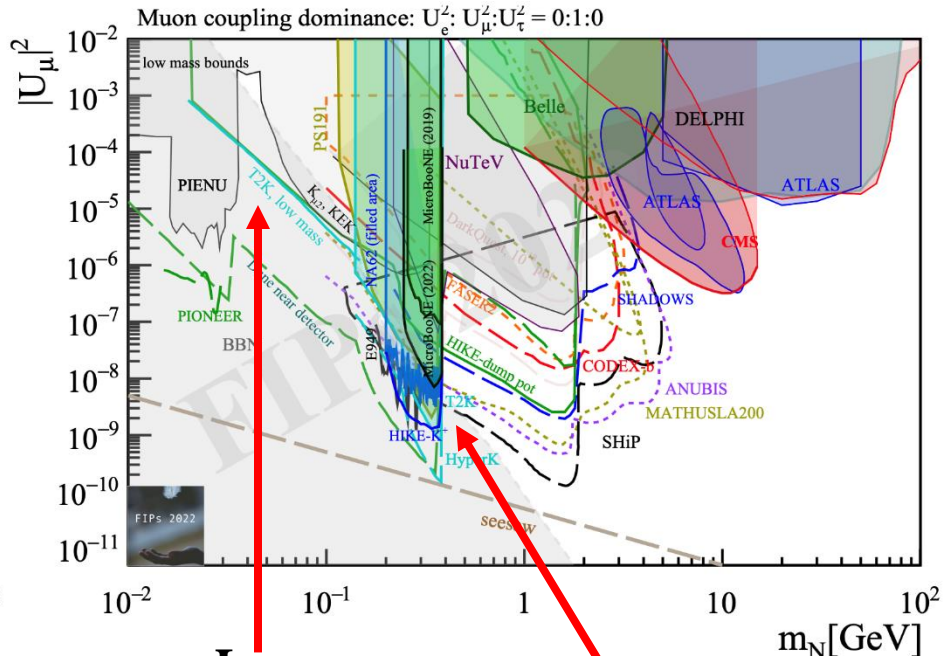
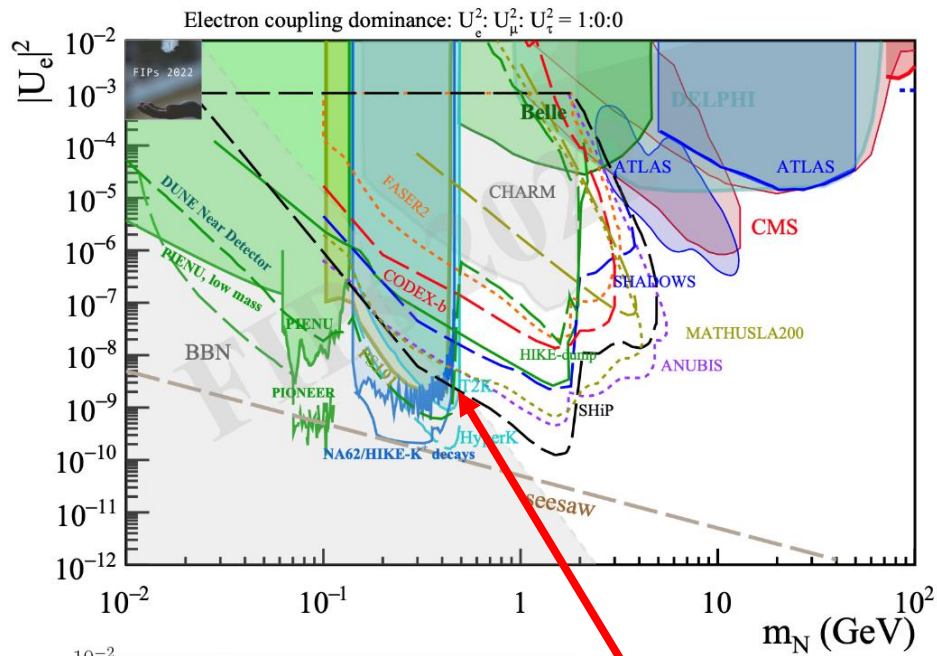


- Tokai-to-Kamioka (T2K) [3] – long-baseline neutrino experiment in Japan. Main goal – study ν oscillations, search for lepton CP violation.
- Near Detector ND280 positioned 2.5° from neutrino beam ($\overline{E}_\nu = 0.6 \text{ GeV}$).
- Accelerator experiment based on 30 GeV proton beam @ J-PARC.
- Neutrino beam from π and K mesons decays.

- π and K mesons focused with magnetic horns for $\nu_\mu (\overline{\nu}_\mu)$ - enhanced beam.



Current constraints on mixing elements



T2K results (2019)

Low mass projections [5]

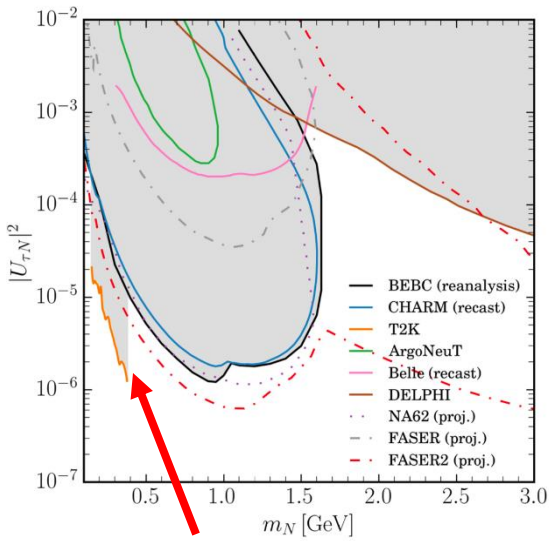
T2K results (2019)

Current bounds and future projections for 90% CL limits [4]

Filled colored areas - bounds set by experimental collaborations

- T2K limits *still competitive*

Example: Meson decay: $K^+ \rightarrow e^+ N_I$, $BR \sim |\Theta_{eI}|^2$
 HNL decay: $N_I \rightarrow \mu^\pm \pi^\mp$, $BR \sim |\Theta_{\mu I}|^2$ } Sensitive to $U_e^2 U_\mu^2$



T2K results (2019)

Motivation for new analysis

Search for HNL in 2019 [5]:

- $K^\pm \rightarrow l_\alpha^\pm N$ ($\alpha = e, \mu$)
- K^+ in ν -mode and K^- in $\bar{\nu}$ -mode

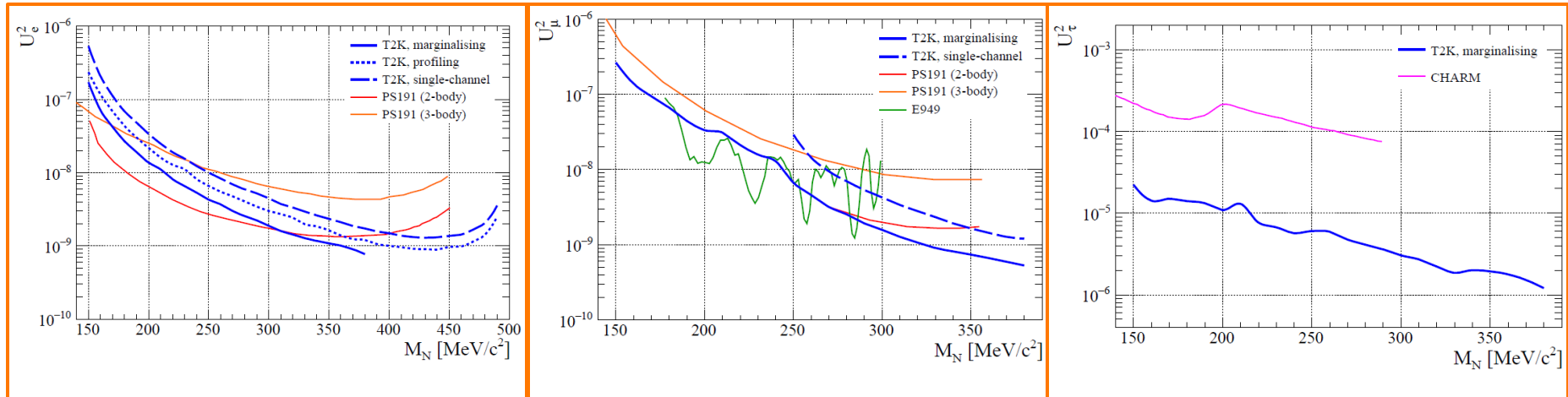


New search for HNL:

- $H^\pm \rightarrow l_\alpha^\pm N$ ($H = K, \pi; \alpha = e, \mu$)
- H^\pm ($H = K, \pi$) in ν and $\bar{\nu}$ beam modes
- **Updated** tracking, signal and background
- **Additional statistics** available

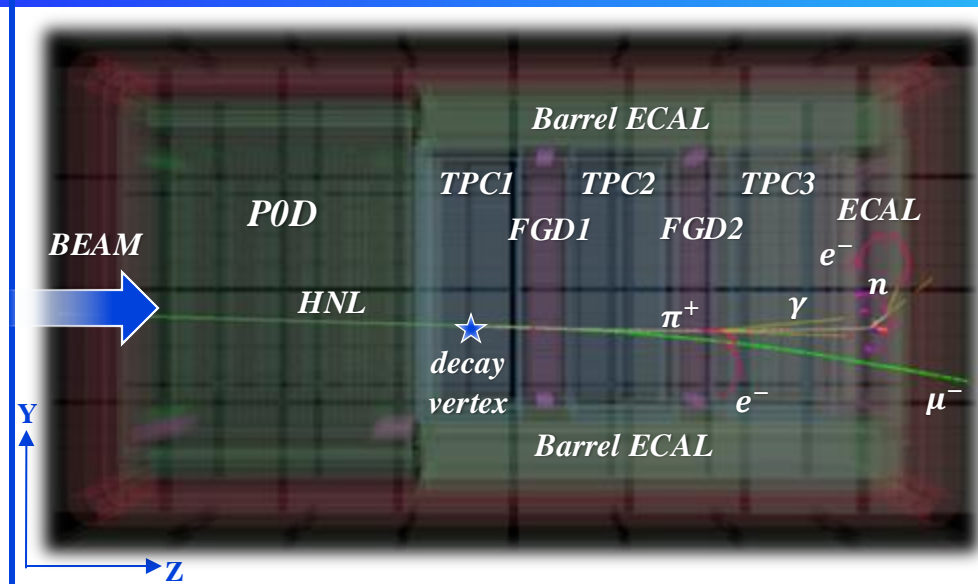
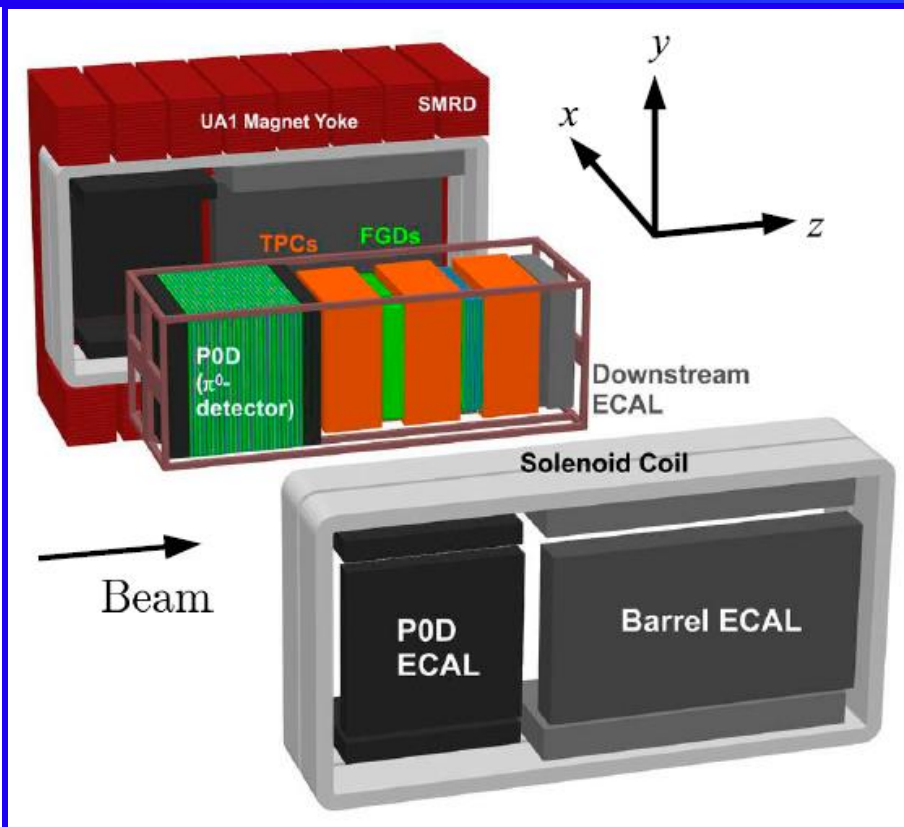


