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V. Tsakstara, T. S. Kosmas, J. Sinatkas

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Nuclear response to supernova neutrino spectra

V. Tsakstara ^a T.S. Kosmas ^a and J. Sinatkas ^b

^a*Theoretical Physics Section, University of Ioannina, GR 45110 Ioannina, Greece*

^b*Department of Informatics and Computer Technology, TEI of Western Macedonia, GR-52100 Kastoria, Greece*

Abstract

In current probes searching for rare event processes, appropriate nuclear targets are employed (in the COBRA double-beta decay detector the CdZnTe semiconductor is used). In this work the response of such detectors to various low-energy neutrino spectra is explored starting from state-by-state calculations of the neutrino-nucleus reactions cross sections obtained by using the quasi particle random phase approximation (QRPA) based on realistic two-body residual interactions. As a concrete example, we examine the response of ^{64}Zn isotope to low energy supernova neutrinos.

Key words: Neutrino-nucleus reactions, Supernovae.

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1 Introduction

In general, nuclear responses to neutrinos are crucial for low-energy neutrino detection but also for nuclear structure studies because of the presence of both the vector and the axial-vector weak interactions. Accordingly, the nuclear responses connected to the charged current neutrino-nucleus interactions are nuclear isospin and spin isospin responses, which reflect the spin isospin structures. Such responses in nuclear medium are modified much by strong nuclear spin and isospin interactions [1,2]. Isospin and spin isospin giant resonances, which absorb most of isospin and spin isospin strengths, are located at the excitation region of $E_{ex} = 10\text{-}25$ MeV.

Thus, nuclei show large responses for neutrinos in that energy region. In the case of the neutral current neutrino-nucleus reactions, in addition to the other

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neutrino-induced nuclear excitations, the coherent channel (gs \rightarrow gs transitions) is also possible and, this is the dominant channel for low-energy neutrinos.

In the present work, we study nuclear responses to supernova neutrino spectra using the convolution method and the neutrino energy distributions described in Section 2.

2 Nuclear detector response to low-energy neutrino sources

In order to estimate the response of a nucleus to a specific source of neutrinos, the calculated differential cross sections of neutrino-nucleus induced reactions must be folded with the neutrino energy distribution of the source in question [3,4].

For the double differential cross sections, $d^2\sigma(\varepsilon_\nu, \theta, \omega)/d\Omega d\omega$, of neutrino-nucleus reactions, the folding is defined by the expression

$$\left[\frac{d^2\sigma(\theta, \omega)}{d\Omega d\omega} \right]_{folded} = \int_{\omega}^{\infty} \frac{d^2\sigma(\varepsilon_\nu, \theta, \omega)}{d\Omega d\omega} \eta(\varepsilon_\nu) d\varepsilon_\nu, \quad (1)$$

where $\eta(\varepsilon_\nu)$ represents the energy distribution of SN-neutrinos (traditionally a Fermi-Dirac or Power-Law distributions are utilized) [5,6].

If we introduce the chemical potential n_{dg} , the Fermi-Dirac energy distribution reads

$$\eta_{FD}[\varepsilon_\nu, T, n_{dg}] = F(n_{dg}) \frac{1}{T^3} \frac{\varepsilon_\nu^2}{1 + e^{(\varepsilon_\nu/T - n_{dg})}}, \quad (2)$$

In this case the width of the spectrum is reduced compared to the corresponding thermal spectrum (for this reason the parameter n_{dg} is also called pinching parameter). (in MeV) is the neutrino temperature. The degeneracy parameter n_{dg} , is the ratio of the chemical potential divided by the temperature. The factor $F_2(n_{dg})$, is the normalization constant of the distribution determined so that

$$\int_0^{\infty} \eta_{FD}[\varepsilon_\nu, T, n_{dg}] d\varepsilon_\nu = 1. \quad (3)$$

This means that the normalization constant $F(n_{dg})$ depends on the degeneracy

parameter n_{dg} and it is given by the relation

$$\frac{1}{F(n_{dg})} \equiv \int_0^{\infty} \frac{x^2}{e^{x-n_{dg}} + 1} dx. \quad (4)$$

The mean energy, $\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle$, of the neutrino is written as a function of temperature as [7]

$$\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle = (3.1515 + 0.125 n_{dg} + 0.0249 n_{dg}^2 + \dots)T. \quad (5)$$

