J/ψ Suppression at Forward Rapidity in Pb-Pb Collisions at \( \sqrt{s(\text{NN})}=2.76 \text{ TeV} \)


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$J/\psi$ Suppression at Forward Rapidity in Pb-Pb Collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV

B. Abelev et al.*
(ALICE Collaboration)

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The ALICE experiment has measured the inclusive $J/\psi$ production in Pb-Pb collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV down to zero transverse momentum in the rapidity range $2.5 < y < 4$. A suppression of the inclusive $J/\psi$ yield in Pb-Pb is observed with respect to the one measured in $pp$ collisions scaled by the number of binary nucleon-nucleon collisions. The nuclear modification factor, integrated over the 0%-80% most central collisions, is $0.545 \pm 0.032$(stat) $\pm 0.083$(syst) and does not exhibit a significant dependence on the collision centrality. These features appear significantly different from measurements at lower collision energies. Models including $J/\psi$ production from charm quarks in a deconfined partonic phase can describe our data.

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Ultrarelativistic collisions of heavy nuclei aim at producing nuclear matter at high temperature and pressure. Under such conditions quantum chromodynamics predicts the existence of a deconfined state of partonic matter, the quark-gluon plasma (QGP). Among the possible probes of the QGP, heavy quarks are of particular interest since they are expected to be produced in the primary partonic scatterings and to coexist with the surrounding medium. Therefore, the measurement of quarkonium states and hadrons with open heavy flavor is expected to provide essential information on the properties of the strongly-interacting system formed in the early stages of heavy-ion collisions [1]. In particular, according to the color-screening model [2], measuring the in-medium dissociation probability of the different quarkonium states is expected to provide an estimate of the initial temperature of the system. In the past two decades, $J/\psi$ production in heavy-ion collisions was intensively studied at the Super Proton Synchrotron (SPS) and at the Relativistic Heavy-Ion Collider (RHIC), from approximately 20 to 200 GeV center-of-mass energy per nucleon pair ($\sqrt{s_{NN}}$). At the SPS, a strong $J/\psi$ suppression was found in the most central Pb-Pb collisions [3]. The observed suppression is larger than the one expected from Cold Nuclear Matter (CNM) effects, which include nuclear absorption and (anti-) shadowing. The dissociation of excited $c\bar{c}$ states like $\chi_c$ and $\psi(2S)$, which in $pp$ collisions constitute about 40% of the inclusive $J/\psi$ yield [1], is one possible interpretation of the observed suppression. A $J/\psi$ suppression was also observed at RHIC, in central Au-Au collisions [4,5], at a level similar to the one observed at the SPS when measured at midrapidity although it is larger at forward rapidity. Several models [6–9] attempt to reproduce the RHIC data by adding to the direct $J/\psi$ production a regeneration component from deconfined charm quarks in the medium, which counteracts the $J/\psi$ dissociation in a QGP. A quantitative description of these final-state effects is however difficult at the present time because of the lack of precision in the CNM effects and in the open charm cross section determination. The measurement of charmonium production is especially promising at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) where the high energy density of the medium and the large number of $c\bar{c}$ pairs produced in central Pb-Pb collisions should help to disentangle between the different suppression and regeneration scenarios. At the LHC, a suppression of inclusive $J/\psi$ production a high transverse momentum was observed in central Pb-Pb collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV with respect to peripheral collisions or $pp$ collisions at the same energy by ATLAS [10] and CMS [11], respectively.

In this Letter, we report ALICE results on inclusive $J/\psi$ production in Pb-Pb collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV at forward rapidity, measured via the $\mu^+\mu^-$ decay channel. Our measurement encloses the low transverse momentum region that is not accessible to other LHC experiments and thus complements their observations. The $J/\psi$ corrected yield in Pb-Pb collisions is combined with the one measured in $pp$ collisions at the same center-of-mass energy [12] to form the $J/\psi$ nuclear modification factor $R_{AA}$. The results are presented as a function of collision centrality and rapidity ($y$), and in intervals of transverse momentum ($p_t$).

