Title

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Author

Good, Myron L.

Publication Date

1957-10-01

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Ernest O. Lawrence Radiation Laboratory

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

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Radiation Laboratory
Berkeley, California

Contract No. W-7405-eng-48

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Printed for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission

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University of California
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ABSTRACT

The equations of motion for the amplitudes of short-lived (K_+^0) and long-lived (K_-^0) neutral K mesons in an absorber are simplified for the case of dominance of the decay term. For the case of a thick absorber, a simple relation between the intensities of scattered and unscattered regenerated K_+^0, at zero degrees, results; the relation is sensitive to the K_+^0 - K_-^0 mass difference.

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The phenomenon of regeneration of the short-lived neutral K meson in a beam of long-lived neutral K's is a crucial test of the particle-mixture hypothesis of Gell-Mann and Pais;[1] what we wish to show here is that it also permits a rather direct determination of the difference in mass of the two particles.

The process has been studied theoretically;[2,3] preliminary experimental verification of the basic ideas involved has been obtained by Lederman et al.[4] and by Fowler, Lander, and Powell,[5] and others.

The theory of the process is independent of the questions of whether or not charge conjugation (C), parity (P), or time reversal (T) are valid symmetry operations.[6,3]

For the short-lived and long-lived particles, respectively, we adopt, following Lee and Yang, the names K^0_+ and K^0_-. Otherwise the notation used is that of reference (3).

First, we observe that, in most, if not all, circumstances K^0_+ decay predominates over absorption processes, so that it is a good approximation to set

$$\beta ck \left|\frac{n - n'}{2}\right| << \frac{1}{2\gamma\tau_+} .$$

(This is precisely what makes the regeneration so small[2]). With this approximation, the solutions for the amplitudes (a_+, a_-) of K^0_+, K^0_- in the absorber simplify considerably:

$$\begin{pmatrix} a_+(t) \\ a_-(t) \end{pmatrix} \cong \left[-\begin{pmatrix} R \\ R^2 \end{pmatrix} e^{-i(\omega_+ + \frac{1}{2\gamma\tau_+})t} + \begin{pmatrix} R \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{-i\omega_- t} \right] e^{i\beta ck\left(\frac{n+n'}{2}\right)t} ,$$

where $$R = \frac{\beta\gamma ck\,(n - n')}{2\left(\frac{1}{2\tau_+} + i(\omega^0_+ - \omega^0_-)\right)} , \text{ and } |R| << 1 , \qquad (1)$$

The initial conditions have been taken as $a_+(o) = 0$, $a_-(o) = 1$ and $\frac{1}{\tau_-}$ has been neglected in comparison with $\frac{1}{\tau_+}$. If we now confine ourselves to thicknesses (L) large compared with the K_+^0 decay distance, we can drop the first term, and we have, for the K_+^0 intensity emerging from the absorber,

$$\left| a\,(L) \right|^2 \approx \left| R \right|^2 e^{-N\left(\frac{\sigma + \sigma'}{2}\right)L} . \qquad (2)$$

This refers to the unscatterdd regenerated K_+^0. The K_+^0 intensity regenerated by scattering through an angle ϕ, at depth x, is, in the same spirit (evaluated at $\phi = 0$),

$$\left| \left(\frac{dI_s}{dx}\right) dx\,d\Omega \right|_{\phi = 0} \approx \frac{k^4}{16\pi^2 N} \left| n - n' \right|^2 dx\,d\Omega\, e^{-N\left(\frac{\sigma + \sigma'}{2}\right)x} . \qquad (3)$$

To evaluate the scattered K_+^0 intensity emerging from the absorber at $\phi = 0$, we must multiply Eq. (3) by the probability of escape of the regenerated K_+^0, without decay or further scattering, and must integrate with respect to x. The scattered K_+^0, being incoherent with the incident beam, decays with essentially the exponent of the first term of Eq. (1), so that we have

$$\left| I_s\, d\Omega \right|_{\phi=0} \approx d\Omega \int_0^L \frac{dI_s}{dx}(x)\; e^{-\left(\frac{L - x}{\beta\gamma c\,\tau_+}\right)} e^{-N\left(\frac{\sigma + \sigma'}{2}\right)(L - x)} dx .$$

The absorption terms combine, and we have simply

$$\left| I_s\; d\Omega \right|_{\phi=0} \approx \frac{k^4}{16\pi^2 N} \left| n - n' \right|^2 e^{-N\left(\frac{\sigma + \sigma'}{2}\right)L} \beta\gamma c\,\tau_+\, d\Omega . \qquad (4)$$

Putting $\beta\gamma = \hbar k/Mc$, we obtain

$$\left| I_s\, d\Omega \right|_{\phi=0} \approx \frac{k^5 \hbar\, \tau_+}{16\pi^2 N M} \left| n - n' \right|^2 e^{-\left(\frac{\sigma + \sigma'}{2}\right)L} d\Omega , \qquad (5)$$

where M is the mass of the K^0. In the same terms, the unscattered regenerated intensity is:

$$\left| a_+(L) \right|^2 \approx \left(\frac{\hbar^2 k^4 \tau_+^2}{M^2}\right) \frac{\left| n - n' \right|^2 e^{-\left(\frac{\sigma + \sigma'}{2}\right)L}}{\left| 1 + i\left(\frac{\omega_+^0 - \omega_-^0}{1/2\;\tau_+}\right) \right|^2} ,$$

and the ratio of unscattered to scattered K^0_+ intensity, at $\phi = 0$ and ... momentum $\hbar k$, is

$$\frac{|a_+(L)|^2}{I_s} \left(\frac{16\pi^2\hbar\tau_+ N}{M k}\right) \frac{1}{\left|1 + i\left(\frac{\omega^0_+ - \omega^0_-}{1/2\,\tau_+}\right)\right|^2} \qquad (6)$$

The factors depending on the cross sections cancel, and the result is sensitive to the mass difference. The cancellation reflects the fact that the two groups of particles represent different aspects of the same phenomenon. However, in the unscattered group the regenerated wave is fed by the incident wave over a time $\approx \tau_+$, and is sensitive to the difference in natural frequency of the two waves, whereas in the scattered group the regeneration takes place in a single event, and does not depend on the mass difference.

The rather similar result obtained in an earlier communication was for absorber thicknesses small compared to the distance the particle travels in one period of the mass difference oscillation, and hence did not depend on the mass difference.

The terms neglected are of order $|R|^2$ throughout, therefore the fractional error in Eq. (6) should be of the same order as the fraction of K^0_- regenerated (for reasonable guesses, the latter is 1% or less).[2] It would seem, then, that a measurement of $|a_+|^2/I_s$ behind a fairly thick absorber (several decay lengths), coupled with a knowledge of the momentum of each event, could be used to determine the mass difference.

Some qualifications need to be made, however; for one thing, one should in principle, use an absorber that is an isotopically pure element of spin zero (or possibly 1/2.)[3] In practice, the scattering is probably well described by the optical model, and if so, the nucleus is characterized, for our purposes, entirely by its size. Thus any element would do, but compounds would still be unsatisfactory in general.

The derivation also assumed "good geometry," in that there was taken to be an unscattered K^0_- beam at $X \approx L$ which was the source of all events; deviations from "good geometry" in practicalk situations would have to be taken into account. Finally, only elastic scatterings were considered. Inelastic ones could probably be ruled out on the basis of angular distribution, if not by other means.

As a numerical example, Eq. (6) says that for 100-Mev K^0_-'s in Pb, with a 1° angular resolution, and for mass difference zero, one has

$$\frac{\left| a_+ \right|^2}{I_s \, \delta \, \Omega} = 40.$$

The mass-difference measurement here proposed differs from that pointed out by Trieman and Sachs,[7] in that no parameters of the weak interactions other than the mass difference, are involved.

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