We can easily prove that, for $n_{dg} = 0$, $F(0) = \frac{7\pi^4}{120} \sim 5.68$. Also, inserting Eq. (4) into Eq. (2), we take

$$\eta_{FD}[\varepsilon_{\nu}, T, n_{dg}] = \left[\int_0^{\infty} \frac{x^2}{e^{x-n_{dg}} + 1} dx \right]^{-1} \frac{(\varepsilon_{\nu}^2/T^3)}{1 + e^{(\varepsilon_{\nu}/T - n_{dg})}}. \quad (6)$$

After processing the later equation is written as

$$\eta_{FD}[\varepsilon_{\nu}, T, n_{dg}] = \frac{1}{\int_0^{\infty} \frac{x^2}{e^x + e^{n_{dg}}} dx} \frac{(\varepsilon_{\nu}^2/T^3)}{e^{(\varepsilon_{\nu}/T)} + e^{n_{dg}}}. \quad (7)$$

From the later equation it is clear that, for $n_{dg} = -\infty$ we finally take

$$\begin{aligned} \eta_{FD}[\varepsilon_{\nu}, T, n_{dg} = -\infty] &= (\varepsilon_{\nu}^2/T^3) e^{-(\varepsilon_{\nu}/T)} \left[\int_0^{\infty} x^2 e^{-x} dx \right]^{-1} \\ &= \frac{1}{2} (\varepsilon_{\nu}^2/T^3) e^{-(\varepsilon_{\nu}/T)}. \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

It had been found that [5], the SN-neutrino energy spectra can be fitted by using a Power-Law energy distribution of the form:

$$\eta_{PL}[\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle, \alpha] = C \left(\frac{\varepsilon_{\nu}}{\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle} \right)^{\alpha} e^{-(\alpha+1)(\varepsilon_{\nu}/\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle)}, \quad (9)$$

where $\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle$ is the neutrino mean energy and the parameter α adjusts the width of the spectrum. The normalization factor C , is calculated by the equation

$$\int_0^{\infty} \eta_{PL}[\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle, \alpha] d\varepsilon_{\nu} = C \int_0^{\infty} \left(\frac{\varepsilon_{\nu}}{\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle} \right)^{\alpha} e^{-(\alpha+1)(\varepsilon_{\nu}/\langle \varepsilon_{\nu} \rangle)} d\varepsilon_{\nu} = 1. \quad (10)$$

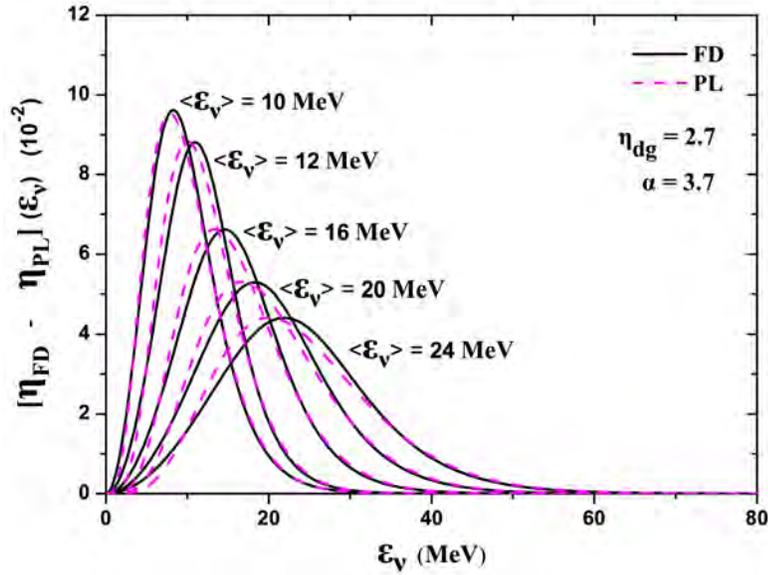


Fig. 1. Comparison between Fermi-Dirac and Power-law energy distributions for various values of their parameters.