The ALICE detector is described in [13]. At forward rapidity ($2.5 < y < 4$) the production of quarkonium states is measured in the muon spectrometer [14] down to $p_t = 0$. The spectrometer consists of a ten interaction length thick absorber filtering the muons in front of five tracking stations comprising two planes of cathode pad chambers each, with the third station inside a dipole magnet with a
3 Tm field integral. The tracking apparatus is completed by a triggering system made of four planes of resistive plate chambers downstream of a 1.2 m thick iron wall, which absorbs secondary hadrons escaping from the front absorber and low momentum muons coming mainly from $\pi$ and K decays. In addition, the silicon pixel detector (SPD) and scintillator arrays (VZERO) were used in this analysis. The VZERO counters, two arrays of 32 scintillator tiles each, cover $2.8 \leq \eta \leq 5.1$ (VZERO-A) and $-3.7 \leq \eta \leq -1.7$ (VZERO-C). The SPD consists of two cylindrical layers covering $|\eta| \leq 2.0$ and $|\eta| \leq 1.4$ for the inner and outer layers, respectively. All these detectors have full azimuthal coverage. The minimum bias (MB) trigger requirement used for this analysis consists of a logical AND of the three following conditions: (i) a signal in two readout chips in the outer layer of the SPD, (ii) a signal in VZERO-A, (iii) a signal in VZERO-C, providing a high triggering efficiency for hadronic interactions. The beam induced background was further reduced by timing cuts on the signals from the VZERO and from the zero degree calorimeters (ZDC). The contribution from electromagnetic processes was removed with a cut on the energy deposited in the neutron ZDCs. The centrality determination is based on a fit of the VZERO amplitude distribution as described in [15]. A cut corresponding to the most central 80% of the nuclear cross section was applied; for these events the MB trigger is fully efficient. A data sample of $17.7 \times 10^6$ Pb-Pb collisions collected in 2010 satisfying all the above conditions is used in the following analysis. It corresponds to an integrated luminosity $L_{\text{int}} = 2.9 \mu b^{-1}$.

This data sample was further divided into five centrality classes from 0%–10% (central collisions) to 50%–80% (peripheral collisions).

$J/\psi$ candidates are formed by combining pairs of opposite-sign (OS) tracks reconstructed in the geometrical acceptance of the muon spectrometer. To reduce the combinatorial background, the reconstructed tracks in the muon tracking chambers are required to match a track segment in the muon trigger system. The resulting invariant mass distribution of OS muon pairs for the 0%–80% most central Pb-Pb collisions is shown in Fig. 1, where a $J/\psi$ signal above the combinatorial background is clearly visible. The $J/\psi$ raw yield was extracted by using two different methods. The OS dimuon invariant mass distribution was fitted with a Crystal Ball (CB) function to reproduce the $J/\psi$ line shape, and a sum of two exponentials to describe the underlying continuum. The CB function connects a Gaussian core with a power-law tail [16] at low mass to account for energy loss fluctuations and radiative decays. At high transverse momenta ($p_t \geq 3 \text{ GeV}/c$), the sum of two exponentials does not describe correctly the underlying continuum; it was replaced by a third order polynomial. Alternatively, the combinatorial background was subtracted using an event-mixing technique. The resulting mass distribution was fitted with a CB function and an exponential or a first order polynomial to describe the remaining background. The event-mixing was preferred to the like-sign subtraction technique since it is less sensitive to correlated signal pairs present in the like-sign spectra and gives better statistical precision. The $\psi(2S)$ was not included in the signal line shape since its contribution is negligible. The width of the $J/\psi$ mass peak depends on the resolution of the spectrometer which can be affected by the detector occupancy that increases with centrality. This effect, evaluated by embedding simulated $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ decays into real events, was found to be less than 2%. This conclusion was confirmed by a direct measurement of the tracking chamber resolution versus centrality using reconstructed tracks. Therefore, the same CB line shape can be used for all centrality classes. The parameters of the CB tails were fixed to the values obtained either in simulations or in $p p$ collisions where the signal to background ratio is much higher. For each of these choices, the mean and width of the CB Gaussian part were fixed to the value obtained by fitting the mass distribution in the centrality range 0%–80%. In addition, a variation of the width of $\pm 1$ standard deviation was applied to account for uncertainties (varying the mean has turned out to have a negligible effect in comparison). The raw $J/\psi$ yield in each centrality class was determined as the average of the results obtained with the two fitting approaches and the various CB parametrizations, while the corresponding systematic uncertainties were defined as the RMS of these results. It was also checked that every individual result differs from the mean value by less than three RMS. The raw $J/\psi$ yield in our Pb-Pb sample is $2350 \pm 139\text{(stat)} \pm 189\text{(syst)}$. The invariant mass resolution is around $78 \text{ MeV}/c^2$, in very good agreement with the embedded $J/\psi$ simulations. The signal to background ratio integrated over $\pm 3\sigma$ of the mass resolution varies from 0.1 for central collisions to 1.5 for peripheral collisions.
The measured number of $J/\psi$ $(N_{J/\psi}^i)$ was normalized to the number of events in the corresponding centrality class $(N_{\text{event}}^i)$ and further corrected for the branching ratio (BR) of the dimuon decay channel, the acceptance $A$ and the efficiency $\epsilon^i$ of the detector. The inclusive $J/\psi$ yield in each centrality class $i$ for our measured $p_t$ and $y$ ranges $(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)$ is then given by:

$$Y_{J/\psi}(\Delta p_t, \Delta y) = \frac{N_{J/\psi}^i}{BR_{J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-} N_{\text{event}}^i A \epsilon^i}.$$ (1)

The product $A \epsilon$ was determined from Monte Carlo simulations. The generated $J/\psi$ $p_t$ and $y$ distributions were extrapolated from existing measurements [17], including shadowing effects from EKS98 calculations [18]. As the measured $J/\psi$ polarization in $pp$ collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV is compatible with zero [19], and $J/\psi$ mesons produced from charm quarks in the medium are expected to be unpolarized, we presume $J/\psi$ production is unpolarized. For the tracking chambers, the time-dependent status of each electronic channel during the data taking period was taken into account as well as the remaining misalignment of the tracking elements. The efficiencies of the muon trigger chambers were determined from data and were then applied in the simulations [20]. Finally, the dependence of the efficiency on the detector occupancy was included using the embedding technique. For $J/\psi$ mesons emitted at $2.5 < y < 4$ and $p_t \approx 0$, a run-averaged value of $A \epsilon = 0.176$ with a 8% relative systematic uncertainty was obtained. A 8% ± 2% (syst) relative decrease of the efficiency was observed when going from peripheral to central collisions.

The $J/\psi$ yield measured in Pb-Pb collisions in centrality class $i$ is combined with the inclusive $J/\psi$ cross section measured in $pp$ collisions at the same energy to form the nuclear modification factor $R_{AA}$ defined as:

$$R_{AA}^i = \frac{Y_{J/\psi}(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)}{(T_{AA})^i \sigma_{pp}^{J/\psi}(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)}.$$ (2)

The inclusive $J/\psi$ cross section in $pp$ collisions $\sigma_{J/\psi}^{pp}(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)$ was measured using the same apparatus and analysis technique within the corresponding $p_t$ and $y$ range [12]. The reference value $\sigma_{J/\psi}^{pp}$ used for the calculation of $R_{AA}$ integrated over $p_t$ and $y$ is $3.34 \pm 0.13 \text{(stat)} \pm 0.24 \text{(syst)} \pm 0.12 \text{(lumi)}^{+0.55}_{-1.07} \text{(pol)} \mu b$. The centrality intervals used in this analysis, the average number of participating nucleons $\langle N_{\text{part}} \rangle$ and average value of the nuclear overlap function $(T_{AA})$ derived from a Glauber model calculation [15] are summarized in Table I. Since our most peripheral bin is rather large, the variables $(N_{\text{part}})$ and the charged-particle density measured at midrapidity $dN_{ch}^i/d\eta|_{\eta=0}$ with $(N_{\text{coll}})$ weighting and the average value of the nuclear overlap function $(T_{AA})$ for the centrality classes expressed in percentages of the nuclear cross section [15].

