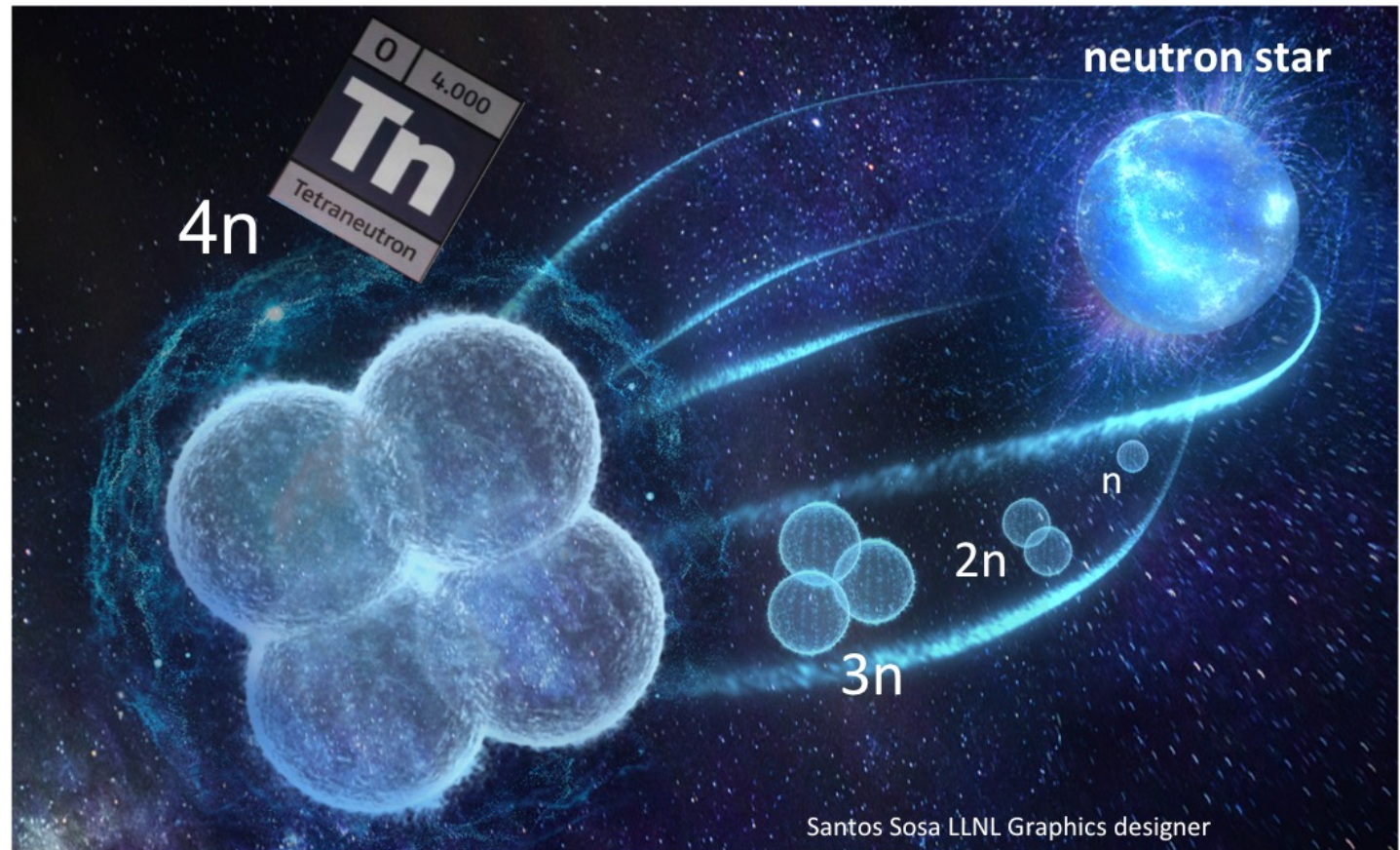


Tetraneutron and its isospin analogues

A. M. Shirokov

Skobeltsyn Institute of nuclear physics, Moscow state University



Neutron & neutron star
Is there anything in between?

Santos Sosa LLNL Graphics designer

FBS-2024, Хабаровск, 2 октября 2024

Tetraneutron and its isospin analogues

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Neutron & neutron star

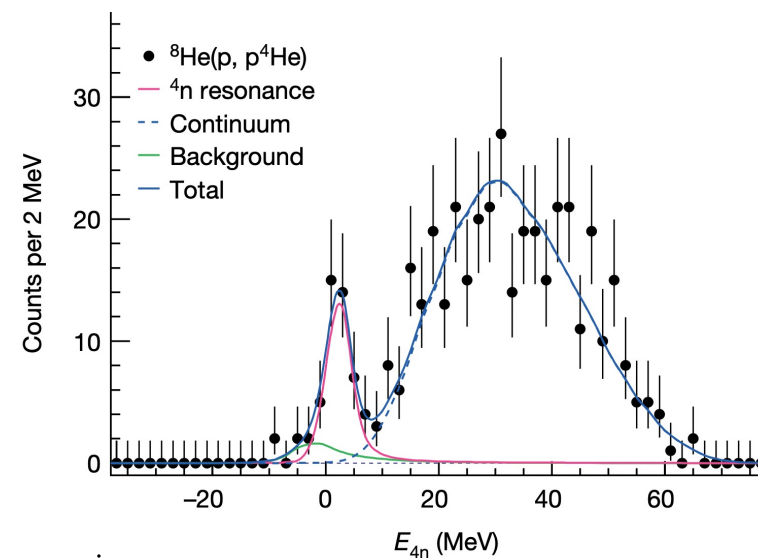
Is there anything in between?

Тетранейтрон:

- Система из 4 нейтронов. Нестабильна, т. е. представляет собой **резонанс**: образуется на короткое время $\sim (3.8 \pm 0.8) \times 10^{-22}$ с и распадается. Время жизни резонанса t обратно пропорционально его ширине Γ : $t \sim \frac{1}{\Gamma}$.
- Резонанс тетранейтрона предсказан нами в 2014 г. Впервые наблюдался с малой статистикой (4 события) в 2016 г.; окончательно подтвержден в эксперименте с хорошей статистикой в 2022 г.

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Изотопический спин (изоспин):

- Изоспин T и его проекция T_z – характеристики элементарных частиц и ядер
- Нуклоны: $T = \frac{1}{2}$; причем протоны: $T_z = +\frac{1}{2}$, нейтроны: $T_z = -\frac{1}{2}$
- Сложение изоспинов аналогично сложению моментов в квантовой механике
- Ядра $A = Z + N$, $T_z = \frac{1}{2}(Z - N)$, $T \geq |T_z|$
- Изоспиновые аналоги – состояния разных ядер с одинаковыми A и T

Пример, интересный для нашего обсуждения:

${}^4\text{H}$: $A = 4, Z = 1, N = 3$:

Binding energy: 5.604 MeV

Spectrum: $2^-, T = 1$ – g.s., $E_x = 0$

$1^-, T = 1, E_x = 0.310$ MeV, $\Gamma = 6.73$ MeV

$0^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.080$ MeV, $\Gamma = 8.92$ MeV

$1^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.830$ MeV, $\Gamma = 12.99$ MeV

${}^4\text{Li}$: $A = 4, Z = 3, N = 1$:

Binding energy: 4.619 MeV

Spectrum: $2^-, T = 1$ – g.s., $E_x = 0$

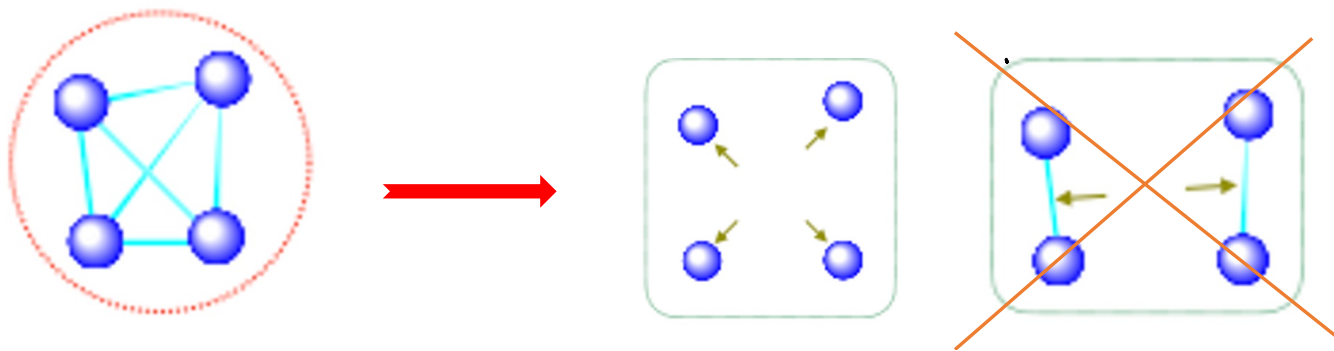
$1^-, T = 1, E_x = 0.320$ MeV, $\Gamma = 7.35$ MeV

$0^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.080$ MeV, $\Gamma = 9.35$ MeV

$1^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.850$ MeV, $\Gamma = 13.51$ MeV

Демократический распад:

- Распад тетранейтрона – **демократический распад**, т. е. никакая подсистема не имеет связанных состояний.
- Демократические распады на 3 частицы исследовались теоретически и экспериментально; с демократическим распадом резонанса на 4 частицы мы сталкиваемся впервые, теория такого распада не разработана.