From the later equation we find

$$C = \frac{(\alpha + 1)^{\alpha+1}}{\Gamma(\alpha + 1)\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle}, \quad (11)$$

therefore, Eq. (9) becomes

$$\eta_{PL}[\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle, \alpha] = \frac{(\alpha + 1)^{\alpha+1}}{\Gamma(\alpha + 1)} \frac{\varepsilon_\nu^\alpha}{\langle E \rangle^{\alpha+1}} e^{-(\alpha+1)(\varepsilon_\nu/\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle)}. \quad (12)$$

For $\alpha = 2$, Eq. (12) gives

$$\eta_{PL}[\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle, \alpha = 2] = \frac{27}{2} \frac{\varepsilon_\nu^2}{\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle^3} e^{-3\varepsilon_\nu/\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle}. \quad (13)$$

By comparing Eqs. (9) and (13), we conclude that, the equality (equivalent spectra) applies when the temperature of the neutrinosphere and its mean energy $\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle$, related via the expression

$$T = \frac{\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle}{3}. \quad (14)$$

We note that, for non-degenerate particles $\langle\varepsilon_\nu\rangle = 3$, which means that, the above equality between the distributions applies when we consider the neutrinos non-degenerate [5,6].

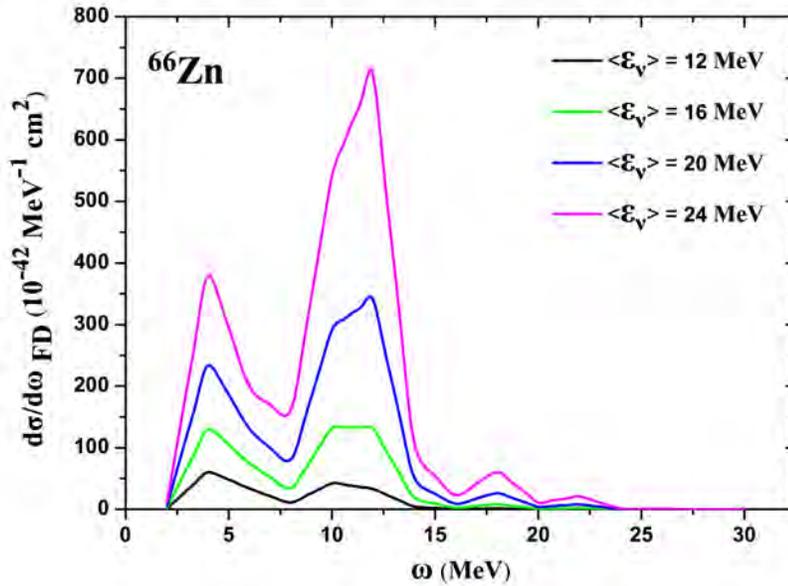


Fig. 2. Differential cross section for the reaction ${}^{66}\text{Zn}(\nu, \nu'){}^{66}\text{Zn}^*$, averaged over neutrinos and antineutrinos and over a Fermi-Dirac distribution with mean energies $\langle \varepsilon_\nu \rangle = 12, 16, 20$ and 24 MeV.

3 Results and discussion

The folded results for ${}^{66}\text{Zn}$ are illustrated in Fig. 2. These results have been obtained by folding the original cross sections with a Fermi-Dirac distribution. More specifically, Fig. 2 shows the mean energy dependence of the folded differential cross section $[d\sigma(\omega)/d\omega]_{fold}$ for $\eta_{dg}=2.7$ (the mean energy values used are $\langle \varepsilon_\nu \rangle = 12, 16, 20$ and 24 MeV).

We see that, the folded differential cross sections increase appreciably with the mean energy (or the temperature) $\langle \varepsilon_\nu \rangle$. This increase is dependent also on the detector's excitation energy ω . In the case of the ${}^{64}\text{Zn}$, our results show a pronounced response in the excitation region $\omega = 10 - 15$ MeV. This means that signals of supernova neutrinos of the type ν_x and $\tilde{\nu}_x$, $x = \mu, \tau$ (high mean energies), cause much stronger response in this range of excitations of the detector [8–10].

4 Summary and Conclusions

As can be seen, there is a rich response, not only in the particle-unbound energy region, but also in the particle bound energy region of the discrete spectrum. Obviously, the folded cross section is strongly dependent on the mean energy $\langle \varepsilon_\nu \rangle$. Also there is a clear temperature (T) increase of the folded

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