| Centrality | $\langle N_{\text{part}} \rangle$ | $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ | $\langle dN_{ch}^i/d\eta|_{\eta=0} \rangle$ | $\langle T_{AA} \rangle$ (mb$^{-1}$) |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0%–10%     | 356 ± 4                         | 361 ± 4                         | 1463 ± 60                                | 23.5 ± 1.0                    |
| 10%–20%    | 260 ± 4                         | 264 ± 4                         | 979 ± 37                                 | 14.4 ± 0.6                    |
| 20%–30%    | 186 ± 4                         | 189 ± 4                         | 658 ± 23                                 | 8.74 ± 0.37                   |
| 30%–50%    | 107 ± 3                         | 117 ± 3                         | 369 ± 13                                 | 3.87 ± 0.18                   |
| 50%–80%    | 32 ± 2                          | 47 ± 2                          | 110 ± 5                                  | 0.72 ± 0.05                   |
| 0%–80%     | 139 ± 3                         | 264 ± 4                         | –                                        | 7.03 ± 0.27                   |

The weighted values are given in Table I and are used for the ALICE data points in the following figures. All systematic uncertainties entering the $R_{AA}$ calculation are listed in Table II. In the figures below, the point to point uncorrelated systematic uncertainties are represented as boxes at the position of the data points while the statistical ones are indicated by vertical bars. Correlated systematic uncertainties are quoted directly on the figures.

The inclusive $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ measured by ALICE at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV in the range $2.5 < y < 4$ and $p_t \approx 0$ is shown in Fig. 2 as a function of $dN_{ch}^i/d\eta|_{\eta=0}$ (left) and $N_{\text{part}}$ (right). The charged-particle density closely relates to the energy density of the created medium whereas the number of participants reflects the collision geometry. The centrality integrated $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ is $R_{AA}^{0%–80%} = 0.545 \pm 0.032 \text{(stat)} \pm 0.083 \text{(syst)}$, indicating a clear $J/\psi$ suppression. The contribution from beauty hadron feed-down to the inclusive $J/\psi$ yield in our $y$ and $p_t$ domain was measured by the LHCb collaboration to be about 10% in $pp$ collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV [21]. Therefore, the difference between the prompt $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ and our inclusive measurement is expected not to exceed 11% if $N_{\text{coll}}$ scaling of beauty production is assumed and shadowing effects are neglected. All $R_{AA}$ results are presented assuming unpolarized $J/\psi$ production in $pp$ and Pb-Pb collisions. The comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>signal extraction</td>
<td>5%–12%</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>input MC parametrization</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tracking efficiency</td>
<td>5% and 0%–1%</td>
<td>I and II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trigger efficiency</td>
<td>4% and 0%–2%</td>
<td>I and II</td>
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<tr>
<td>matching efficiency</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>$R_{AA}$ at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV</td>
<td>9%</td>
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with the PHENIX measurements [22] at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV at forward rapidity $1.2 < |y| < 2.2$ [5,23] shows that our inclusive $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ is almost a factor of 3 larger for $dN_{ch}/d\eta|_{\eta=0} \gtrsim 600$ ($N_{part} \gtrsim 180$). In addition, our results do not exhibit a significant centrality dependence.