T2K results obtained in 2019 [6]



90% upper limits on $|U_\alpha|^2$ as function of M_{HNL}

ND280 and HNL typical event



Example of simulated HNL decay in ND280

- UA1 magnet – dipole magnetic field 0.2 T
- TPCs – Gaseous-Argon Time Projection Chambers
- POD – π^0 detector
- FGDs – Fine Grained plastic-scintillator Detectors
- ECAL – Electromagnetic Calorimeter
- SMRD – Side Muon Range Detector, scintillator plates inside magnet yokes

TPC Fiducial Volume: no walls, no cathode
Margin of 59 mm upstream and 150 mm downstream

HNL search in ND280

- *Events in TPC gas* to reduce background from ν interactions

- Study decays:

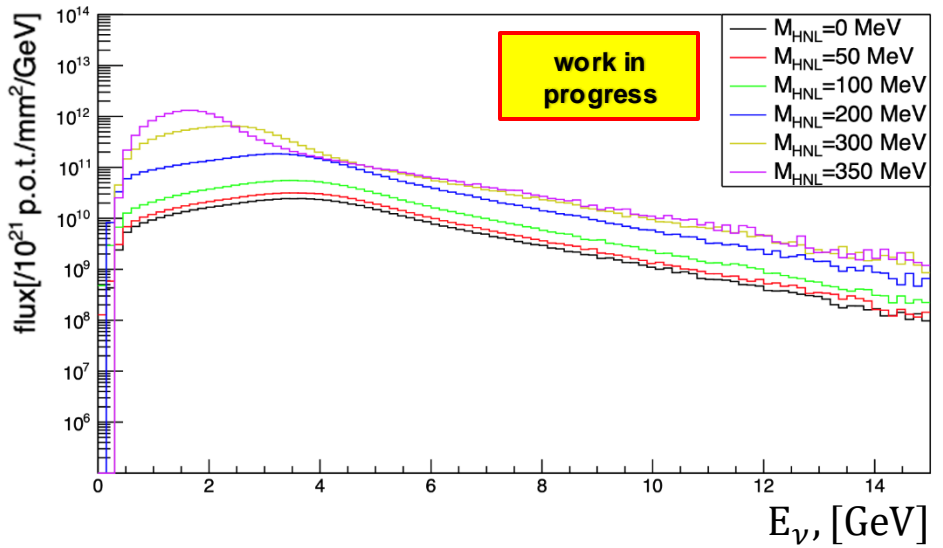
$$H^\pm \rightarrow l_\alpha^\pm N \quad (H = K, \pi; \alpha = e, \mu)$$

$$N \rightarrow \mu^\pm \pi^\mp, N \rightarrow e^\pm \pi^\mp, N \rightarrow e^+ e^- \nu, N \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^- \nu, N \rightarrow e^\pm \mu^\mp \nu$$

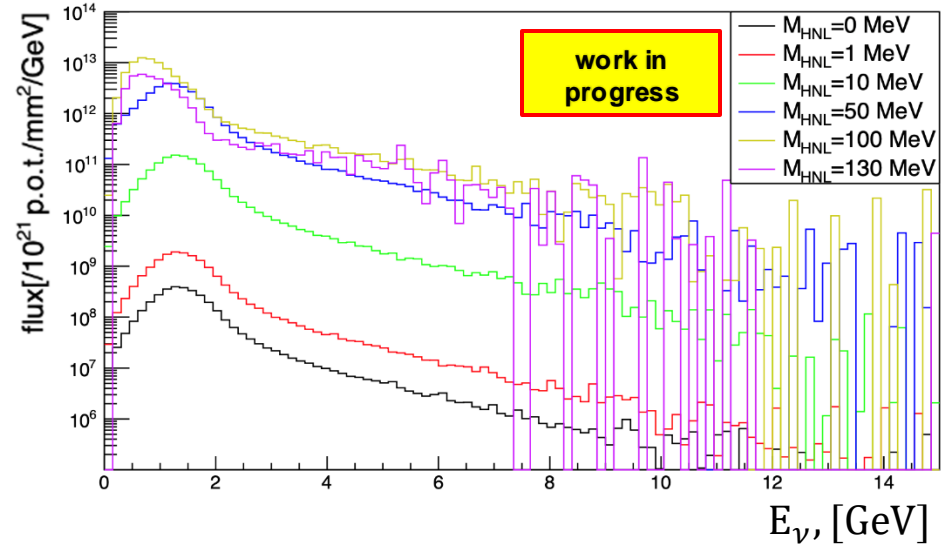
- Signal topology: 2 close opposite charged tracks starting in same TPC fiducial volume
- Applying veto, PID and kinematic selection criteria

HNL flux at ND280 front plane

$K^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ N, \nu$ -beam mode



$\pi^+ \rightarrow e^+ N, \nu$ -beam mode

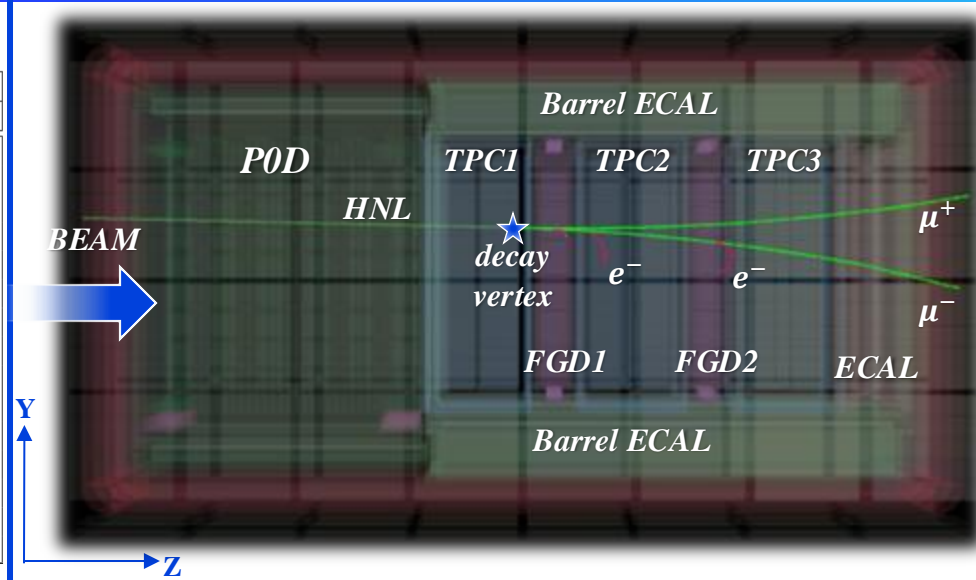


assume $|U_e| = |U_\mu| = 1$

Systematics

• Detector systematics:

HNL decay mode	$N \rightarrow e^- \pi^+$	$N \rightarrow \mu^- \mu^+ \nu$	$N \rightarrow e^- e^+ \nu$	$N \rightarrow e^- \mu^+ \nu$
M_N, MeV	250	350	105	130
B field distortion	0.27%	0.27%	0.09%	0.09%
Momentum scale	0.06%	0.03%	0.04%	0.14%
Momentum resolution	0.45%	0.34%	0.49%	0.28%
TPC PID	0.92%	0.75%	1.41%	0.9%
ECAL EM resolution	-	0.78%	-	-
ECAL EM scale	-	0.42%	-	-
Position resolution	0.14%	0.22%	0.94%	0.12%
Parent decay	0.03%	-	-	0.02%
Charge identification efficiency	0.11%	0.04%	0.1%	0.03%
TPC cluster efficiency	0.0005%	0.00057%	0.00034%	0.00079%
TPC track efficiency	0.38%	0.16%	0.23%	0.35%
TPC-FGD match efficiency	0.04%	0.02%	0.03%	0.03%
Pion secondary interactions	2.21%	-	-	-
TPC-ECAL match efficiency	-	1.26%	-	-
ECAL PID	-	3.96%	-	-



preliminary

All	2.49%	4.34%	1.79%	1.03%
-----	-------	-------	-------	-------

• Flux systematics (*preliminary*):

20% for K^\pm and 10% for π^\pm [7]

ECAL used only
for $N \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^- \nu$

ECAL related:

- TPC-ECAL match efficiency
- ECAL PID
- EM Energy resolution and scale

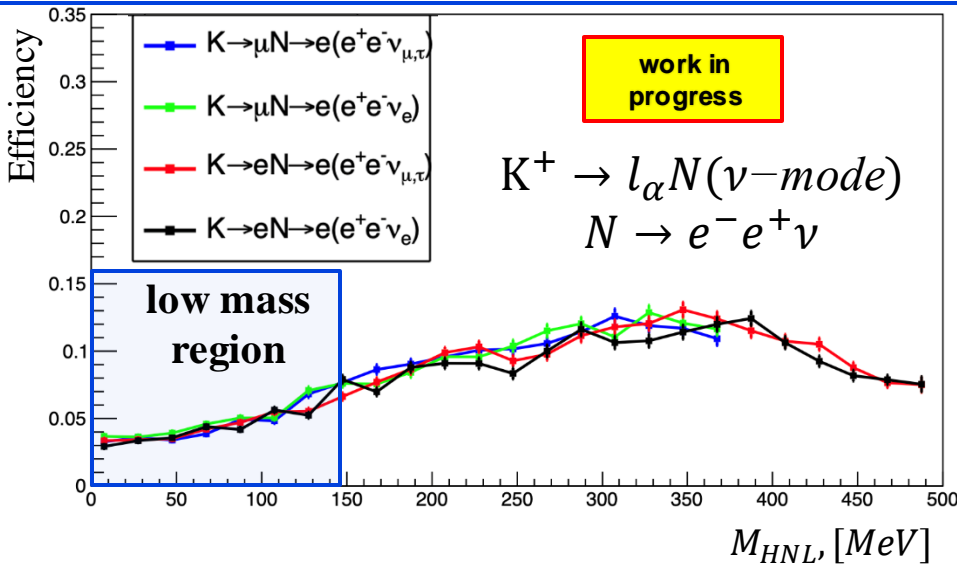
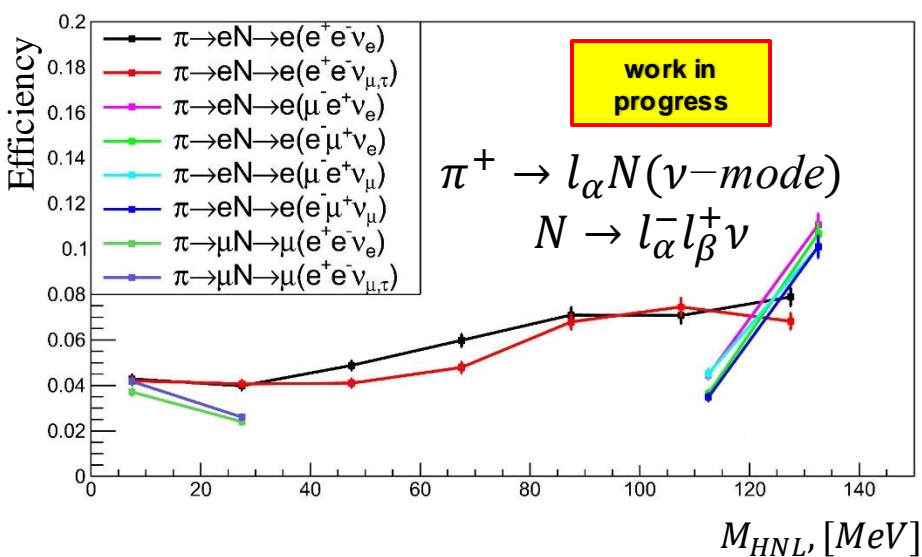
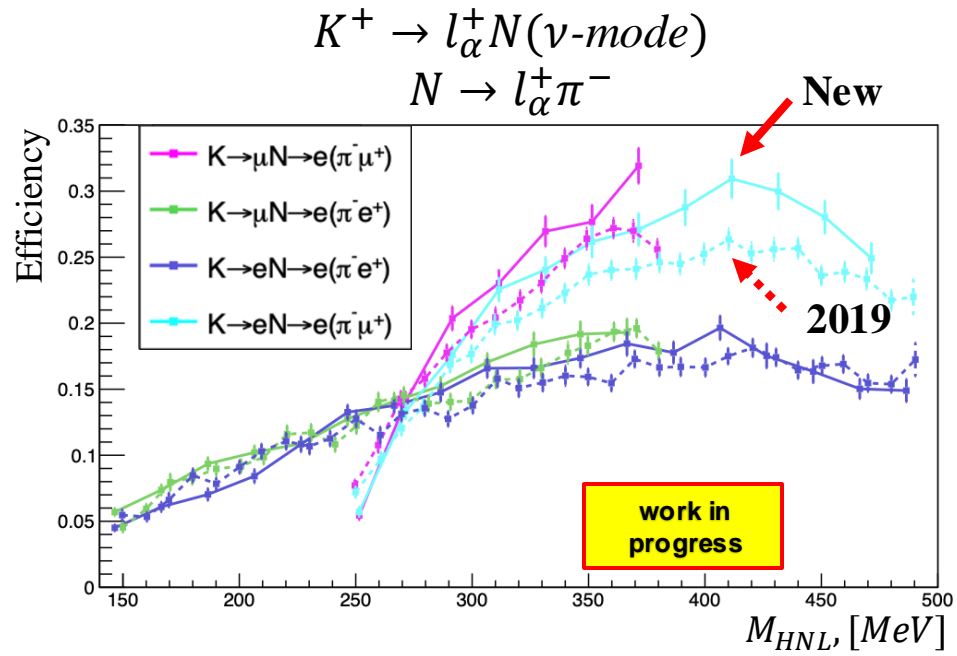
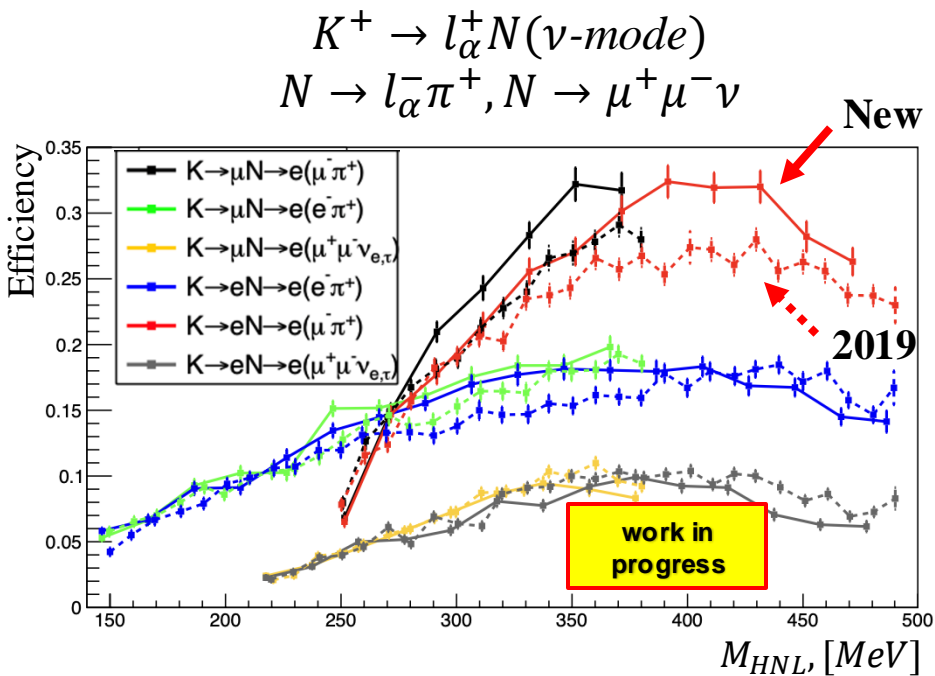
TPC related:

- Magnetic field distortions
- Momentum resolution and scale
- TPC PID
- Charge confusion
- Cluster efficiency
- Track efficiency
- TPC-FGD match efficiency
- Pion Secondary Interactions

Specific for the analysis:

- Position resolution
- Parent decay

Efficiency: new analysis (solid lines) vs 2019 [5] (dashed)



Background study

Background after selection
in each sample.
Normalized to data POT.

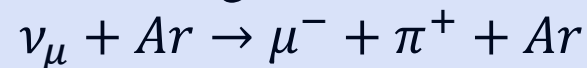
Total exposure (POT):
 12.02×10^{20} ν -mode
 8.61×10^{20} $\bar{\nu}$ -mode

HNL decay channels	Background category		NEUT ν	NEUT $\bar{\nu}$
	$\mu^\pm \pi^\mp$	gas coherent	0.152	0.093
		gas $\nu - \bar{\nu}$ other	0.05	0.0
		OOFV γ	0.0	0.0
		OOFV other	0.0	0.0
	$e^- \pi^+$	gas coherent	0.0	0.0
gas $\nu - \bar{\nu}$ other		0.0	0.0	
OOFV γ		0.0	0.0	
OOFV other		0.0	0.0	
$e^+ \pi^-$	gas coherent	0.0	0.0	
	gas $\nu - \bar{\nu}$ other	0.0	0.0	
	OOFV γ	0.0	0.0	
	OOFV other	0.0	0.0	
$\mu^+ \mu^-$	gas coherent	0.152	0.093	
	gas $\nu - \bar{\nu}$ other	0.104	0.14	
	OOFV γ	0.0	0.0	
	OOFV other	0.0	0.0	
$e^+ e^-$	gas coherent	0.0	0.0	
	gas $\nu - \bar{\nu}$ other	0.0	0.0	
	OOFV γ	0.054	0.0	
	OOFV other	0.0	0.0	

Analysis channel	Background (ν -mode)	Background ($\bar{\nu}$ -mode)
$\mu^\pm \pi^\mp$	0.16 ± 0.08	0.03 ± 0.08
$e^- \pi^+$	0 ± 0	0 ± 0
$e^+ \pi^-$	0 ± 0	0 ± 0
$\mu^+ \mu^-$	0.21 ± 0.15	0.16 ± 0.13
$e^+ e^-$	0.10 ± 0.06	0 ± 0

- Dominant contribution for
$$N \rightarrow \mu^\pm \pi^\mp, \mu^+ \mu^- \nu$$

is neutrino-induced **coherent pion production** on argon nuclei in TPC gas:



- **ν interactions on gas** (“gas other”):
 - resonant π production;
 - quasi-elastic scattering;

- $\gamma \rightarrow e^+ e^-$ and out-of-fiducial volume events for $N \rightarrow e^\pm \pi^\mp$ channels

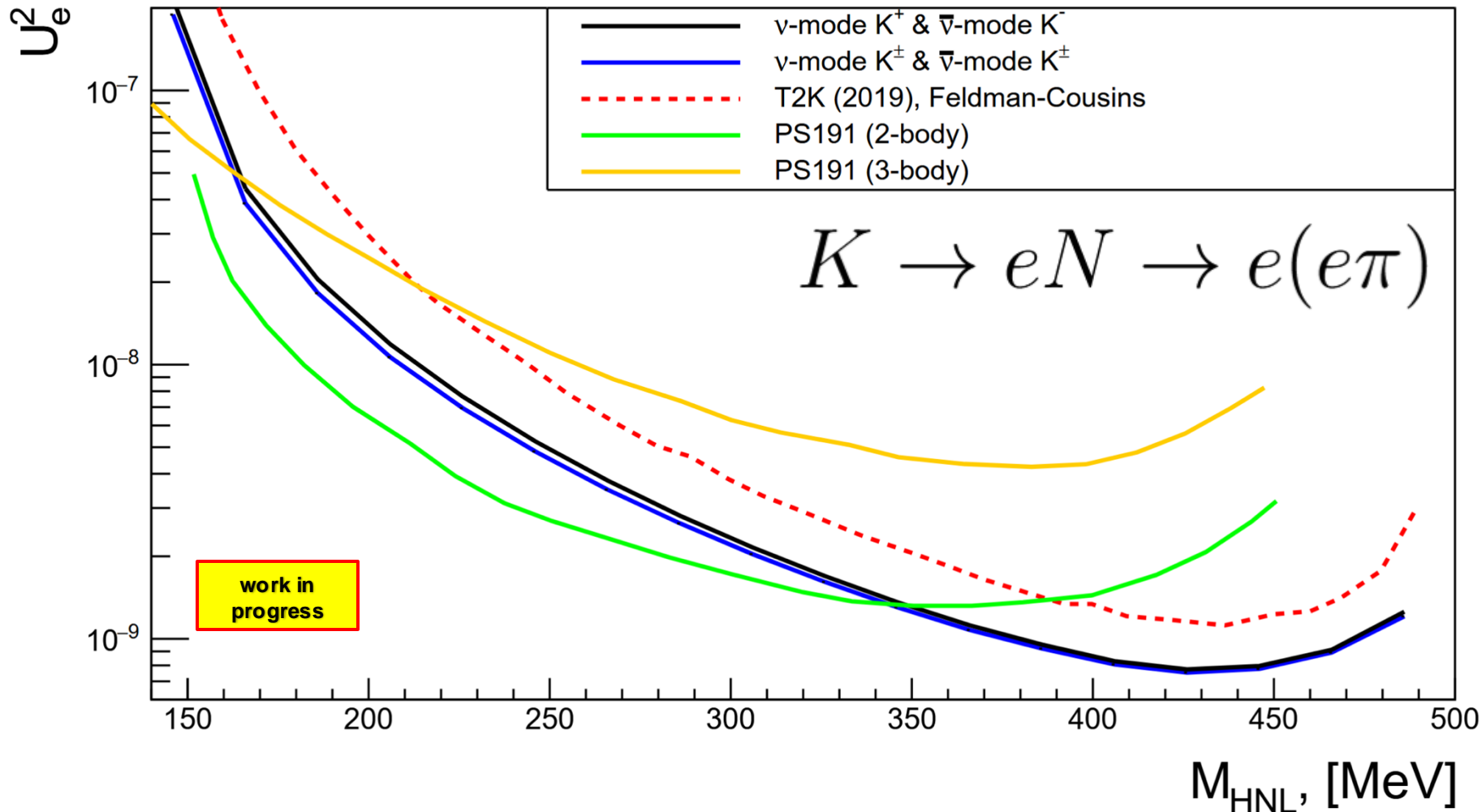
- ν interactions estimation with NEUT Monte-Carlo generator [8]
- Constraints with real data via control samples:
 1. Inverted polar angle
 2. Events in TPC dead material

Sensitivity ($eff = 1$, zero background)

$$|U_i|^2_{limit} = \sqrt{\frac{2.44}{N_{events}}}$$

N_{events} – expected signal assuming $|U|^2 = 1$

$efficiency = 1$
data POT
 zero background



work in progress



Expected sensitivity: considering only one HNL decay mode

$$|U_i|_{limit}^2 = \sqrt{\frac{U_n}{N_{events}}}$$

N_{events} – expected signal assuming $|U|^2 = 1$

Highland-Cousins method [9]

$$b = 0$$

Signal systematics

$$U_n = U_{n0} \left\{ 1 + \frac{E_n \sigma_{Acc}^2}{2} \left(1 + \left(\frac{E_n \sigma_{Acc}}{2} \right)^2 \right) \right\}$$

σ_{Acc} – detector acceptance error

$$E_n = U_{n0} - n$$

Feldman-Cousins method [10]

$$b \neq 0$$

Signal, background systematics

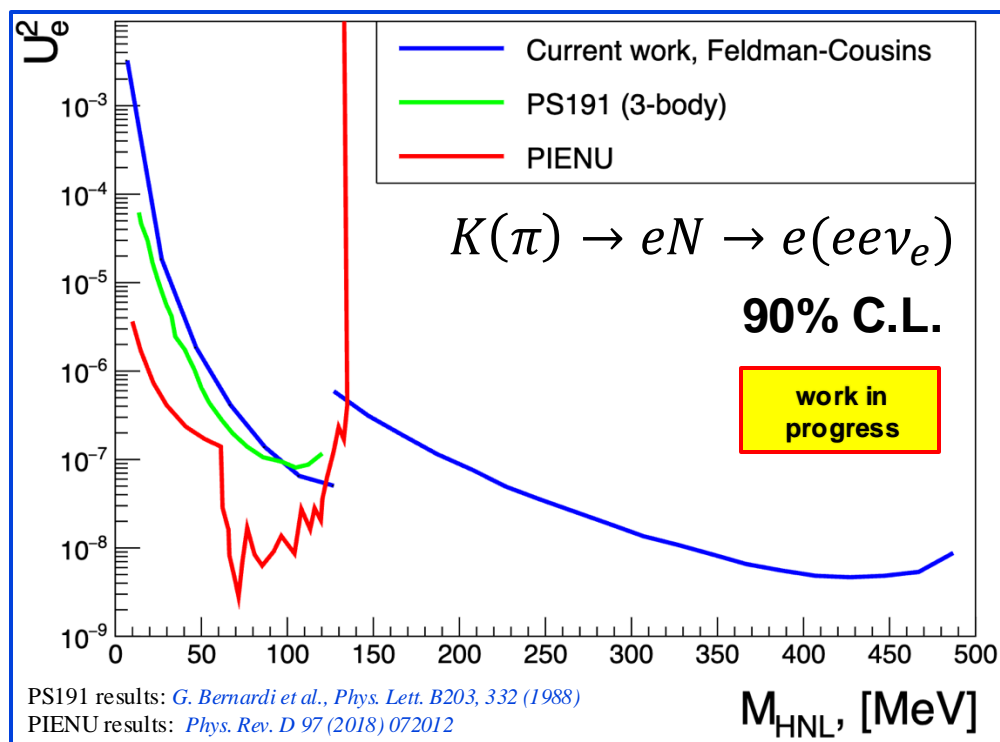
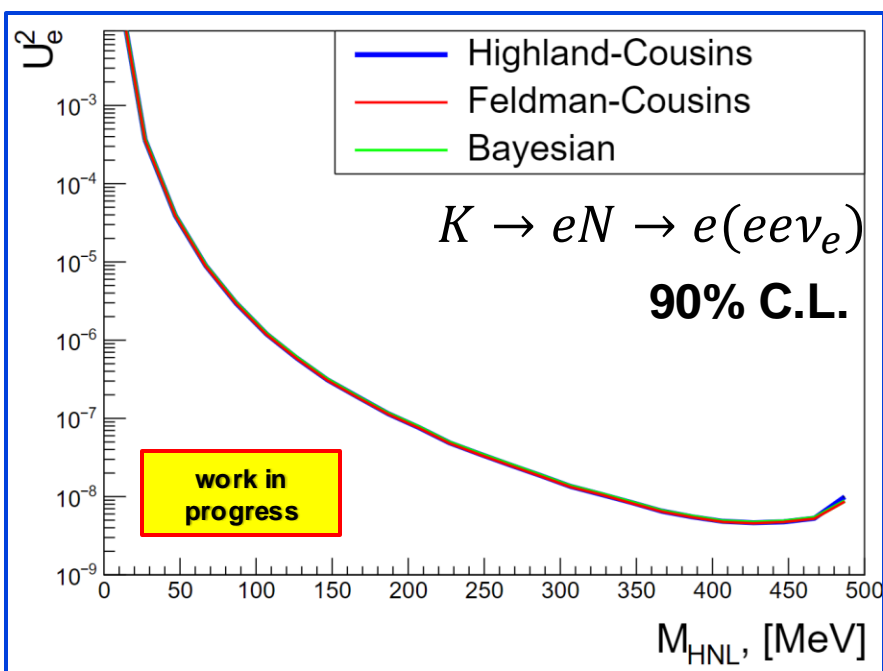
U_n – 90% C. L. Poisson limit for n observed events

Bayesian method [11]

$$b \neq 0$$

Signal efficiency, bkg. uncertainties using prior probabilities π

$$\int_{Slow}^{Sup} p(s|n) ds = 1 - \alpha$$



Conclusion

New search for heavy neutrinos in T2K ND280 *in progress*:

- In 2019 T2K set still competitive limits in mass range $140 < m_N < 493 \text{ MeV}$
- New analysis based on updated tracking and extended to low masses $m_N < 140 \text{ MeV}$

Current status:

For π^\pm , K^\pm decays to HNLs in ν - and $\bar{\nu}$ -beam modes:

- **Selection criteria** reviewed
- Signal **efficiencies increased**
- **Systematics** estimation
- **Background** study
- **Expected sensitivity** with single-channel approach

In progress:

- Expected sensitivity via combining HNL decay modes

Supported by the state project "Science" of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation under the contract № 075-15-2024-541.

Author is grateful for the contribution given by Yu. Kudenko, A. Izmaylov and T2K collaboration members.

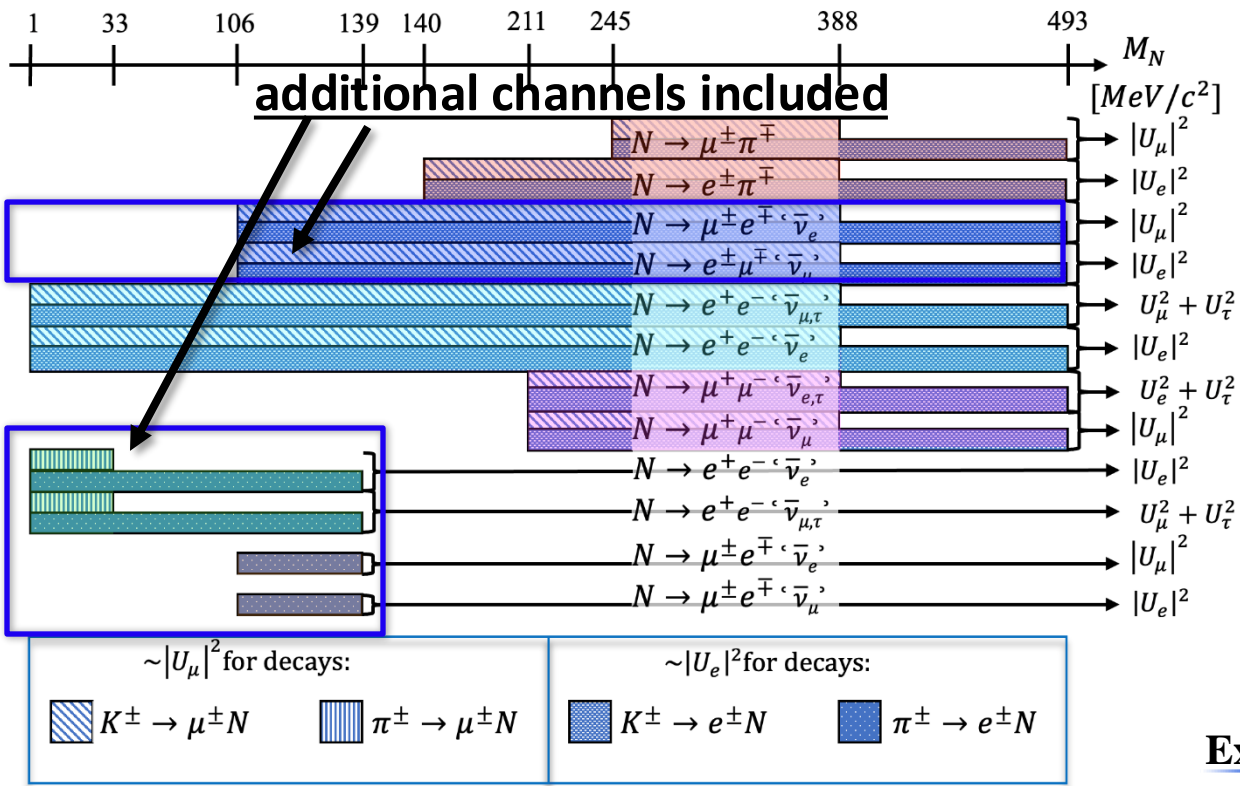
***THANK YOU
FOR ATTENTION!***

BACKUP

Heavy neutrino decays

HNLs decay through charged or neutral current.

Considered decay modes:



Schematic of production and decay modes included in analysis for HNL with $M_N < 493 \text{ MeV}/c^2$. Bars show allowed kinematic regions for each decay mode with the corresponding mixing element(s).

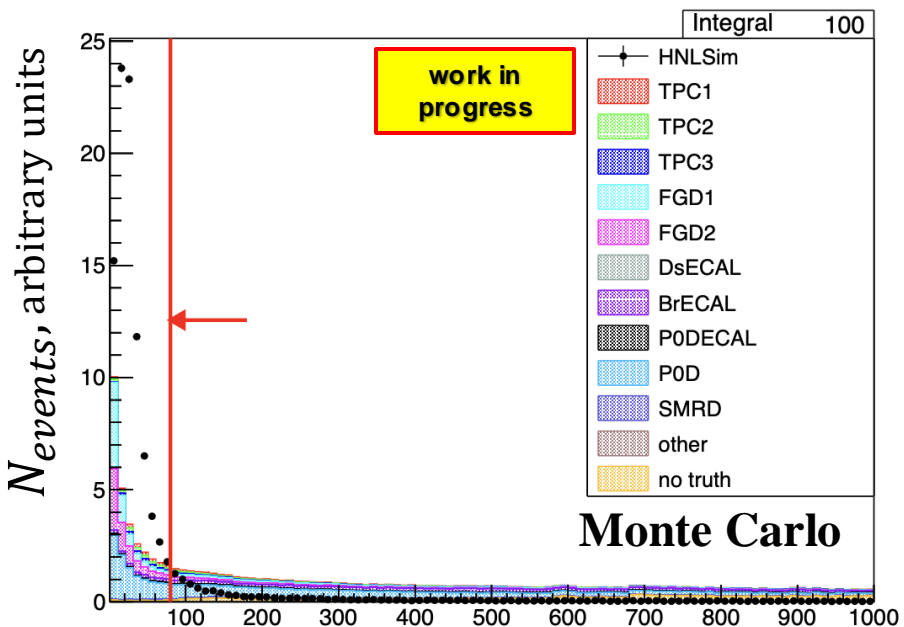
- Assuming $M_2 \sim M_3 \equiv M_N$, hence experiment sensitive to $|U_\alpha|^2 = \sum_{I=\{2,3\}} |\Theta_{\alpha I}|^2$
- Look for heavy neutrino decay after their production, study kinematics of daughter particles. Sensitive to $U_\alpha^2 U_\beta^2$

Example:

meson decays $H^\pm \rightarrow l_\alpha^\pm N_I$, $BR \sim |\Theta_{\alpha I}|^2$
 HNL decays: $N_I \rightarrow l_\beta^\pm \pi^\mp$, $BR \sim |\Theta_{\beta I}|^2$

Experiment is sensitive to $U_\alpha^2 U_\beta^2$, where $|U_\alpha|^2 = \sum_{I=\{2,3\}} |\Theta_{\alpha I}|^2$

Selection criteria examples

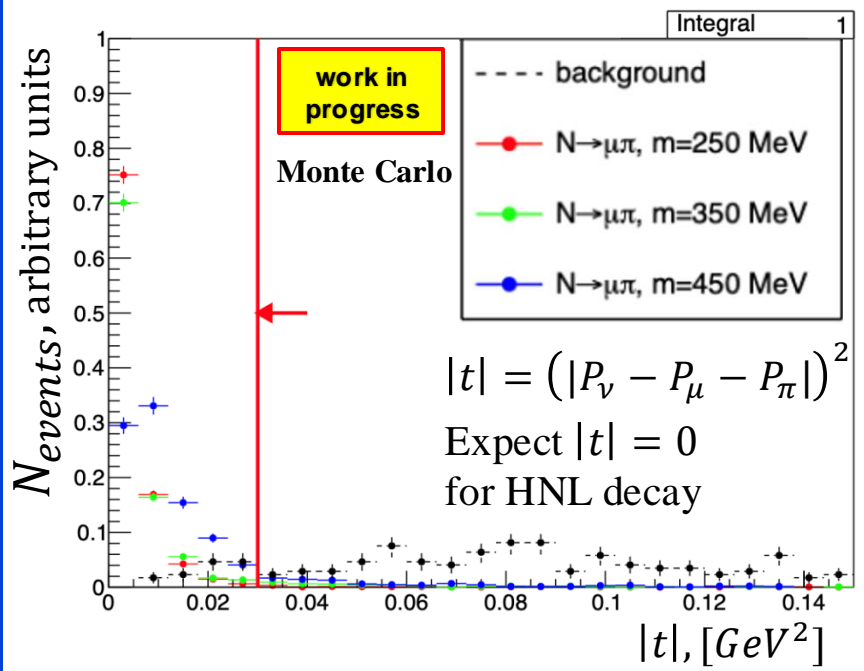
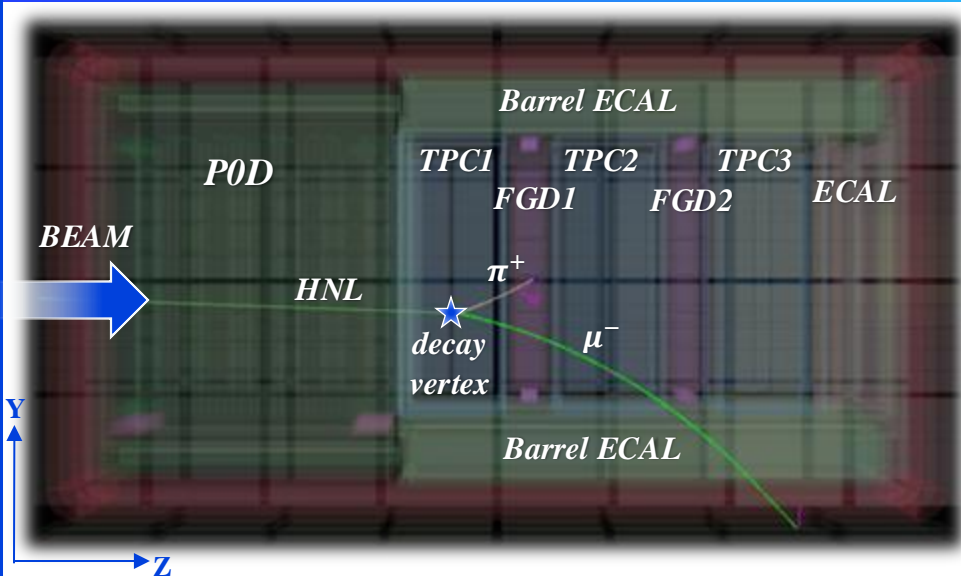


distance between tracks start positions in XY, [mm]

- Starting positions < 80 mm in XY plane
- Reconstructed vertex in TPC Fiducial Volume

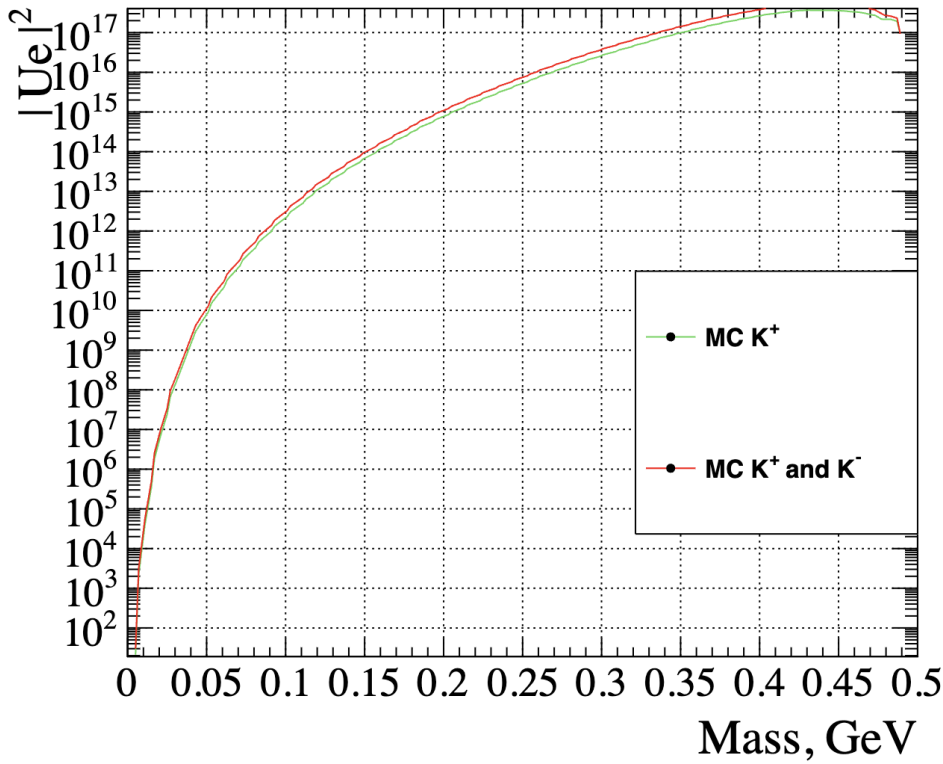
Monte Carlo simulation:

- Background – colored histogram
- Signal – black dots

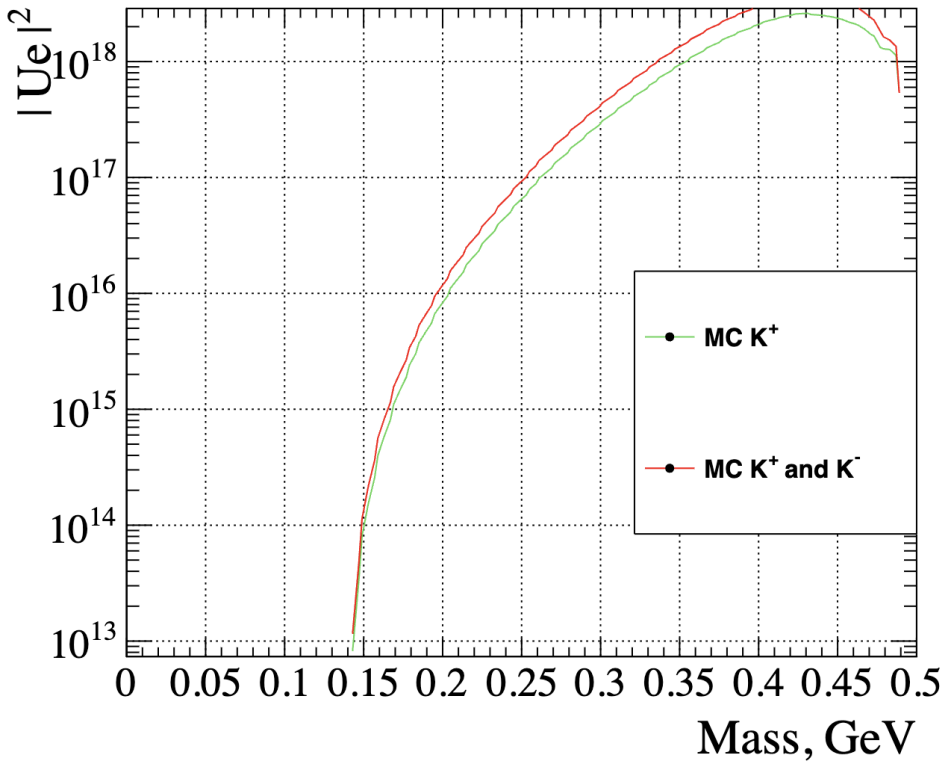


Number of signal events in TPCs (10^{21} POT normalization)

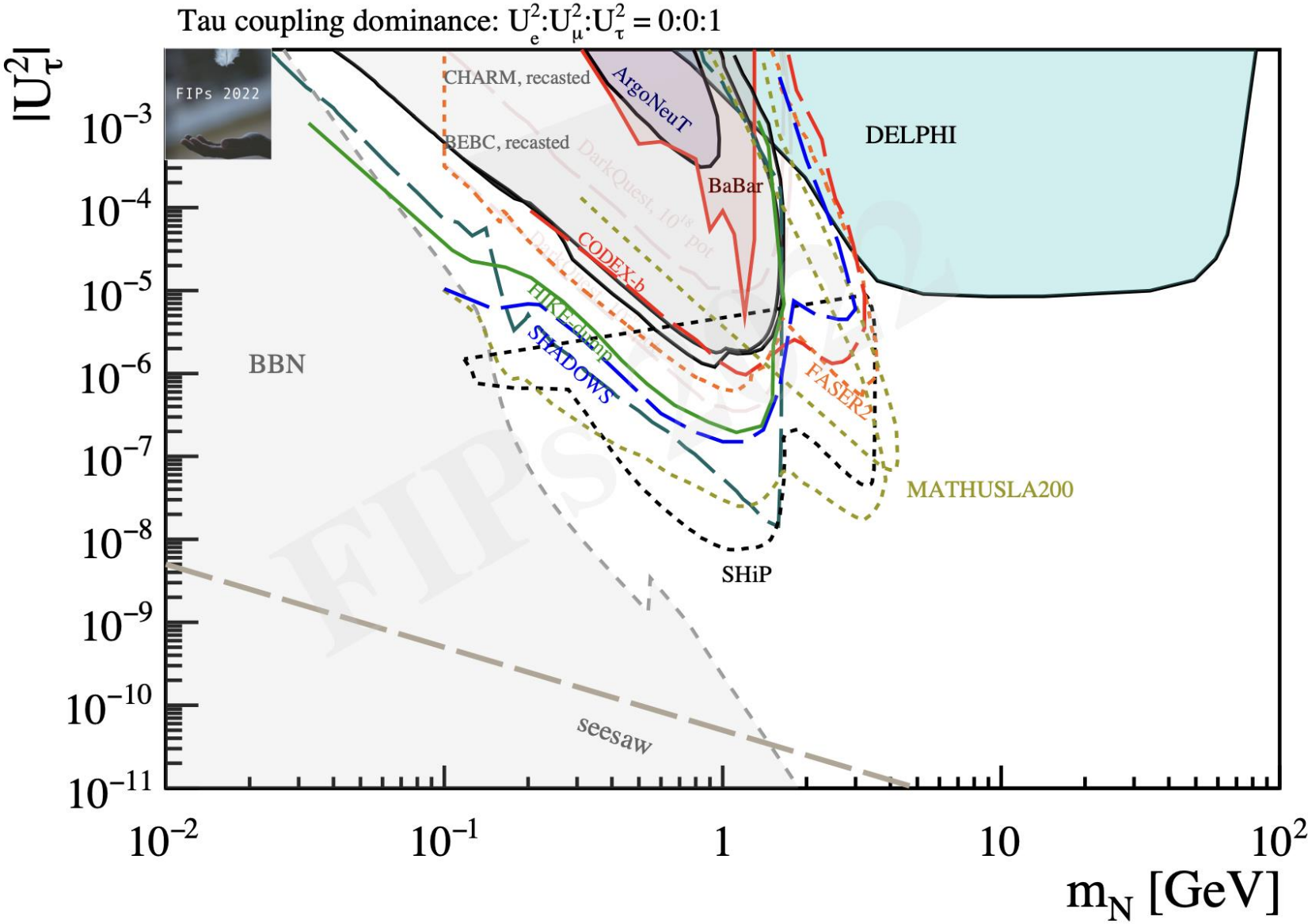
$K \rightarrow eN, N \rightarrow ee\nu_e$



$K \rightarrow eN, N \rightarrow e\pi$



Current Limits



T2K low mass limits

Argüelles, C.A., Foppiani, N. and Hostert, M., 2022. *Physical Review D*, 105(9), p.095006.

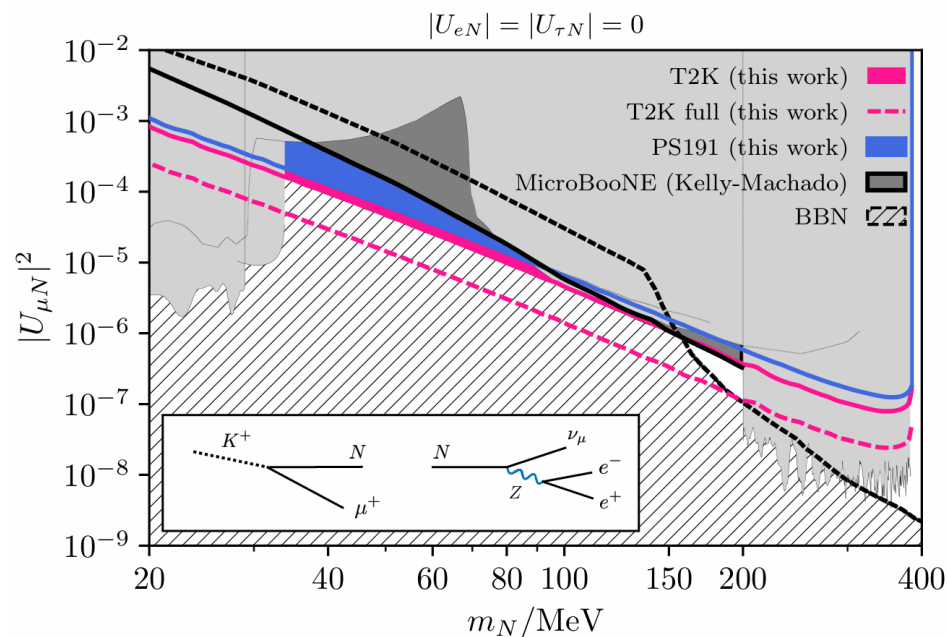
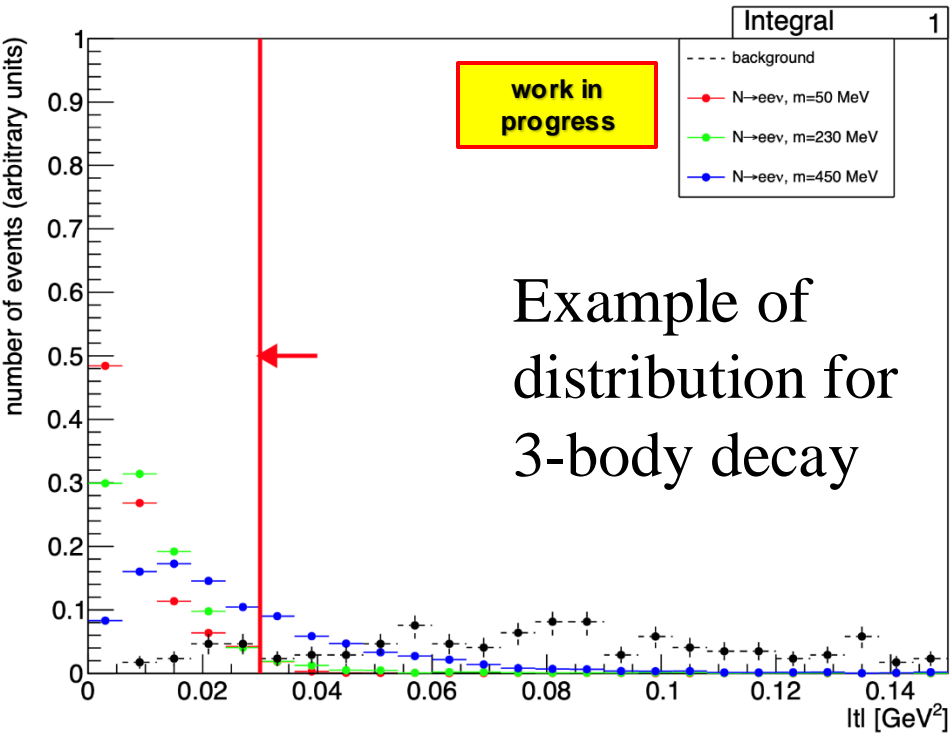


FIG. 2. Constraints on the mixing of HNLs with the muon flavor as a function of its mass for a minimal HNL model at 90% C.L. , considering only the production and decay mode: $K \rightarrow \nu_\mu N \rightarrow \nu_\mu(e^+e^-\bar{\nu}_\mu)$. For MicroBooNE, T2K, and PS191 the regions above the lines are excluded, while BBN excludes the region below the line. In gray we show other model-independent constraints. T2K full refers to the projected sensitivity of T2K with the final dataset, which will be collected by the end of the experiment.

The T2K collaboration searched for the DIF of HNLs in the three Gaseous Argon Time Projection Chambers (GARrTPC) of the off-axis near detector ND280 [52]. Because of the low density of the argon gas, this search has very small backgrounds from neutrino interactions, while the gas allows excellent tracking and identification of the e^+e^- final state. The analysis observes no event in all channels, and provides some of the strongest limits in the mass region $140 \leq m_N \leq 493$ MeV. We use their null results and extrapolate the experimental efficiencies to estimate the constraint on light HNLs with $20 \leq m_N \leq 140$ MeV. We neglect systematic uncertainties and backgrounds, as they provide negligible contributions to the limits. We reproduce the official T2K result above the pion mass with reasonable accuracy.

Selection criteria examples

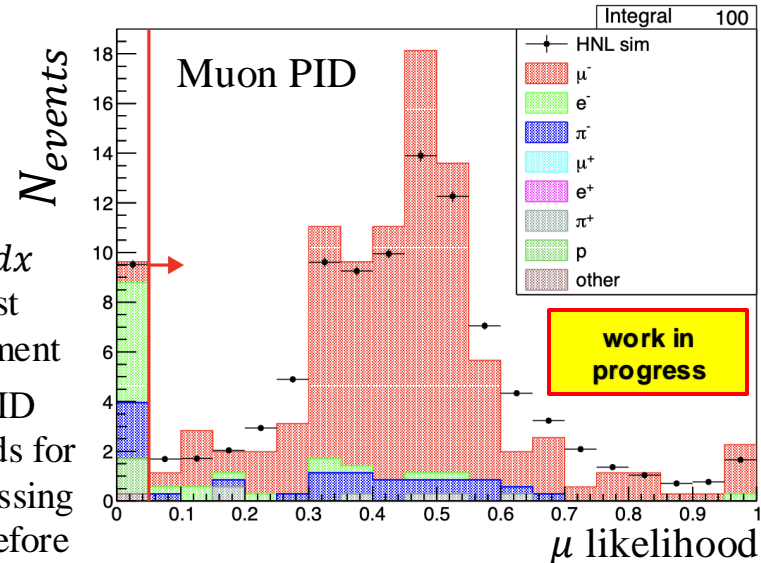


Example of kinematic cut:
4-momentum transfer

$$|t| = (|P_\nu - P_\mu - P_\pi|)^2$$

For HNL decay expect $|t| = 0$
as there no nucleus involved

Use dE/dx
for longest
TPC segment
Tracks' PID
likelihoods for
events passing
all cuts before



Simulation strategy

- Start from standard ν flux, apply event-by-event weighting, kinematics modification:
 1. $m_\nu \neq m_N$, hence change kinematics of parent meson decay
 2. $\text{BR}(K \rightarrow l_\alpha \nu_\alpha)$ changed to $\text{BR}(K \rightarrow l_\alpha N)$ assuming $U_\alpha = 1$
- Events in TPC gas fiducial volume to reduce background from ν interactions
- HNL decays simulated randomly along trajectories in TPCs

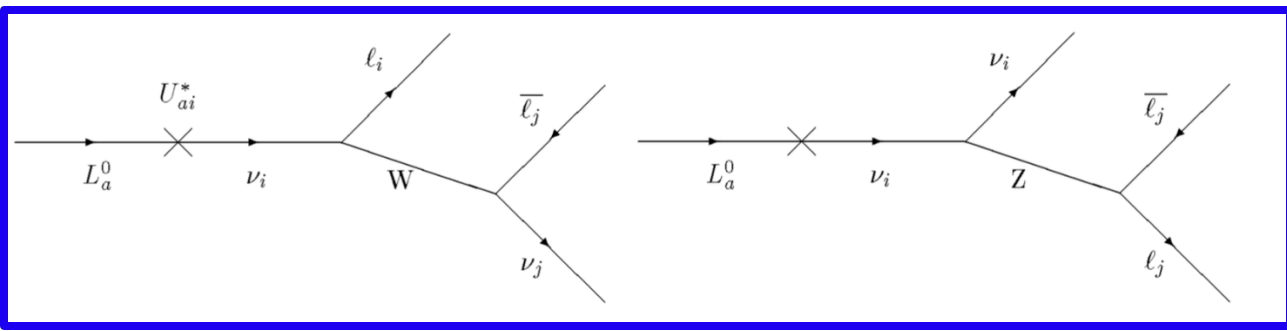
Fiducial Volume in TPCs:

	TPC 1	TPC 2	TPC 3
X	[-870; -20] or [20; 870]		
Y	[-930; 1030]		
Z	[-725; -162]	[634; 1197]	[1993; 2556]

Unused Ar	[-870, -20], [20, 870]	[-930, 1030]	[-784, -725]	[575, 634]	[1934, 1993]
-----------	------------------------	--------------	--------------	------------	--------------

Constraints on $|U_\tau|$

$N \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^- \nu_\mu$ (NC, CC) and $N \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^- \nu_{e,\tau}$ (NC) modes:



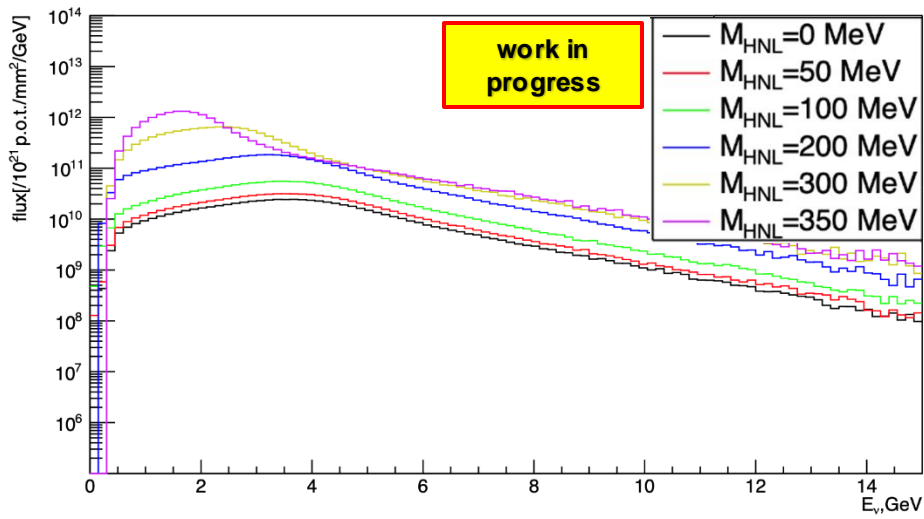
Feynman diagrams for HNL decay $N \rightarrow \mu\mu\nu$ via CC (left) and NC (right)

With NC any type of active neutrino can be produced (ν_e, ν_μ, ν_τ) \rightarrow sensitive to $|U_\tau|$,

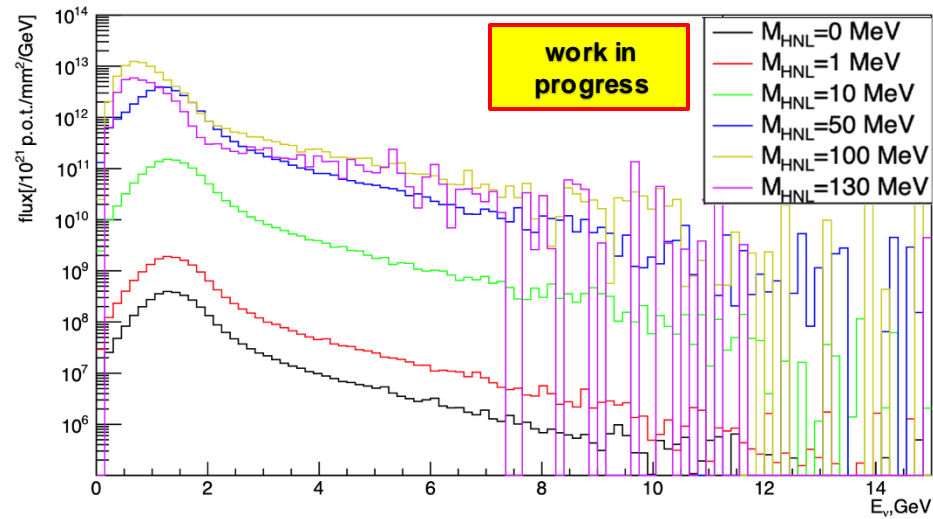
e.g. $K \rightarrow eN, N \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^- \nu_{e,\tau}$ sensitive to $(U_e)^2 (U_e^2 + U_\tau^2)$

Heavy neutrino flux

Flux from reaction $K^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ N$, FHC



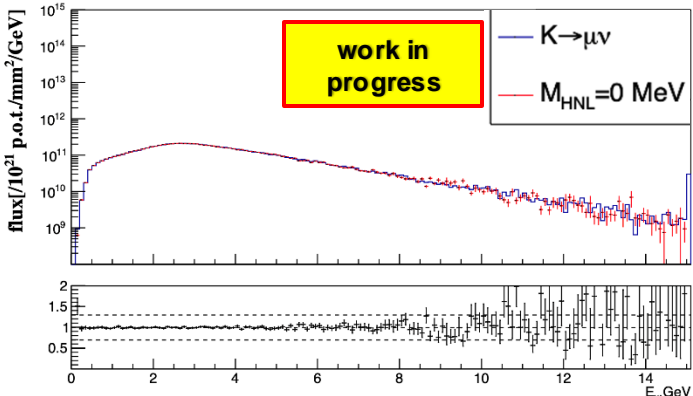
Flux from reaction $\pi^+ \rightarrow e^+ N$, FHC



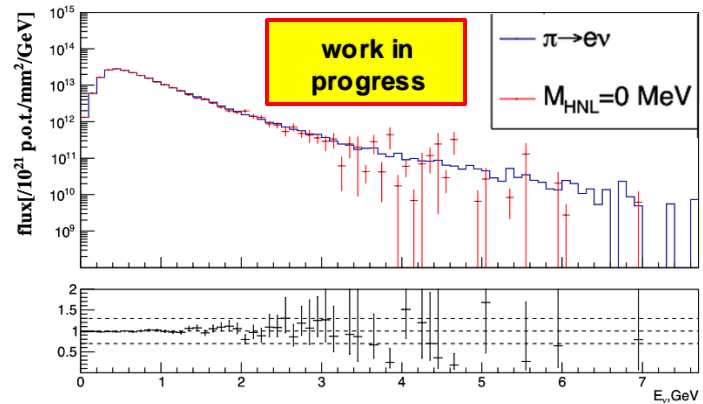
HNL flux at ND280 front plane for $K^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ N$ and $\pi^+ \rightarrow e^+ N$ modes for different HNL masses assuming $|U_e| = |U_\mu| = 1$

Cross check of weighting machinery

Flux from reaction $K^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ N$, FHC

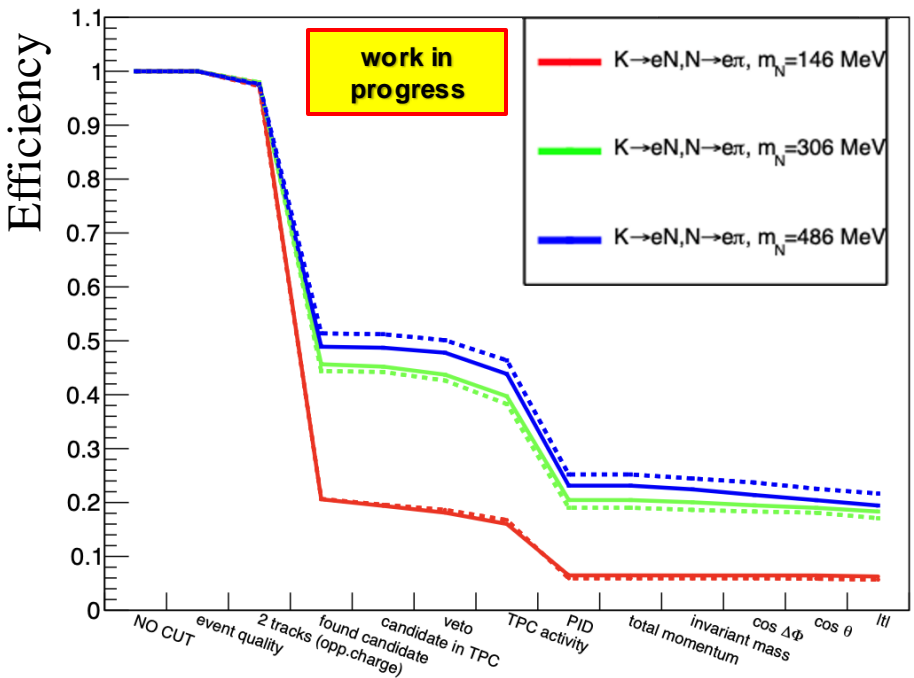


Flux from reaction $\pi^+ \rightarrow e^+ N$, FHC

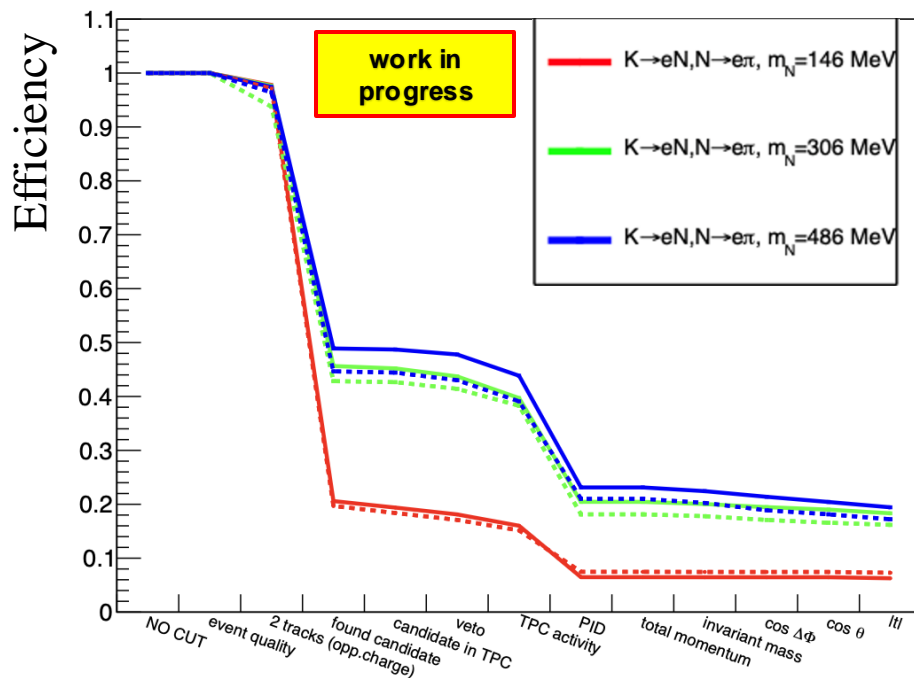


Comparison of HNL spectra for $M_{HNL} = 0 \text{ MeV}$ with active neutrino spectrum from $K^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ \nu$ and $\pi^+ \rightarrow e^+ \nu$ decays (assuming $|U_e| = |U_\mu| = 1$)