Тетранейтрон

- Демократический распад (нет связанных подсистем)
- Метод гиперсферических гармоник
- В 3-мерном пространстве число переменных для системы 4 нейтронов $3 \cdot 4 - 3_{\text{ц.м.}} = 9$; вводится длина ρ в 9-мерном пространстве и 8 углов:

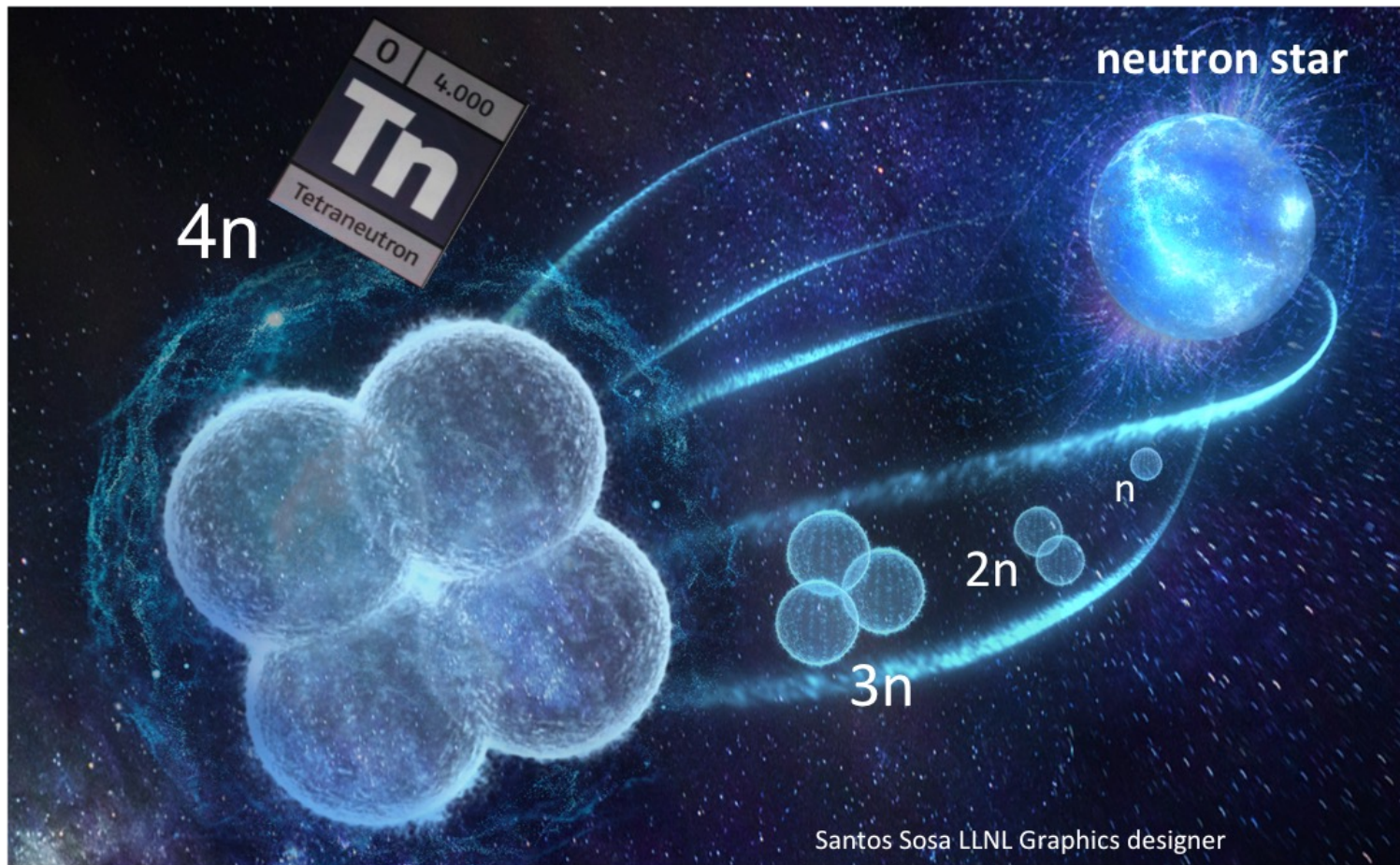
$$\Psi(\mathbf{r}_1, \mathbf{r}_2, \dots, \mathbf{r}_A) = \Phi(\rho) \mathcal{Y}_{k\nu}(\Omega), \quad \rho = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^A (\mathbf{r}_i - \mathbf{R})^2},$$

$$\Phi_{nK} \equiv \Phi_n^{\mathcal{L}}(\rho) = \rho^{-(3A-4)/2} \varphi_{nK}(\rho), \quad \mathcal{L} = K + \frac{3A-6}{2};$$

$$\frac{\hbar^2}{2m} \left[-\frac{d^2}{d^2\rho} + \frac{\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{L}+1)}{\rho^2} \right] \Phi_n^{\mathcal{L}}(\rho) + \sum_{\mathcal{L}'} V_{\mathcal{L},\mathcal{L}'} \Phi_n^{\mathcal{L}'}(\rho) = E \Phi_n^{\mathcal{L}}(\rho).$$

- Приближение: учтен открытый канал распад а с $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}_{\min} = K_{\min} + 3 = 5$.
- Но все возможные каналы учтены в МОБИК как закрытые каналы

Чем интересен тетранейтрон?



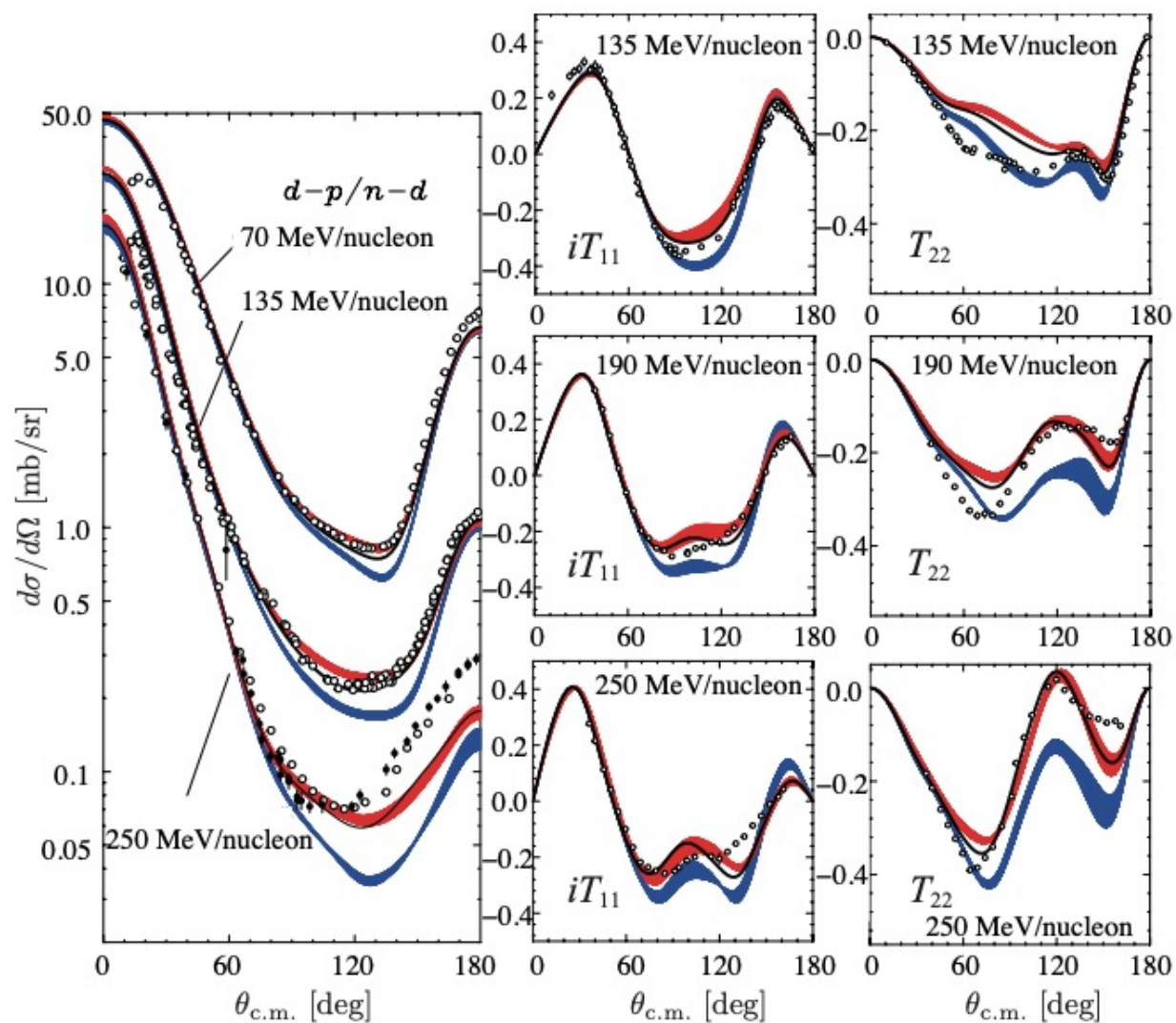
Neutron & neutron star
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Чем интересен тетранейтрон?

- Экспериментальные поиски тетранейтрона велись около 60 лет, окончательно обнаружен резонанс тетранейтрона в 2022 г.
- Граница стабильности ядер, ядра на границе стабильности и вблизи ее, в том числе и за ее пределами
- Нейтронная материя, в том числе и с небольшим числом нейтронов
- Взаимодействие нейтронов друг с другом, в том числе и трехчастичные получено только в разных моделях (есть данные по pp - и pr -рассеянию, прямых данных по nn -взаимодействию нет)

N-d рассеяние

- Из статьи Kimiko Sekiguchi в трудах NTSE-2018



History of the tetra-neutron studies

- 1963: First experiments: ${}^4\text{He}(\pi^-, \pi^+)4n$ reaction and searches in nuclear fission – no bound, no resonant states found
- Around 1980: Theory of democratic decays (no one subsystem has a bound state) into 3 and 4 fragments suggested (R. Jibuti, R. Kezerashvili, K. Sigua et al)
- End of 1980s: Experiments with heavy ions: ${}^7\text{Li}({}^{11}\text{B}, {}^{14}\text{O}) {}^4n$, ${}^7\text{Li}({}^7\text{Li}, {}^{10}\text{C}) {}^4n$, etc.
- 2002 г.: F. M. Marqués et al., Phys. Rev. C **65**, 044006 (2002) – ${}^{12}\text{C}({}^{14}\text{Be}, {}^{10}\text{Be}) {}^4n$ reaction: [bound tetra-neutron discovered \(6 events\)!](#)

History of the tetraneutron studies

- 2002 г.: F. M. Marqués et al., Phys. Rev. C **65**, 044006 (2002) –
 $^{12}\text{C}(^{14}\text{Be}, ^{10}\text{Be}) ^4n$ reaction: bound tetraneutron discovered (6 events)!

History of the tetraneutron studies

- 2002 г.: F. M. Marqués et al., Phys. Rev. C **65**, 044006 (2002) – $^{12}\text{C}(^{14}\text{Be}, ^{10}\text{Be}) ^4n$ reaction: *Was the bound tetraneutron really found?*

No confirmation in later experiments

- This work give rise to a number of theoretical studies
- **Conclusion:** bound tetraneutron is impossible with modern NN interactions
- Attempt to create a tree-nucleon force with isospin $T = \frac{3}{2}$ to bind the tetraneutron
- **Conclusion:** it destroys description of nuclei with $A \geq 4$

History of the tetraneutron studies

- 2002 г.: F. M. Marqués et al., Phys. Rev. C **65**, 044006 (2002) – $^{12}\text{C}(^{14}\text{Be}, ^{10}\text{Be}) ^4n$ reaction: *Was the bound tetraneutron really found?*

No confirmation in later experiments

- Detailed studies of a possibility to obtain a low-energy tetraneutron resonant state, narrow enough to be measured experimentally. Various NN and NNN interactions used, various approaches explored (Faddeev –Yakubovsky equations, Gamow shell model, complex scaling, analytical continuation of coupling constant, etc.)
- **Conclusion:** no narrow resonances found
- **Note:** theory of the decay in 4 fragments is not well-developed; really, we had no experience with such decays

History of the tetraneutron studies

Eur. Phys. J. A **19**, 187–201 (2004)
DOI 10.1140/epja/i2003-10124-1

**THE EUROPEAN
PHYSICAL JOURNAL A**

Broad states beyond the neutron drip line

Examples of ${}^5\text{H}$ and ${}^4\text{n}$

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² Russian Research Center “The Kurchatov Institute”, 123182 Moscow, Russia

³ Department of Physics, University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 7XH, UK

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Communicated by G. Orlandini

Abstract. Theoretical studies of broad states in the few-body systems beyond the neutron drip line have been performed. We introduce a theoretical model which allows to incorporate the initial structure of colliding nuclei, reaction mechanism, few-body effects and final-state interactions in studies of broad unbound states. The model is directly related to the sudden-removal approximation for high-energy knock-out or break-up reactions. We apply this model to qualitative studies of some general properties of broad few-body states including correlations for emitted fragments. The theoretical ideas are illustrated mainly using

History of the tetraneutron studies

L. Grigorenko, N. Timofeyuk, M. Zhukov, Eur. Phys. J. A 19, 187 (2004)

Theoretical study of ${}^8\text{He}(p; {}^4\text{He}, p) {}^4n$ reaction. Fast knock-out of ${}^4\text{He}$ from ${}^8\text{He}$, Schrödinger equation with a source:

$$(H_4 - E)\Psi_4^{(+)} = F_{4n}^0,$$
$$\Psi_4^{(+)} = G^+(E)F_{4n}^0.$$

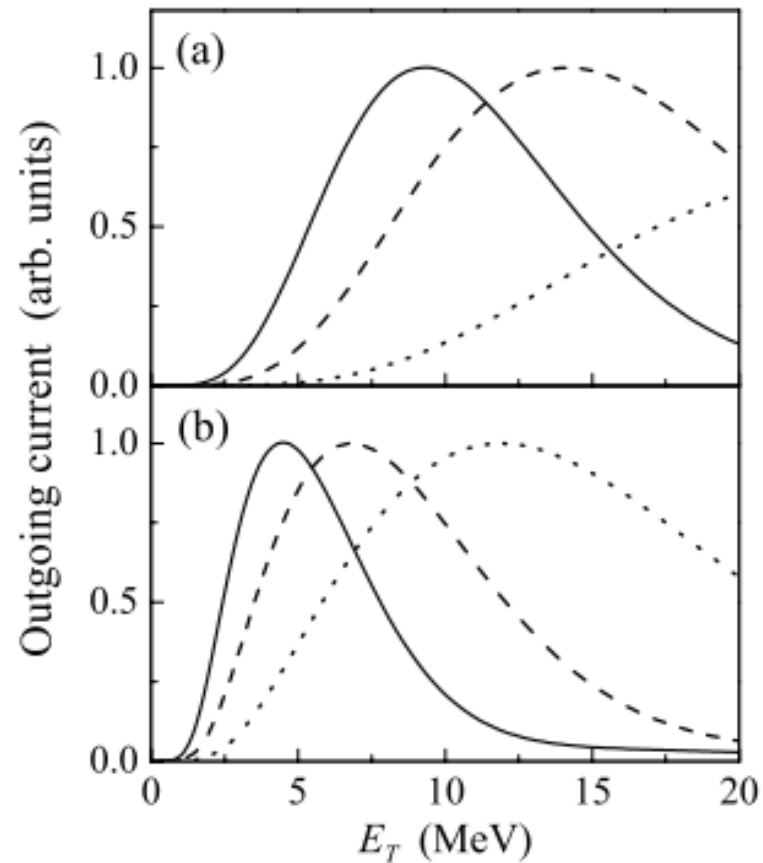
F_{4n}^0 is a wave function of 4 neutrons in the initial ${}^8\text{He}$ outside the ${}^4\text{He}$ core described within COSMA, $\Psi_4^{(+)}$ is the 4n wave function in the Hyperspherical approach. There is no 4n resonance; however, the initial distribution of 4 neutrons in ${}^8\text{He}$ within this mechanism produce a wide bump in the cross section at large energies.

History of the tetraneutron studies

L. Grigorenko, N. Timofeyuk, M. Zhukov, Eur. Phys. J. A 19, 187 (2004)

${}^8\text{He}(p; {}^4\text{He}, p) {}^4n$ reaction

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History of the tetraneutron studies

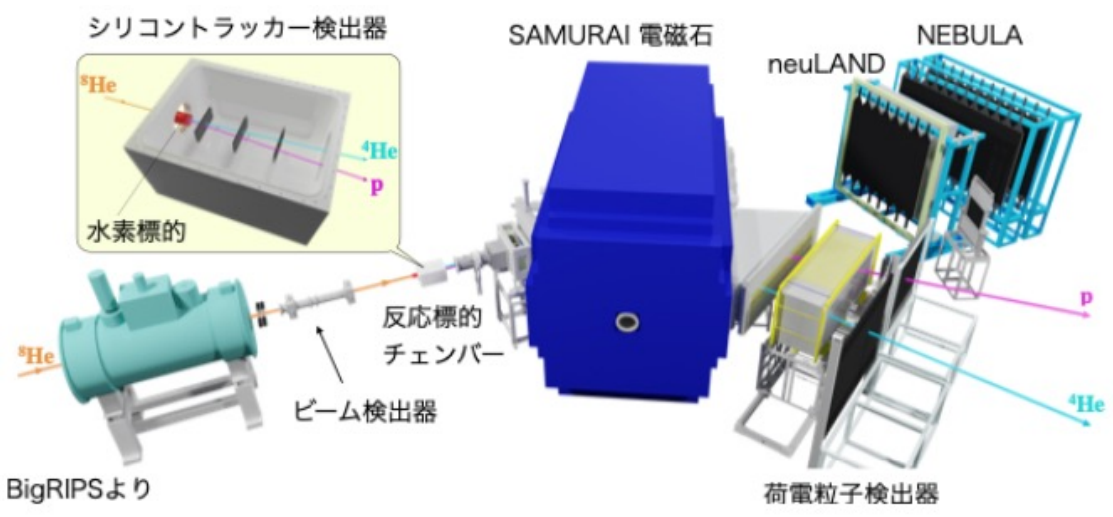
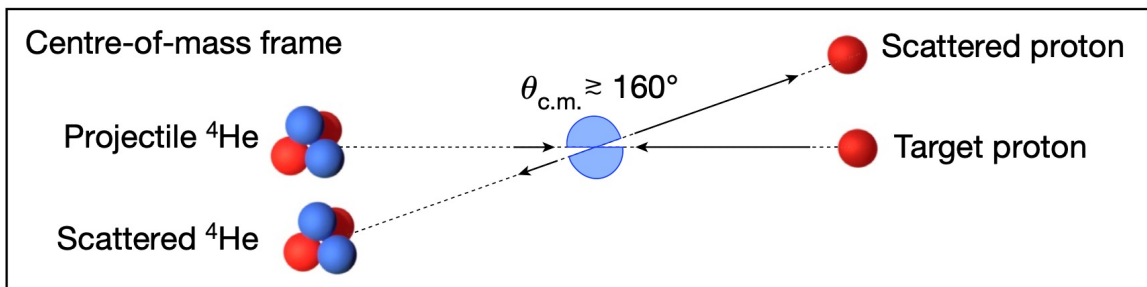
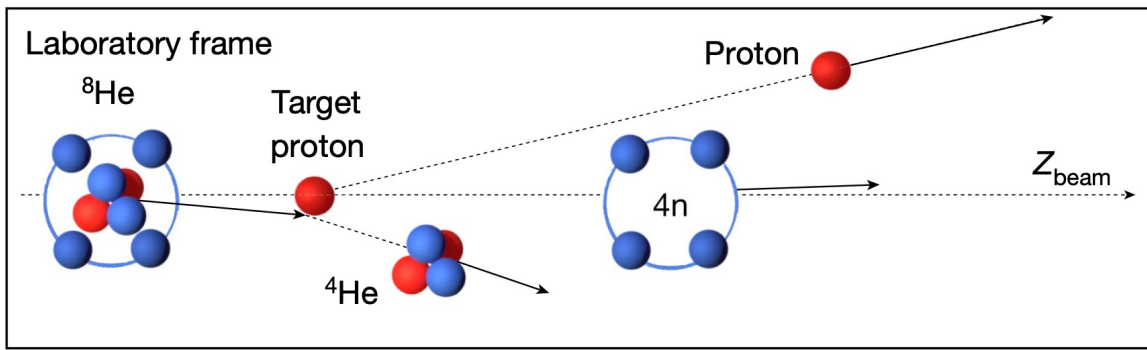
- 2016:
- Japanese experiment ${}^4\text{He}({}^8\text{He}, 2\alpha){}^4n$ (K. Kisamori, et al., Phys Rev. Lett. **116**, 052501 (2016)): tetraneutron resonance (**marginal statistics: 4 events**), $E_r = 0.83 \pm 0.65(\text{stat}) \pm 1.25(\text{syst}) \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma < 2.6 \text{ MeV}$.
- 2016:
- First description (prediction) of the tetraneutron resonance (A. M. Shirokov, G. Papadimitriou, A. I. Mazur, I. A. Mazur, R. Roth, J. P. Vary, Phys. Rev. Lett. **117**, 182502 (2016)): $E_r = 0.844 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma = 1.378 \text{ MeV}$. No-core shell model plus SS-HORSE method for resonance description, democratic decay, JISP16 NN interaction
- **Publicity, mass media (Phys.org, International Business Times, etc.)**

Our later (preliminary) tetra-neutron studies

- **2016:** Our description (prediction) of the tetra-neutron resonance (A. Shirokov et al, AIP Conf. Proc. **2038** (2018)): $E_r = 0.98$ MeV, $\Gamma = 1.6$ MeV. No-core shell model plus SS-HORSE method for resonance description, democratic decay, Daejeon16 NN interaction
- Democratic decay experiences high centrifugal barrier $\frac{\mathcal{L}(\mathcal{L} + 1)}{\rho^2}$ with $\mathcal{L} = \mathcal{L}_{\min} = K_{\min} + 3 = 5$.
- We can expect that system will prefer to arrange dynamically a 2-body channel $n + {}^3n$ with trineutron resonance or ${}^2n + {}^2n$ channel
- In this cases we get the 4n resonance at slightly smaller energy of E_r and essentially smaller width Γ . Hence 2-body channels with smaller width will be suppressed and system will decay democratically into 4 neutrons.

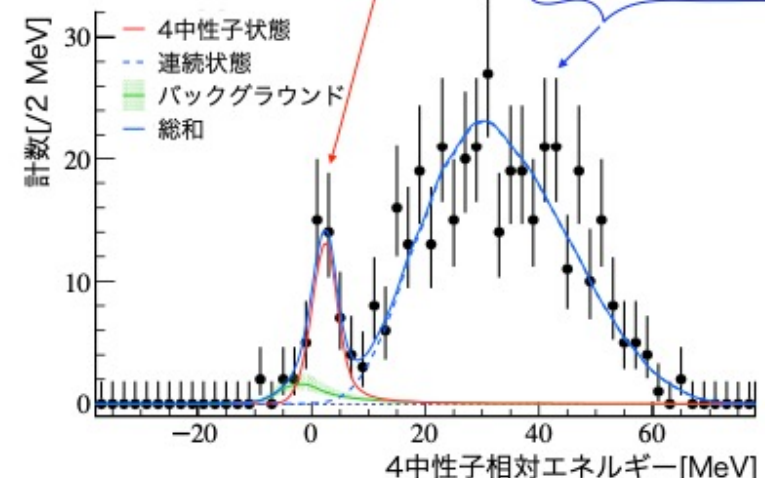
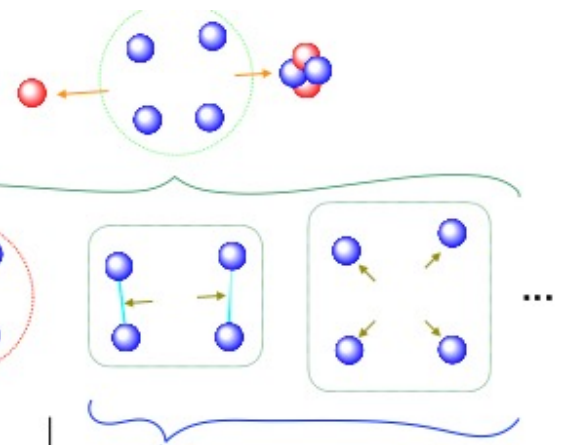
History of the tetraneutron studies

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- **2019:** One more theoretical prediction: Gamow shell model with SRG-softened chiral EFT NN interaction (J. G. Li, N. Michel, B. S. Hu, W. Zuo, F. R. Xu, Phys. Rev. C **100**, 054313 (2019)): $E_r = 2.64 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma = 2.38 \text{ MeV}$
- **2022:** Darmstadt experiment ${}^1\text{H}({}^8\text{He}, p\alpha){}^4n$ (M. Duer et al., Nature **606**, 678 (2022)): statistically approved resonance $E_r = 2.37 \pm 0.38(\text{stat}) \pm 0.44(\text{syst}) \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma = 1.75 \pm 0.22(\text{stat}) \pm 0.30(\text{syst}) \text{ MeV}$.



Experiment

$^8\text{He}(p,p^4\text{He})$ 反応結果
とその解釈



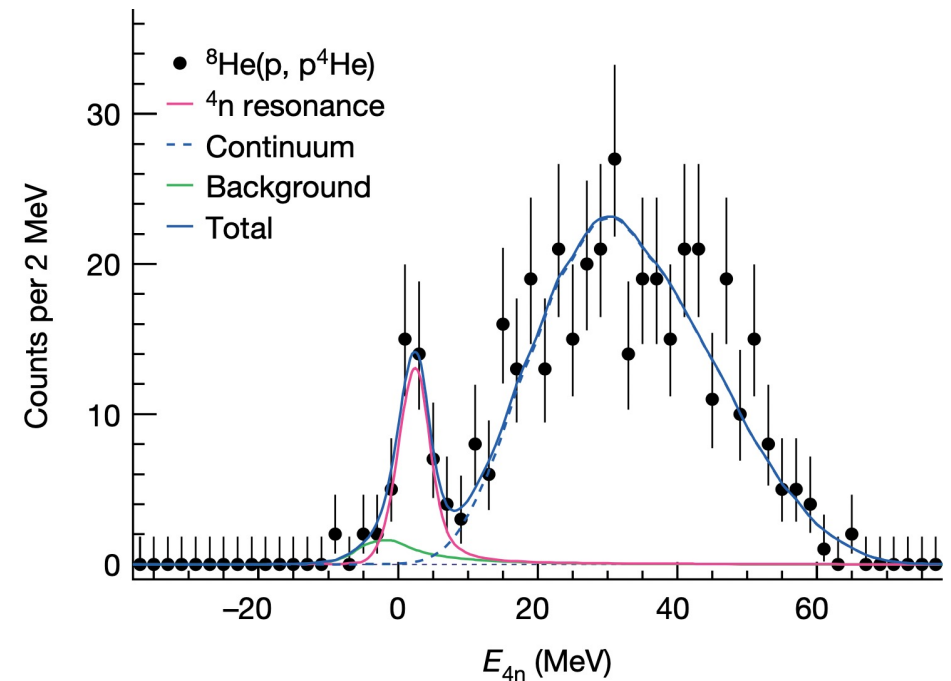
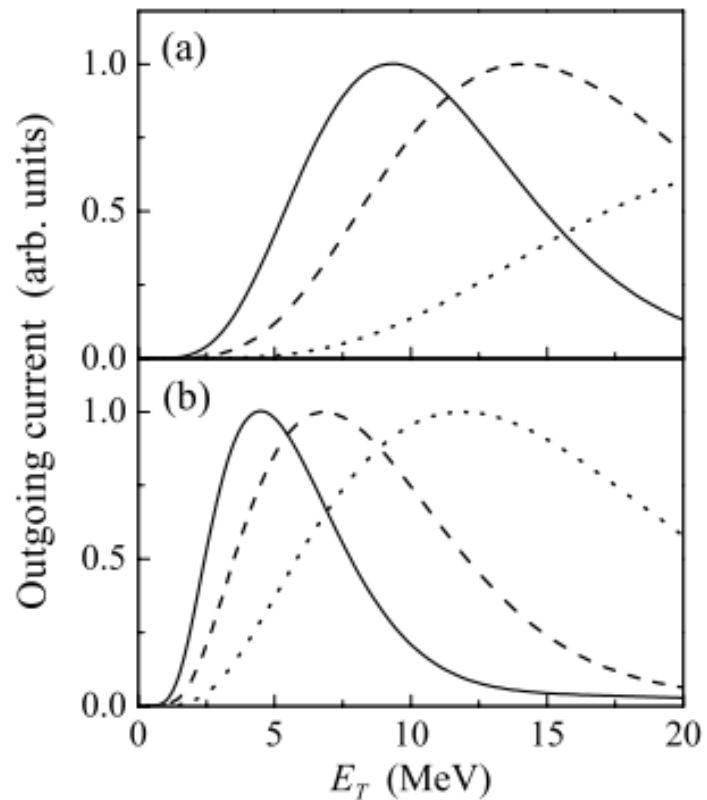
$E_r = 2.37 \pm 0.38(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.44(\text{sys.}) \text{ MeV},$
 $\Gamma = 1.75 \pm 0.22(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.30(\text{sys.}) \text{ MeV.}$

corresponding lifetime of $(3.8 \pm 0.8) \times 10^{-22} \text{ s.}$

History of the tetraneutron studies

L. Grigorenko, N. Timofeyuk, M. Zhukov, Eur. Phys. J. A 19, 187 (2004)

${}^8\text{He}(p; {}^4\text{He}, p) {}^4n$ reaction

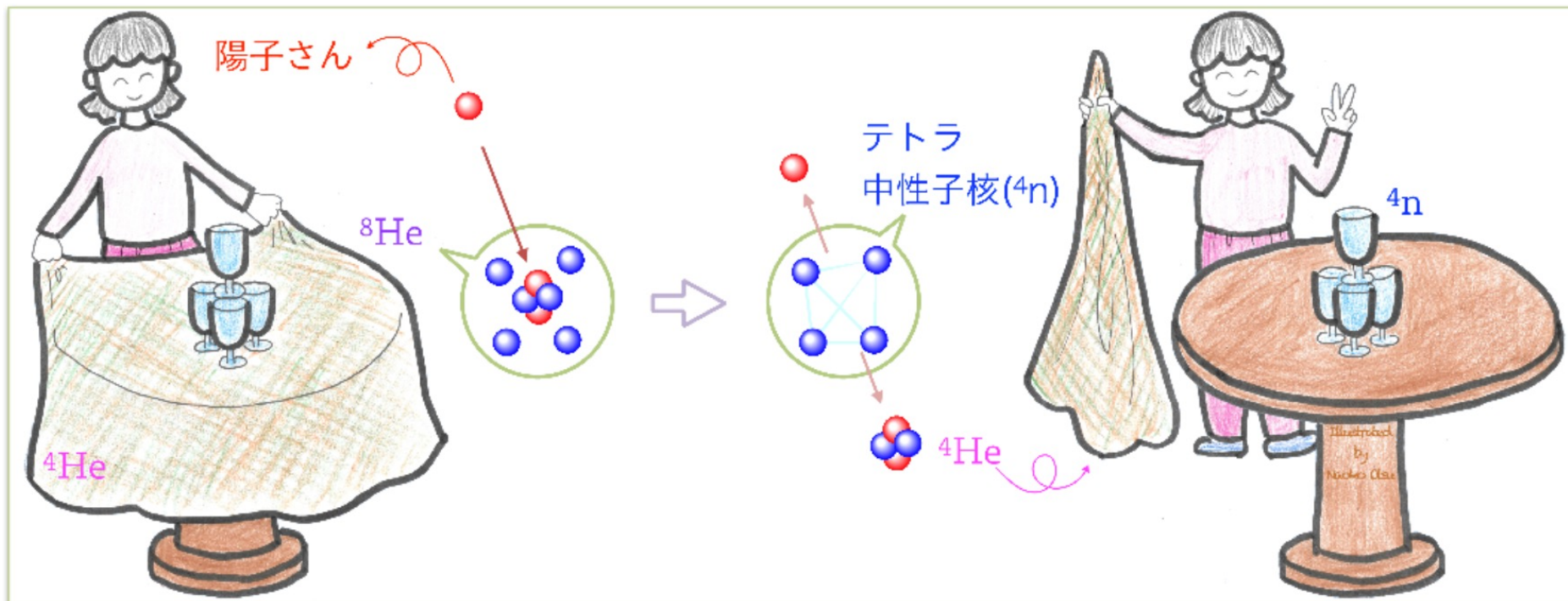


Blue dashed curve in 2022 experiment is taken from Grigorenko et al, 2004

PRESS RELEASE

2022年6月22日

理化学研究所、ダルムシュタット工科大学
東京大学大学院理学系研究科、東京工業大学



科学道

Dreams to the Future

テトラ中性子核を生成する手法のイメージ

Проблемы описания тетранейтрона

Существование резонанса тетранейтрона подтверждено.

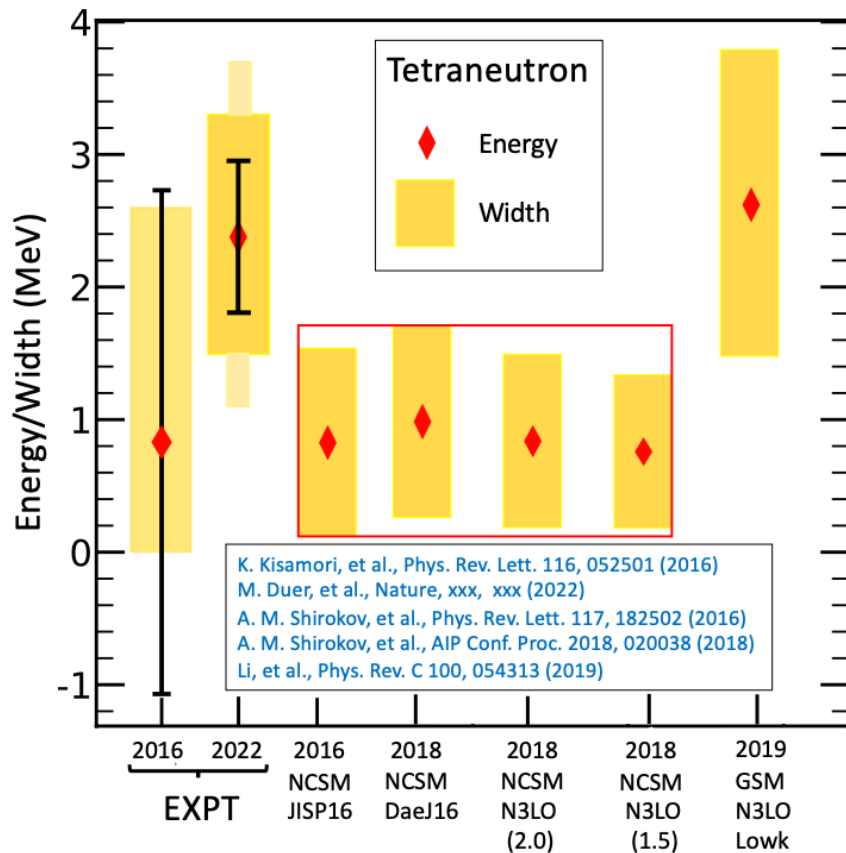
В чем проблема теоретического описания?

Видимо,

- 1) метод описания демократического распада резонанса на 4 частицы;
- 2) взаимодействие нейтронов друг с другом

Проблемы описания тетранейтрона

Взаимодействие нейтронов друг с другом в описании резонанса 4n :



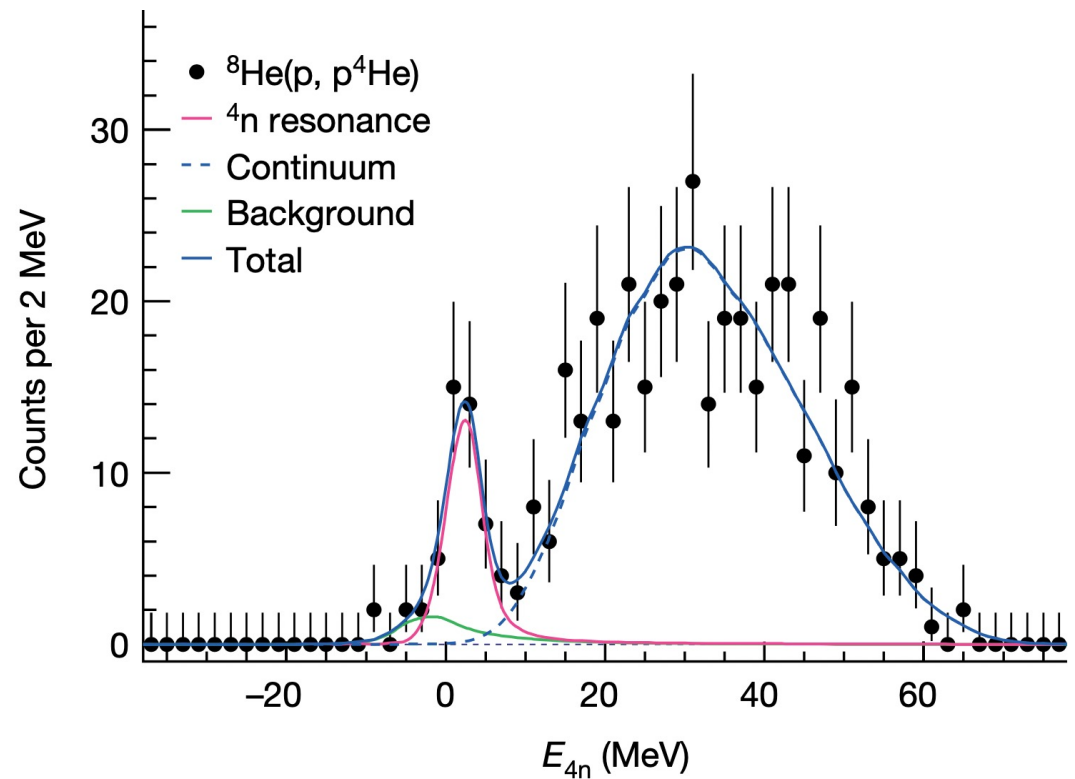
На данный момент резонанс тетранейтрона получен только с этими NN -взаимодействиями:
JISP16, Daejeon16: мягкие взаимодействия, предложенные нами, не требуют NNN -сил; остальные взаимодействия, искусственно смягченные, требуют NNN -силы, но NNN -силы с $T = 3/2$ неизвестны.
Например, с NN -взаимодействием N3LO без смягчения резонанс тетранейтрона не получается

- Открытие тетранейтрона ставит вопрос о серьезном переосмыслении взаимодействия нуклонов друг с другом

Tetraneutron?

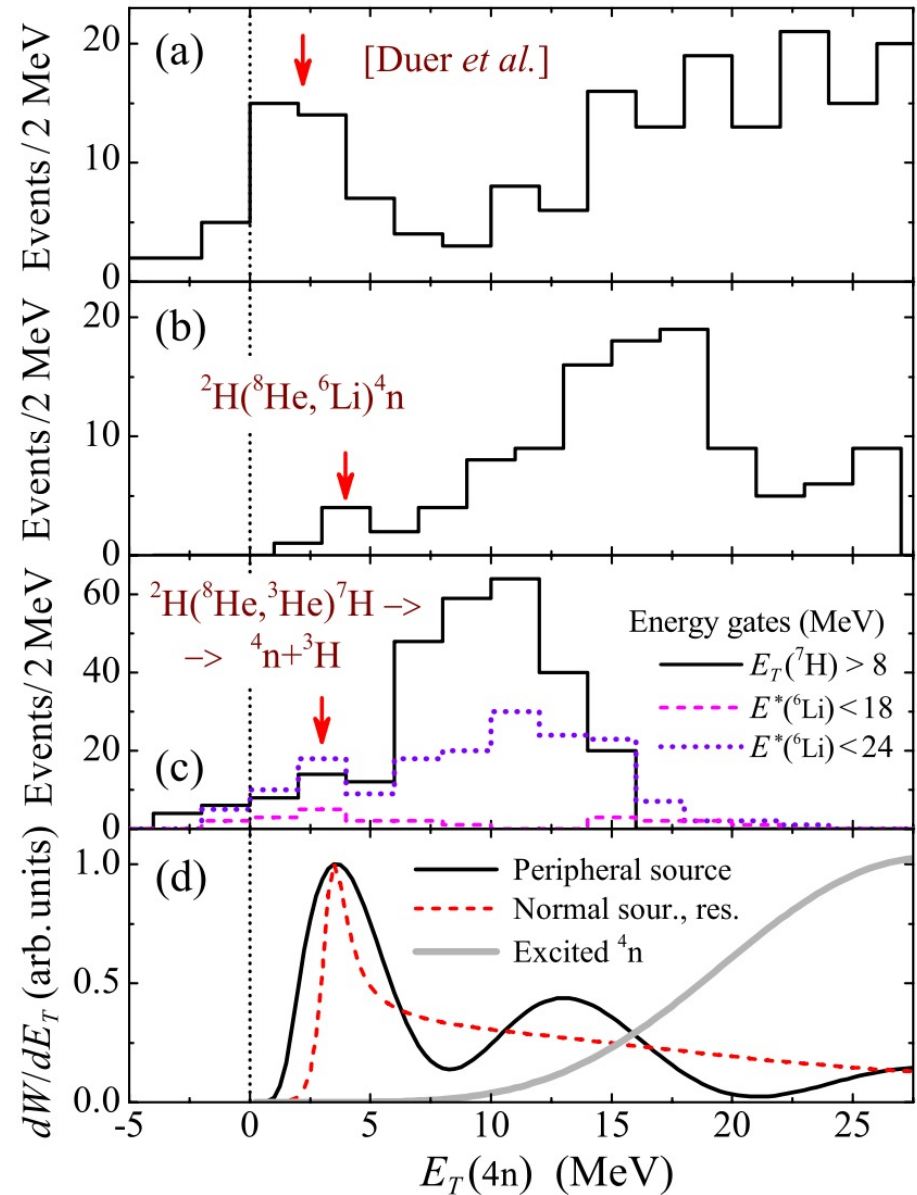
There are still some people who are skeptical about the tetraneutron resonance. In particular,

- 1) L. G. Sobotka, M. Piarulli, *Nature* **606**, 656 (2022)
- 2) R. Lazauskas, E. Hiyama, J. Carbonell, *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **130**, 102501 (2023)
- 3) I. A. Muzalevskii et al.,
arXiv: 2312.17354



Tetraneutron?

- I. A. Muzalevskii et al., arXiv: 2312.17354
- Reactions: ${}^2\text{He}({}^8\text{He}, {}^6\text{Li}) {}^4n$,
 ${}^2\text{He}({}^8\text{He}, {}^3\text{He}) {}^7\text{H} \rightarrow {}^3\text{H} + {}^4n$
- The later reaction transforms to ${}^2\text{He}({}^8\text{He}, {}^6\text{Li}^*) {}^4n$ in the limit of the highest ${}^7\text{H}$ decay energies and ${}^6\text{Li}^* \rightarrow {}^3\text{H} + {}^3\text{He}$
- Interpretation: the low-energy peak is not related to the tetraneutron *per se*, but to the ${}^8\text{He}$ structure and the reaction mechanism
- “*The existence of low-energy tetraneutron resonance would mean a radical revision of everything we know about neutron-rich nuclei and neutron matter. Our vision of the problem is that a solution can be found, which is much less radical*”



Speculations about tetraneutron analogues

- If the tetraneutron resonance exists with an energy around $E_r \approx 2.4$ MeV, we should expect its isospin analogues: tetraproton (${}^4\text{Be}$) resonance ($0^+, T = 2$); excited resonant states of ${}^4\text{Li}(0^+, T = 2)$; ${}^4\text{He}(0^+, T = 2)$; ${}^4\text{H}(0^+, T = 2)$.
- Studies of these states is very interesting. If found, they can confirm the existence of the tetraneutron resonance. Their studies are interesting from various other aspects.

Speculations: ${}^4\text{H}$

- Binding energy: 5.604 MeV
- Spectrum: $2^-, T = 1$ – g.s., $E_x = 0$
 - $1^-, T = 1, E_x = 0.310$ MeV, $\Gamma = 6.73$ MeV
 - $0^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.080$ MeV, $\Gamma = 8.92$ MeV
 - $1^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.830$ MeV, $\Gamma = 12.99$ MeV
- Expected: $0^+, T = 2, E_x \approx 8.0$ MeV, $\Gamma \approx 1.8$ MeV
- Simplest reaction like $n + {}^3\text{H}$ at the energy of this $T = 2$ state is **forbidden by isospin**; if observed, it will be direct observation of isospin violation
- ${}^4\text{H}^*(0^+, T = 2)$ may be created in various other reactions, e.g., in α particle transfer reaction ${}^8\text{Li} + {}^{14}\text{C} \rightarrow {}^{18}\text{O} + {}^4\text{H}^*(0^+, T = 2)$

Speculations: ${}^4\text{Li}$

- Binding energy: 4.619 MeV
- Spectrum: $2^-, T = 1$ – g.s., $E_x = 0$
 - $1^-, T = 1, E_x = 0.320 \text{ MeV}, \Gamma = 7.35 \text{ MeV}$
 - $0^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.080 \text{ MeV}, \Gamma = 9.35 \text{ MeV}$
 - $1^-, T = 1, E_x = 2.850 \text{ MeV}, \Gamma = 13.51 \text{ MeV}$
- Expected: $0^+, T = 2, E_x \approx 8.0 \text{ MeV}, \Gamma \approx 2 \text{ MeV}$
- Simplest reaction like $p + {}^3\text{He}$ at the energy of this $T = 2$ state is **forbidden by isospin**; if observed, it will be direct observation of isospin violation
- ${}^4\text{Li}^*(0^+, T = 2)$ may be created in various other reactions.

Speculations: ${}^4\text{Be}$ (tetraproton)

- Binding energy: ? Expected approximately -3.5 MeV
- Spectrum: ? Expected $2^-, T = 1$ – g.s., $E_x = 0$, $\Gamma \approx 2.5$ MeV
?
- ${}^4\text{Be}(0^+, T = 2)$ may be hopefully created in some reactions...

Speculations: ${}^4\text{He}$

- Binding energy: 28.296 MeV
- Spectrum: $0^+, T = 0$ – g.s., $E_x = 0$
 - $0^+, T = 0, E_x = 20.210$ MeV, $\Gamma = 0.50$ MeV
 - $0^-, T = 0, E_x = 21.010$ MeV, $\Gamma = 0.84$ MeV
 - $2^-, T = 0, E_x = 21.840$ MeV, $\Gamma = 2.01$ MeV
 - ...
- Expected: $0^+, T = 2, E_x \approx 31$ MeV, $\Gamma \approx 2$ MeV
- I am pessimistic about direct observation of this state: the density of states in ${}^4\text{He}$ at 30+ MeV excitation energy is very high...
- However...

Speculations: ${}^4\text{He}$

- What about ${}^4\text{He} + {}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$?
- That is ${}^8\text{Be}^*(0^+, T=2)$: $E_x = 27.4941 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma = 5.5 \text{ keV}$
- ${}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$ seems to be more bound in the presence of ${}^4\text{He}(0^+, \text{g.s.})$
- What about ${}^8\text{Be} + {}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$?
- That is ${}^{12}\text{C}^*(0^+, T=2)$: $E_x = 27.595 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma < 30 \text{ keV}$
- Note, ${}^8\text{Be}$ is approximately 90 keV unbound!
- What about ${}^8\text{Be}^*(2^+, E_x = 3.03 \text{ MeV}) + {}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$?
- That is ${}^{12}\text{C}^*((2^+), T=2)$: $E_x = 29.63 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma < 200 \text{ keV}$
- What about ${}^{12}\text{C} + {}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$?
- That is ${}^{16}\text{O}^*(0^+, T=2)$: $E_x = 22.721 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma = 12.5 \text{ keV}$
- Note, ${}^{12}\text{C}$ is 7.275 MeV bound with respect 3α threshold. ${}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$ seems to be less bound in the presence of ${}^{12}\text{C}$ as compared with ${}^8\text{Be}$
- What about ${}^{12}\text{C}^*(2^+, E_x = 4.4 \text{ MeV}) + {}^4\text{He}^*(0^+, T=2)$?
- That is ${}^{16}\text{O}^*(2^+, T=2)$: $E_x = 24.522 \text{ MeV}$, $\Gamma < 50 \text{ keV}$

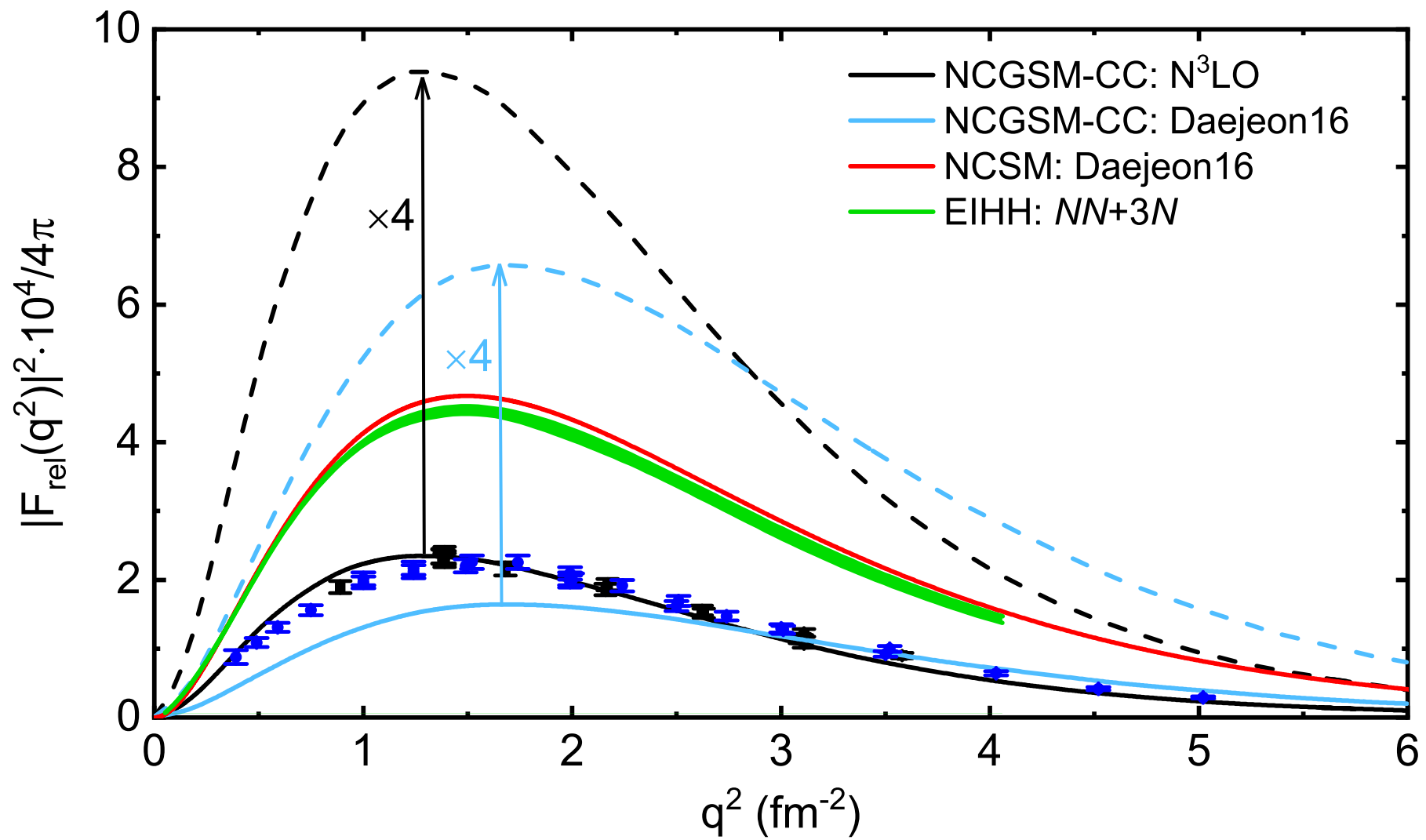
Conclusions

- Do the tetraneutron and its analogues exist?
- There are people who doubt
- However, it seems interesting to search for them
- Is it possible?

• Спасибо

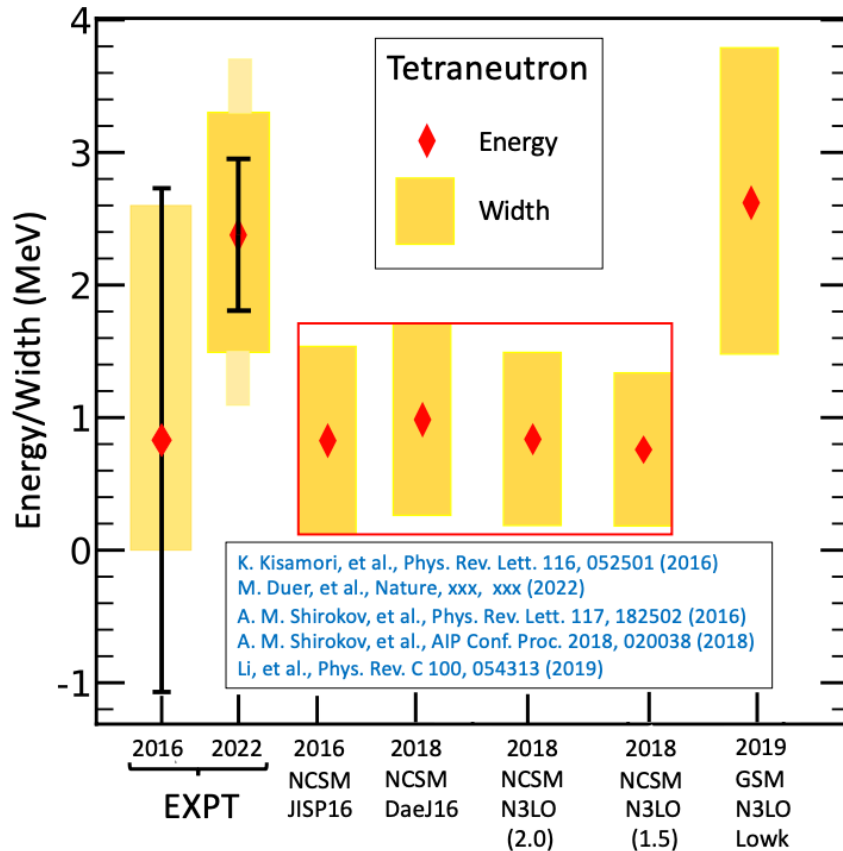
за

ваше терпение!



Tetraneutron theory summary

NN interactions and tetraneutron resonance:



Tetraneutron resonance has been obtained with our *NN* interactions JISP16, Daejeon16 which do not require *NNN* forces and *NN* interactions softened by SRG or Low-k approaches (which require *NNN* forces but they were avoided). Standard modern meson-exchange or chiral EFT *NN* interactions (require *NNN*) do not support the tetraneutron resonance. *NNN* interactions with $T = \frac{3}{2}$ are unknown.

4 particle decay theory is not well established

• Thank you
for your
patience!