The rapidity dependence of the $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ is presented in Fig. 3 for two $p_t$ domains, $p_t \gtrsim 0$ and $p_t \gtrsim 3$ GeV/$c$. The $J/\psi$ reference cross sections in $p+p$ collisions [24] and the $R_{AA}$ total systematic uncertainties, indicated as open boxes in the figure, were evaluated in the same kinematic range. Our results are shown together with a measurement from CMS [11] of the inclusive $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ in the rapidity range $1.6 < |y| < 2.4$ with $p_t \gtrsim 3$ GeV/$c$. No significant rapidity dependence can be seen in the $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ for $p_t \gtrsim 0$. For $p_t \gtrsim 3$ GeV/$c$, a decrease of $R_{AA}$ is observed with increasing rapidity reaching a value of $0.289 \pm 0.061$(stat.) $\pm 0.078$(syst.) for $3.25 < y < 4$. At LHC energies, $J/\psi$ nuclear absorption is likely to be negligible and the modification of the gluon distribution function is dominated by shadowing effects [25]. An estimate of shadowing effects is shown in Fig. 3 within the color singlet model at leading order [26] and the color evaporation model at next to leading order [27]. The shadowing is, respectively, calculated with the nDSg and the EPS09 parametrizations [27] of the nuclear parton distribution function (nPDF). For nDSg (EPS09) the upper and lower limits correspond to the uncertainty in the factorization scale (uncertainty of the nPDF). The effect of shadowing shows no dependence with rapidity and its overall amount is reduced by the addition of a transverse momentum cut. At most, shadowing effects are expected to lower the $R_{AA}$ from 1 to 0.7. Recent color glass condensate (CGC) calculations for LHC energies may indicate a larger initial state suppression ($R_{AA} = 0.5$) [28]. However, any $J/\psi$ suppression due to initial state effects, CGC or shadowing, will be stronger at lower $p_t$ contrary to the data behavior.

In Fig. 4, our measurement is compared with theoretical models that include a $J/\psi$ regeneration component from deconfined charm quarks in the medium. The statistical hadronization model [6,29] assumes deconfinement and a thermal equilibration of the bulk of the $c\bar{c}$ pairs. Then charmonium production occurs only at phase boundary by statistical hadronization of charm quarks. The prediction is given for two values of $d\sigma_{c\bar{c}}/dy$ in absence of a measurement for Pb-Pb collisions. The two transport model results [30,31] presented in the same figure differ mostly in the rate equation controlling the $J/\psi$ dissociation and regeneration. Both are shown as a band which connects the results obtained with (lower limit) and

FIG. 2 (color online). Inclusive $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ as a function of the midrapidity charged-particle density (left) and the number of participating nucleons (right) measured in Pb-Pb collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV compared to PHENIX results in Au-Au collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV at midrapidity and forward rapidity [4,5,23]. The ALICE data points are placed at the $dN_{ch}/d\eta|_{\eta=0}$ and $\langle N_{part}^{w} \rangle$ values defined in Table I.

FIG. 3 (color online). Centrality integrated inclusive $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ measured in Pb-Pb collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV as a function of rapidity for two $p_t$ ranges. The open boxes contain the total systematic uncertainties except the ones on the integrated luminosity in the $p+p$ reference and on the $T_{AA}$, i.e., 5.2% (8.3%) for the ALICE (CMS [11]) data. The two models [26,27] predict the $R_{AA}$ due only to shadowing effects for nDSg (shaded areas) and EPS09 (lines) nPDF, respectively.
without (higher limit) shadowing. The width of the band can be interpreted as the uncertainty of the prediction. In both transport models, the amount of regenerated $J/\psi$ in the most central collisions contributes to about 50% of the production yield, the rest being from initial production.

In summary, we have presented the first measurement of inclusive $J/\psi$ nuclear modification factor down to $p_{T} = 0$ at forward rapidity in Pb-Pb collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV. The $J/\psi$ $R_{AA}$ is larger than the one measured at the SPS and at RHIC for most central collisions and does not exhibit a significant centrality dependence. Statistical hadronization and transport models which, respectively, feature a full and a partial $J/\psi$ production from charm quarks in the QGP phase can describe the data. Towards a definitive conclusion about the role of $J/\psi$ production from deconfined charm quarks in a partonic phase, the amount of shadowing needs to be measured precisely in pPb collisions. In this context, the measurement of open charm and $J/\psi$ elliptic flow will also help to determine the degree of thermalization for charm quarks.