Efficiency vs selection criteria applied one-by-one

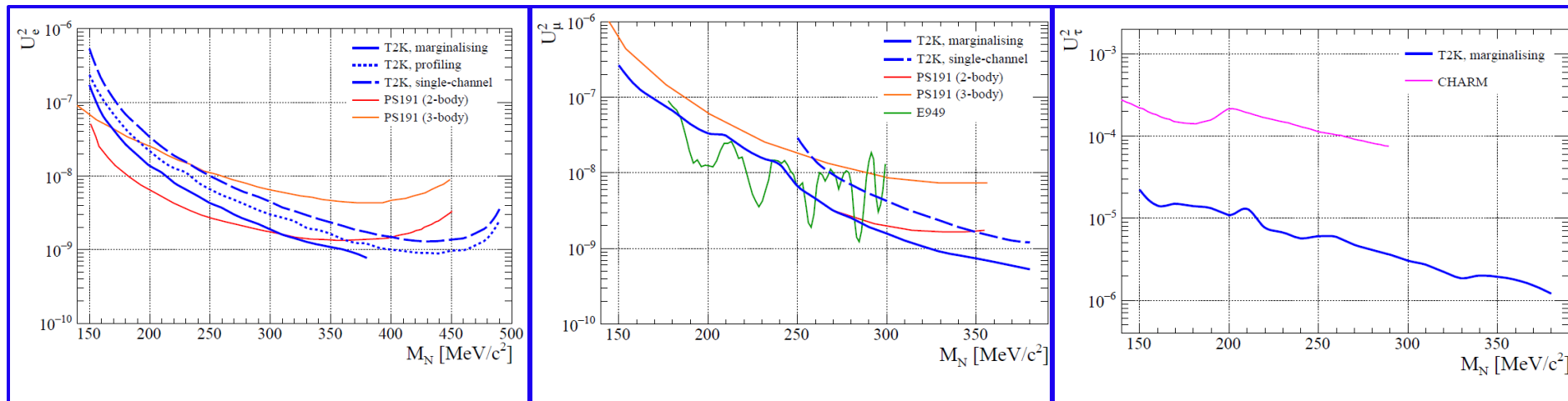


K^+ , FHC (solid)
 VS
 K^- , RHC (dashed)



FHC, K^+ (solid)
 VS
 FHC, K^- (dashed)

2019 results



90% upper limits on mixing elements as a function of HNL mass.
“Combined” and “single-channel” approaches.

Blue dashed lines – single-channel approach

(one single HNL production and decay mode considered at a time)

Blue solid lines – after marginalization over other mixing elements.

Top left plot: blue dotted line – profiling used ($U_{\mu}^2 = U_{\tau}^2 = 0$).

Limits compared to PS191, E949, CHARM. Figures taken from [*].

Expected sensitivity

U_α limits can be set with two approaches:

1. “Single-channel”: each HNL production & decay mode independently

For example, $\mu^\pm\pi^\mp$ channel can constrain:

- U_μ^2 considering only $K^\pm \rightarrow \mu^\pm N, N \rightarrow \mu^\pm\pi^\mp$
- or $U_e \times U_\mu$ considering only $K^\pm \rightarrow e^\pm N, N \rightarrow \mu^\pm\pi^\mp$

2. “Combined”: all HNL production & decay modes simultaneously
 - limits on U_α ($\alpha = e, \mu, \tau$) without assumptions about U_α hierarchy

Example:

- Using $N \rightarrow \mu\mu\nu$ mode, we can put a limit on $U_e\sqrt{U_e^2 + U_\tau^2}$ with assumption $U_\mu \ll U_e$, where contribution comes only from $K \rightarrow eN, N \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-\nu_{e,\tau}$
- With “combined” approach we can put limits on each individual U_α ($\alpha = e, \mu, \tau$) without assumptions about U_α hierarchy

Expected sensitivity

“Combined” approach:

For channel A the contribution of mode i is characterized by:

- expected number of decays Φ_i assuming $U_e^2 = U_\mu^2 = U_\tau^2 = 1$
- selection efficiency of decays in current channel, $\varepsilon_{A,i}$
- actual values of $U_{e,\mu,\tau}^2$ via the factor $f_i = U_\alpha^2 \sum U_{\beta_j}^2$

$\alpha, \beta_j \in \{e, \mu, \tau\}$, α – flavor in HNL production, β_j – flavors in HNL decay

Expected number of events N_A in channel A (with background B_A):

$$N_A = B_A + \sum_i \varepsilon_{A,i} \times f_i(U_e^2, U_\mu^2, U_\tau^2) \times \Phi_i$$

Bayesian approach. Likelihood for observed number of events n_A^{obs}

$$L = \prod_A \text{Poisson}(n_A^{obs}, N_A)$$

PyMC Markov Chain method used for integration.

90% domains are defined by profiling/marginalizing over other mixing elements.

Flux systematics:

20% for K^\pm and 10% for π^\pm [*]

preliminary estimation!

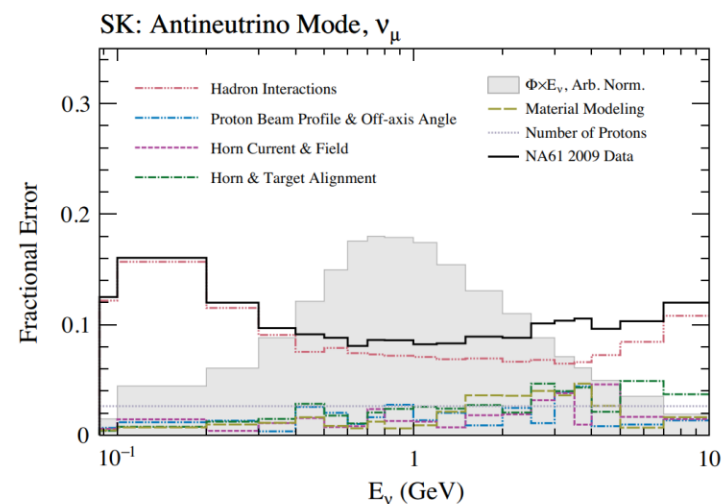
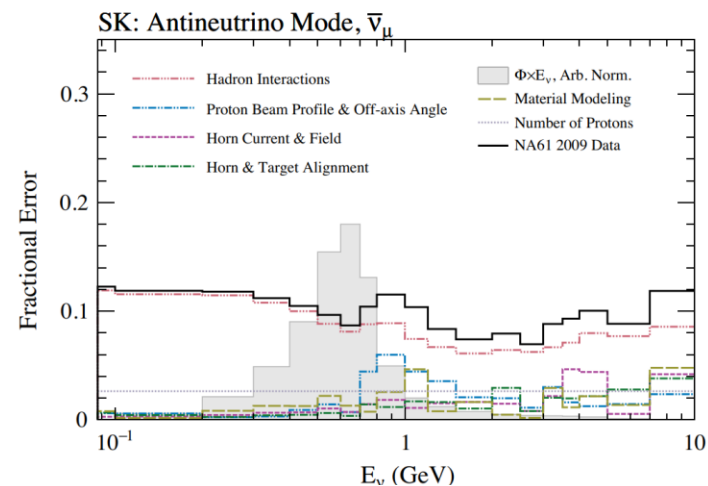
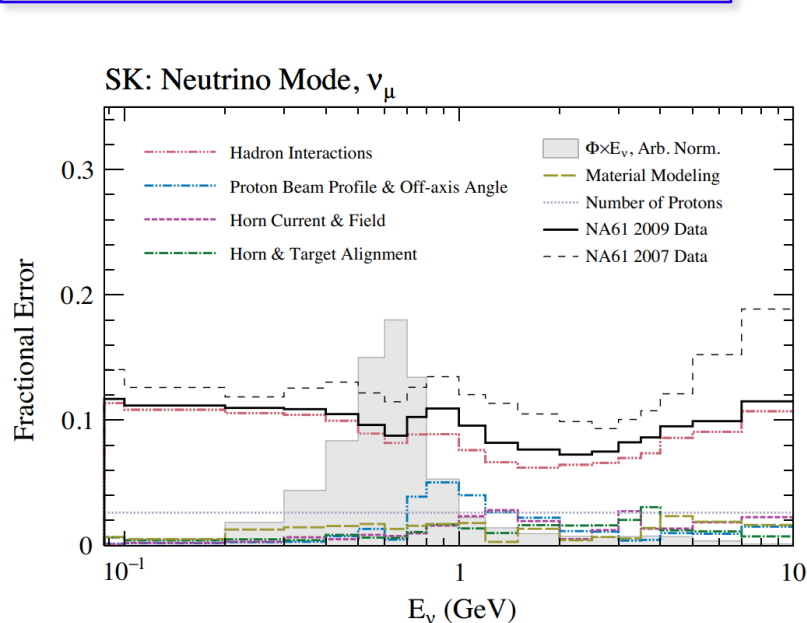


FIG. 2. The fractional systematic uncertainty on the ν_μ flux at SK in FHC mode (top), on the right-sign $\bar{\nu}_\mu$ flux at SK in RHC mode (middle), and on the wrong-sign ν_μ flux at SK in RHC mode (bottom). The solid black line shows the current total fractional uncertainty (NA61/SHINE 2009 data), while the dashed black line in the top panel shows the fractional uncertainty from an earlier flux prediction (NA61/SHINE 2007 data).

Selection criteria

- Required 2 close opposite charge tracks in TPC with extrapolated vertex in TPC Fiducial Volume
- Veto cuts: no activity in detector upstream to TPC where decay occurred (e.g. FGD1 for TPC2)
- No additional good quality tracks in the TPC
- Analysis branches: $\mu^\pm\pi^\mp$, $e^-\pi^+$, $e^+\pi^-$, $\mu^+\mu^-$, e^+e^-
- PID cuts: use TPC dE/dx to build corresponding PID likelihoods (e.g. \mathcal{L}_μ , \mathcal{L}_π , \mathcal{L}_e)
- For $N \rightarrow \mu\mu\nu$ use ECAL PID
- Kinematic cuts:
 - total HNL momentum
 - angle between HNL daughter tracks
 - invariant mass
 - polar angle (between HNL direction and Z-axis)
 - 4-momentum transfer $|t| \equiv (P_\nu - P_\mu - P_\pi)^2$

$$|U_i|_{limit}^2 = \sqrt{\frac{U_n}{N_{events}}}$$

- Feldman-Cousins:

U_n – 90% C. L. Poisson limit for n observed events

N_{events} – expected number of signal events assuming $|U|^2 = 1$

- Highland-Cousins:

$$U_n = U_{n0} \left\{ 1 + \frac{E_n \sigma_{Acc}^2}{2} \left(1 + \left(\frac{E_n \sigma_{Acc}}{2} \right)^2 \right) \right\}$$

U_{n0} – 90% C. L. Poisson limit for n observed events;

σ_{Acc} – detector acceptance error

$$E_n = U_{n0} - n$$

- Bayesian

- $p(s|n) \propto \int_0^\infty db \int_0^\infty d\eta \mathcal{L}(s, \eta, b|n) \pi_S(\eta) \pi_B(b)$

- $\mathcal{L}(s, \eta, b|n) = \frac{(s\eta+b)^n}{n!} e^{-s\eta-b}$

- $\int_{s_{low}}^{s_{sup}} p(s|n) ds = 1 - \alpha$