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In the ALICE reference frame, the muon spectrometer covers a negative $\eta$ range and consequently a negative $y$ range. We have chosen to present our results with a positive $y$ notation.


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(ALICE Collaboration)

1Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California, United States
2Faculty of Nuclear Sciences and Physical Engineering, Czech Technical University in Prague, Prague, Czech Republic
3Nuclear Physics Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Rež u Prahy, Czech Republic
4Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, United States
5Physics Department, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
6European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, Switzerland
7KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary
8Dipartimento di Fisica dell’Università e Sezione INFN, Bologna, Italy
9Instituto de Física, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico
10Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre, Kolkata, India
11Department of Physics Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India
12Laboratoire de Physique Corpusculaire (LPC), Clermont Université, Université Blaise Pascal, CNRS-IN2P3, Clermont-Ferrand, France
13Gangneung-Wonju National University, Gangneung, South Korea
14Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
15Russian Research Centre Kurchatov Institute, Moscow, Russia
16Sezione INFN, Turin, Italy
17Sezione INFN, Bologna, Italy
18Centro Fermi-Centro Studi e Ricerche Museo Storico della Fisica “Enrico Fermi”, Rome, Italy
19Bogolyubov Institute for Theoretical Physics, Kiev, Ukraine
20Faculty of Engineering, Bergen University College, Bergen, Norway
21Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
22Dipartimento Interateneo di Fisica ‘M. Merlin’ and Sezione INFN, Bari, Italy
23Department of Physics and Technology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
24V. Fock Institute for Physics, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia
25National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
26Research Division and ExtreMe Matter Institute EMMI, GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung, Darmstadt, Germany
27Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
28Institut für Kernphysik, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Münster, Germany
29Department of Physics, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, United States
30Rudjer Bošković Institute, Zagreb, Croatia
31Sezione INFN, Padova, Italy
32SUBATECH, Ecole des Mines de Nantes, Université de Nantes, CNRS-IN2P3, Nantes, France
33Institut für Kernphysik, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
34Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie (LPSC), Université Joseph Fourier, CNRS-IN2P3, Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble, Grenoble, France
35Departamento de Física de Partículas and IFCAE, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
36Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, United States
37Helsinki Institute of Physics (HIP) and University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland
38Sezione INFN, Catania, Italy
39Commissariat à l’Énergie Atomique, IRFU, Saclay, France
40Institute of Experimental Physics, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Košice, Slovakia
41Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar, India
42Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia dell’Università e Sezione INFN, Catania, Italy
43School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
44The Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow, Poland
45Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR), Dubna, Russia
46Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark
47Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien (IPHC), Université de Strasbourg, CNRS-IN2P3, Strasbourg, France
48University of Houston, Houston, Texas, United States

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109 The University of Texas at Austin, Physics Department, Austin, Texas, USA
110 Fachhochschule Köln, Köln, Germany
111 Centro de Aplicaciones Tecnológicas y Desarrollo Nuclear (CEADEN), Havana, Cuba
112 Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, Czech Republic
113 University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, United States
114 Dipartimento di Fisica dell’Università “La Sapienza” and Sezione INFN, Rome, Italy
115 Budker Institute for Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk, Russia
116 Institut of Theoretical Physics, University of Wroclaw
117 Laboratori Nazionali di Legnaro, INFN, Legnaro, Italy
118 Indian Institute of Technology Indore (IIT), Indore, India
119 Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan
120 Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany
121 Kirchhoff-Institut für Physik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
122 Centre de Calcul de l’IN2P3, Villeurbanne, France

*Also at M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, D. V. Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, Moscow, Russia.
† Also at “Vinča” Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia.