



Search for lepton-flavour-violating decays of the Higgs boson



CMS Collaboration*

CERN, Switzerland

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ABSTRACT

The first direct search for lepton-flavour-violating decays of the recently discovered Higgs boson (H) is described. The search is performed in the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ and $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ channels, where τ_e and τ_h are tau leptons reconstructed in the electronic and hadronic decay channels, respectively. The data sample used in this search was collected in pp collisions at a centre-of-mass energy of $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV with the CMS experiment at the CERN LHC and corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 19.7 fb^{-1} . The sensitivity of the search is an order of magnitude better than the existing indirect limits. A slight excess of signal events with a significance of 2.4 standard deviations is observed. The p -value of this excess at $M_H = 125$ GeV is 0.010. The best fit branching fraction is $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = (0.84_{-0.37}^{+0.39})\%$. A constraint on the branching fraction, $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < 1.51\%$ at 95% confidence level is set. This limit is subsequently used to constrain the μ - τ Yukawa couplings to be less than 3.6×10^{-3} .

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1. Introduction

The discovery of the Higgs boson (H) [1–3] has generated great interest in exploring its properties. In the standard model (SM), lepton-flavour-violating (LFV) decays are forbidden if the theory is to be renormalizable [4]. If this requirement is relaxed, so the theory is valid only to a finite mass scale, then LFV couplings may be introduced. LFV decays can occur naturally in models with more than one Higgs doublet without abandoning renormalizability [5]. They also arise in supersymmetric models [6–9], composite Higgs boson models [10,11], models with flavour symmetries [12], Randall–Sundrum models [13–15], and many others [16–23]. The presence of LFV couplings would allow $\mu \rightarrow e$, $\tau \rightarrow \mu$ and $\tau \rightarrow e$ transitions to proceed via a virtual Higgs boson [24,25]. The experimental limits on these have recently been translated into constraints on the branching fractions $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow e\mu, \mu\tau, e\tau)$ [4,26]. The $\mu \rightarrow e$ transition is strongly constrained by null search results for $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ [27], $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu e) < \mathcal{O}(10^{-8})$. However, the constraints on $\tau \rightarrow \mu$ and $\tau \rightarrow e$ are much less stringent. These come from searches for $\tau \rightarrow \mu\gamma$ [28,29] and other rare τ decays [30], $\tau \rightarrow e\gamma$, μ and $eg - 2$ measurements [27]. Exclusion limits on the electron and muon electric dipole moments [31] also provide complementary constraints. These lead to the much less restrictive limits: $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < \mathcal{O}(10\%)$, $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow e\tau) < \mathcal{O}(10\%)$. The observation of the Higgs boson offers the possibility of sensitive direct

searches for LFV Higgs boson decays. To date no dedicated searches have been performed. However, a theoretical reinterpretation of the ATLAS $H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ search results in terms of LFV decays by an independent group has been used to set limits at the 95% confidence level (CL) of $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < 13\%$, $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow e\tau) < 13\%$ [4].

This letter describes a search for a LFV decay of a Higgs boson with $M_H = 125$ GeV at the CMS experiment. The 2012 dataset collected at a centre-of-mass energy of $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 19.7 fb^{-1} is used. The search is performed in two channels, $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ and $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$, where τ_e and τ_h are tau leptons reconstructed in the electronic and hadronic decay channels, respectively. The signature is very similar to the SM $H \rightarrow \tau_\mu\tau_e$ and $H \rightarrow \tau_\mu\tau_h$ decays, where τ_μ is a tau lepton decaying muonically, which have been studied by CMS in Refs. [32,33] and ATLAS in Ref. [34], but with some significant kinematic differences. The μ comes promptly from the LFV H decay and tends to have a larger momentum than in the SM case. There is only one tau lepton so there are typically fewer neutrinos in the decay. They are highly Lorentz boosted and tend to be collinear with the visible τ decay products.

The two channels are divided into categories based on the number of jets in order to separate the different H boson production mechanisms. The signal sensitivity is enhanced by using different selection criteria for each category. The dominant production mechanism is gluon–gluon fusion but there is also a significant contribution from vector boson fusion which is enhanced by requiring jets to be present in the event. The dominant background in the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ channel is $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$. Other much smaller

* E-mail address: cms-publication-committee-chair@cern.ch.

backgrounds come from misidentified leptons in $W + \text{jets}$, QCD multijets and $t\bar{t}$ events. In the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ channel the dominant background arises from misidentified τ leptons in $W + \text{jets}$, QCD multijets and $t\bar{t}$ events. Less significant backgrounds come from $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ and $Z + \text{jets}$. The principal backgrounds are estimated using data. There is also a small background from SM H decays which is estimated with simulation. The presence or absence of a signal is established by fitting a mass distribution for signal and background using the asymptotic CL_s criterion [35,36]. A “blind” analysis was performed. The data in the signal region were not studied until the selection criteria had been fixed and the background estimate finalized.

2. Detector and data sets

A detailed description of the CMS detector, together with a description of the coordinate system used and the relevant kinematic variables, can be found in Ref. [37]. The momenta of charged particles are measured with a silicon pixel and strip tracker that covers the pseudorapidity range $|\eta| < 2.5$ and is inside a 3.8 T axial magnetic field. Surrounding the tracker are a lead tungstate crystal electromagnetic calorimeter (ECAL) and a brass/scintillator hadron calorimeter, both consisting of a barrel assembly and two endcaps that extend to a pseudorapidity range of $|\eta| < 3.0$. A steel/quartz-fiber Cherenkov forward detector extends the calorimetric coverage to $|\eta| < 5.0$. The outermost component of the CMS detector is the muon system, consisting of gas-ionization detectors placed in the steel flux-return yoke of the magnet to measure the momenta of muons traversing the detector. The two-level CMS trigger system selects events of interest for permanent storage. The first trigger level, composed of custom hardware processors, uses information from the calorimeters and muon detectors to select events in less than 3.2 μs . The high-level trigger software algorithms, executed on a farm of commercial processors, further reduce the event rate using information from all detector subsystems.

The $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ channel selection begins by requiring a single μ trigger with a transverse momentum threshold $p_T^\mu > 24$ GeV in the pseudorapidity range $|\eta| < 2.1$, while the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ channel requires a μ - e trigger with p_T thresholds of 17 GeV ($|\eta| < 2.4$) for the μ and 8 GeV ($|\eta| < 2.5$) for the e . Loose e and μ identification criteria are applied at the trigger level. The leptons are also required to be isolated from other tracks and calorimeter energy deposits to maintain an acceptable trigger rate.

Simulated samples of signal and background events are produced using various Monte Carlo (MC) event generators, with the CMS detector response modeled with GEANT4 [38]. Higgs bosons are produced in proton–proton collisions predominantly by gluon–gluon fusion, but also by vector boson fusion and in association with a W or Z boson. It is assumed that the rate of new decays of the H are sufficiently small that the narrow width approximation can be used. The LFV H decay samples are produced with PYTHIA 8.175 [39]. The background event samples with a SM H are generated by POWHEG 1.0 [40–44] with the τ decays modeled by TAUOLA [45]. The MADGRAPH 5.1 [46] generator is used for $Z + \text{jets}$, $W + \text{jets}$, $t\bar{t}$, and diboson production, and POWHEG for single top-quark production. The POWHEG and MADGRAPH generators are interfaced with PYTHIA for parton shower and fragmentation.

3. Event reconstruction

A particle-flow (PF) algorithm [47,48] combines the information from all CMS sub-detectors to identify and reconstruct the individual particles emerging from all vertices: charged hadrons, neutral hadrons, photons, muons, and electrons. These particles are then used to reconstruct jets, hadronic τ decays, and to quantify

the isolation of leptons and photons. The missing transverse energy vector is the negative vector sum of all particle transverse momenta and its magnitude is referred to as E_T^{miss} . The variable $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2}$ is used to measure the separation between reconstructed objects in the detector, where ϕ is the azimuthal angle (in radians) of the trajectory of the object in the plane transverse to the direction of the proton beams.

The large number of proton interactions occurring per LHC bunch crossing (pileup), with an average of 21 in 2012, makes the identification of the vertex corresponding to the hard-scattering process nontrivial. This affects most of the object reconstruction algorithms: jets, lepton isolation, etc. The tracking system is able to separate collision vertices as close as 0.5 mm along the beam direction [49]. For each vertex, the sum of the p_T^2 of all tracks associated with the vertex is computed. The vertex for which this quantity is the largest is assumed to correspond to the hard-scattering process, and is referred to as the primary vertex in the event reconstruction.

Muons are reconstructed using two algorithms [50]: one in which tracks in the silicon tracker are matched to signals in the muon detectors, and another in which a global track fit is performed, seeded by signals in the muon systems. The muon candidates used in the analysis are required to be successfully reconstructed by both algorithms. Further identification criteria are imposed on the muon candidates to reduce the fraction of tracks misidentified as muons. These include the number of measurements in the tracker and in the muon systems, the fit quality of the global muon track and its consistency with the primary vertex.

Electron reconstruction requires the matching of an energy cluster in the ECAL with a track in the silicon tracker [51,52]. Identification criteria based on the ECAL shower shape, matching between the track and the ECAL cluster, and consistency with the primary vertex are imposed. Electron identification relies on a multivariate technique that combines observables sensitive to the amount of bremsstrahlung along the electron trajectory, the geometrical and momentum matching between the electron trajectory and associated clusters, as well as shower-shape observables. Additional requirements are imposed to remove electrons produced by photon conversions.

Jets are reconstructed from all the PF objects using the anti- k_T jet clustering algorithm [53] implemented in FASTJET [54], with a distance parameter of 0.5. The jet energy is corrected for the contribution of particles created in pileup interactions and in the underlying event. Particles from different pileup vertices can be clustered into a pileup jet, or significantly overlap a jet from the primary vertex below the p_T threshold applied in the analysis. Such jets are identified and removed [55].

Hadronically decaying τ leptons are reconstructed and identified using the hadron plus strips (HPS) algorithm [56] which targets the main decay modes by selecting PF candidates with one charged hadron and up to two neutral pions, or with three charged hadrons. A photon from a neutral-pion decay can convert in the tracker material into an electron and a positron, which can then radiate bremsstrahlung photons. These particles give rise to several ECAL energy deposits at the same η value and separated in azimuthal angle, and are reconstructed as several photons by the PF algorithm. To increase the acceptance for such converted photons, the neutral pions are identified by clustering the reconstructed photons in narrow strips along the azimuthal direction.

4. Event selection

The event selection consists of three steps. First, a loose selection defining the basic signature is applied. The sample is then divided into categories, according to the number of jets in the

Table 1
Selection criteria for the kinematic variables after the loose selection.

Variable [GeV]	$H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$			$H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$		
	0-jet	1-jet	2-jet	0-jet	1-jet	2-jet
$p_T^\mu >$	50	45	25	45	35	30
$p_T^e >$	10	10	10	–	–	–
$p_T^{\tau_h} >$	–	–	–	35	40	40
$M_T^e <$	65	65	25	–	–	–
$M_T^\mu >$	50	40	15	–	–	–
$M_T^{\tau_h} <$	–	–	–	50	35	35
[radians]						
$\Delta\phi_{\vec{p}_T^\mu - \vec{p}_T^{\tau_h}} >$	–	–	–	2.7	–	–
$\Delta\phi_{\vec{p}_T^e - \vec{E}_T^{\text{miss}}} <$	0.5	0.5	0.3	–	–	–
$\Delta\phi_{\vec{p}_T^e - \vec{p}_T^\mu} >$	2.7	1.0	–	–	–	–

event. Finally, requirements are placed on a set of kinematic variables designed to suppress the backgrounds.

The loose selection for the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ channel requires an isolated μ ($p_T > 25$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.1$) and an isolated e ($p_T > 10$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.3$) of opposite charge lying within a region of the detector that allows good identification. The e and μ are required to be separated by $\Delta R > 0.1$. The $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ channel requires an isolated μ ($p_T > 30$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.1$) and an isolated hadronically decaying τ ($p_T > 30$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.3$) of opposite charge. Leptons are also required to be isolated from any jet in the event with $p_T > 30$ GeV by $\Delta R > 0.4$ and to have an impact parameter consistent with the primary vertex.

The events are then divided into categories within each channel according to the number of jets in the event. Jets are required to pass identification criteria [55], have $p_T > 30$ GeV and lie within the range $|\eta| < 4.7$. The zero jet category contains signal events predominantly produced by gluon–gluon fusion. The one-jet category contains signal events predominantly produced by gluon–gluon fusion and a negligibly small number of events produced in association with a W or Z boson decaying hadronically. The two jet category is enriched with signal events produced by vector boson fusion.

The main variable for the discrimination between the signal and background is the collinear mass, M_{col} , which provides an estimator of the reconstructed H mass using the observed decay products. This is constructed using the collinear approximation [57] which is based on the observation that since the mass of the H is much greater than the mass of the τ , the τ decay products are highly Lorentz boosted in the direction of the τ . The neutrino momenta can be approximated to be in the same direction as the other visible decay products of the τ and the component of the missing transverse energy in the transverse direction of the visible τ decay products is used to estimate the transverse component of the neutrino momentum. Fig. 1 shows M_{col} distribution for the signal and background compared to data for each of the categories in each channel after the loose selection. The simulated signal for $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 100\%$ is shown. The principal backgrounds are estimated with data using techniques described in Section 5. There is good agreement between data and the background estimation. The agreement is similar in all of the kinematic variables that are subsequently used to suppress backgrounds. The analysis is performed “blinded” in the region $100 < M_{\text{col}} < 150$ GeV.

Next, a set of kinematic variables is defined and the criteria for selection are determined by optimizing for $S/\sqrt{S+B}$ where S and B are the expected signal and background event yields in the mass window $100 < M_{\text{col}} < 150$ GeV. The signal event yield corresponds to the SM H production cross section at $M_H = 125$ GeV with $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 10\%$. This value for the LFV H branching

fraction is chosen because it corresponds to the limit from indirect measurements as described in Ref. [4]. The optimization was also performed assuming $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 1\%$ and negligible change in the optimal values of selection criteria was observed. The criteria for each category, and in each channel, are given in Table 1. The variables used are the lepton transverse momenta p_T^ℓ with $\ell = \tau_h, \mu, e$; azimuthal angles between the leptons $\Delta\phi_{\vec{p}_T^{\ell_1} - \vec{p}_T^{\ell_2}}$; azimuthal angle $\Delta\phi_{\vec{p}_T^\ell - \vec{E}_T^{\text{miss}}}$; the transverse mass $M_T^\ell = \sqrt{2p_T^\ell E_T^{\text{miss}}(1 - \cos \Delta\phi_{\vec{p}_T^\ell - \vec{E}_T^{\text{miss}}})}$. Events in the 2-jet category are required to have two jets separated by a pseudorapidity gap ($|\Delta\eta| > 3.5$) and to have a dijet invariant mass greater than 550 GeV. In the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ channel events in which at least one of the jets identified as coming from a b -quark decay are using the combined secondary-vertex b -tagging algorithm [58] are vetoed, to suppress backgrounds from top quark decays.

5. Background processes

The contributions of the dominant background processes are estimated with data while less significant backgrounds are estimated using simulation. The largest backgrounds come from $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ and from misidentified leptons in $W + \text{jets}$ and QCD multijet production.

5.1. $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$

The $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ background contribution is estimated using an embedding technique [33,59] as follows. A sample of $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ events is taken from data using a loose μ selection. The two muons are then replaced with PF particles resulting from the reconstruction of simulated τ lepton decays. Thus, the key features of the event topology such as the jets, missing transverse energy and underlying event are taken directly from data with only the τ decays being simulated. The normalization of the sample is obtained from the simulation. The technique is validated by comparing the τ lepton identification efficiencies estimated with an embedded decay sample, using simulated $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ events, to those from simulated $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ decays.

5.2. Misidentified leptons

Leptons can arise from misidentified PF objects in $W + \text{jets}$ and QCD multijet processes. This background is estimated with data. A sample with similar kinematic properties to the signal sample but enriched in $W + \text{jets}$ and QCD multijets is defined. Then the probability for PF objects to be misidentified as leptons is measured in an independent data set, and this probability is applied to the enriched sample to compute the misidentified lepton background in the signal region. The technique is shown schematically in Table 2 in which four regions are defined including the signal and background enriched regions and two control regions used for validation of the technique. It is employed slightly differently in the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ and $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ channels. The lepton isolation requirements used to define the enriched regions in each channel are slightly different.

In the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ channel, region I is the signal region in which an isolated μ and an isolated e are required. Region III is a data sample in which all the analysis selection criteria are applied except that one of the leptons is required to be not-isolated. Thus, there are two components: events with an isolated μ and not-isolated e events, as well as events with an isolated e and not-isolated μ events. There is negligible number of signal events in region III. Regions II and IV are data samples formed with the same

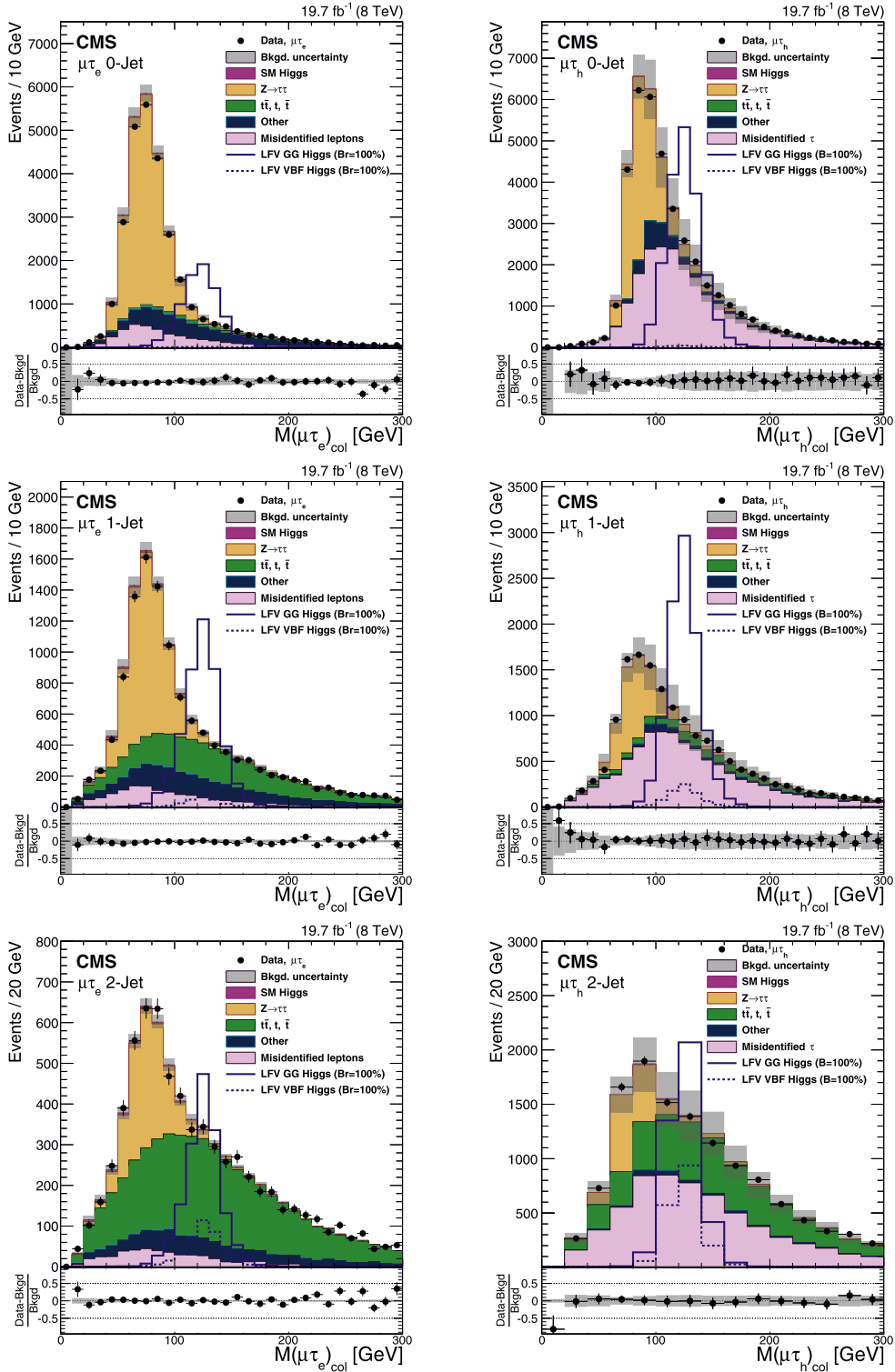


Fig. 1. Distributions of the collinear mass M_{col} for signal with $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 100\%$ for clarity, and background processes after the loose selection requirements for the LFV $H \rightarrow \mu\tau$ candidates for the different channels and categories compared to data. The shaded grey bands indicate the total uncertainty. The bottom panel in each plot shows the fractional difference between the observed data and the total estimated background. Top left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ 0-jet; top right: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ 0-jet; middle left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ 1-jet; middle right: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ 1-jet; bottom left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ 2-jet; bottom right: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ 2-jet.

selection criteria as regions I and III, respectively, but with same-sign rather than opposite-sign leptons. The kinematic distributions of the same-sign samples are very similar to the opposite-sign samples.

The sample in region III is dominated by $W + \text{jets}$ and QCD multijets but with small contributions from WW, ZZ and WZ that

are subtracted using simulation. The misidentified μ background in region I is then estimated by multiplying the event yield in region III by a factor $f_{\mu} \cdot \epsilon_{\text{trigger}}$, where f_{μ} is the ratio of not-isolated to isolated μ 's. It is computed in an independent μ data sample $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + X$, where X is an object identified as a μ , in bins of p_T and η . The $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + X$ sample is corrected for contributions from

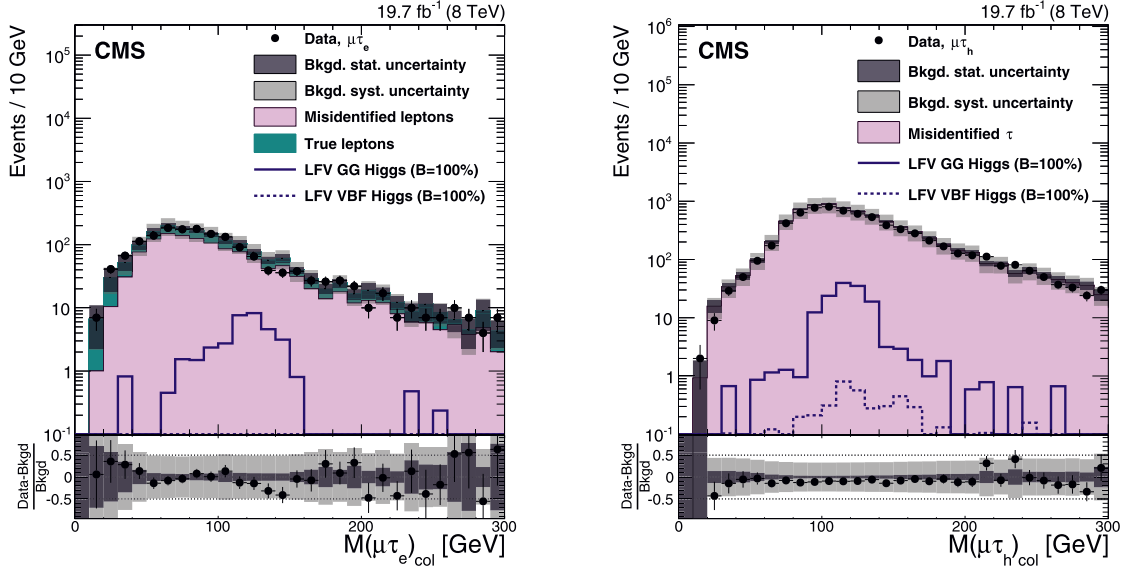


Fig. 2. Distributions of M_{col} for region II compared to the estimate from scaling the region IV sample by the measured misidentification rates. The bottom panel in each plot shows the fractional difference between the observed data and the estimate. Left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$. Right: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$.

Table 2

Schematic to illustrate the application of the method used to estimate the misidentified lepton (ℓ) background. Samples are defined by the charge of the two leptons and by the isolation requirements on each. Charged conjugates are assumed.

Region I	Region II
ℓ_1^+ (isolated)	ℓ_1^+ (isolated)
ℓ_2^- (isolated)	ℓ_2^- (isolated)
Region III	Region IV
ℓ_1^+ (isolated)	ℓ_1^+ (isolated)
ℓ_2^- (not-isolated)	ℓ_2^- (not-isolated)

WW, ZZ and WZ using simulated samples. A correction $\epsilon_{\text{trigger}}$ is made to account for the difference in trigger efficiency for selection of events with isolated e and not-isolated μ versus the events with isolated e and isolated μ . The misidentified e background is computed in exactly the same way. The technique is validated by using the same-sign data from regions II and IV as shown schematically in Table 2. In Fig. 2(left) the observed data yield in region II is compared to the estimate from scaling the region IV sample by the measured misidentification rates. The region II sample is dominated by misidentified leptons but also includes small contributions of true leptons arising from vector boson decays, estimated with simulated samples.

In the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ channel, the τ_h candidate can come from a misidentified jet with a number of sources, predominantly $W + \text{jets}$ and QCD multijets, but also $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + \text{jets}$ and $t\bar{t}$. In this case the enriched background regions are defined with τ_h candidates that pass a looser isolation requirement, but do not pass the signal isolation requirement. The misidentification rate f_{τ_h} is then defined as the fraction of τ_h candidates with the looser isolation that also pass the signal isolation requirement. It is measured in observed $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + X$ events, where X is an object identified as a τ_h . The misidentification rate measured in $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + X$ data is checked by comparing to that measured in $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + X$ simulation and found to be in good agreement. The misidentified background in the signal region (region I) is estimated by multiplying the event yield in region III by a factor $f_{\tau_h}/(1 - f_{\tau_h})$. The procedure is validated with same-sign $\mu\tau$ events in the same way as for the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ channel above. Fig. 2(right) shows the data in region II compared to the estimate from scaling region IV by the misidentification rates.

The method assumes that the misidentification rate in $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu + X$ events is the same as for $W + \text{jets}$ and QCD processes. To test this assumption the misidentification rates are measured in a QCD jet data control sample. They are found to be consistent. Finally as a cross-check the study has been performed also as a function of the number of jets in the event and similar agreement is found.

5.3. Other backgrounds

The SM H decays in the $H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ channel provide a small background that is estimated with simulation. This background is suppressed by the kinematic selection criteria and peaks below 125 GeV. The W leptonic decay from $t\bar{t}$ produces opposite-sign dileptons and $E_{\text{T}}^{\text{miss}}$. This background is estimated with simulated $t\bar{t}$ events using the shape of the M_{col} distribution from simulation and a data control region for normalization. The control region is the 2-jet selection but with the additional requirement that at least one of the jets is b-tagged in order to enhance the $t\bar{t}$ contribution. Other smaller backgrounds come from WW, ZZ + jets, $W\gamma + \text{jets}$ and single top-quark production. Each of these is estimated with simulation.

6. Systematic uncertainties

To set upper bounds on the signal strength, or determine a signal significance, we use the CL_s method [35,36]. A binned likelihood is used, based on the distributions of M_{col} for the signal and the various background sources. Systematic uncertainties are represented by nuisance parameters, some of which only affect the background and signal normalizations, while others affect the shape and/or normalization of the M_{col} distributions.

6.1. Normalization uncertainties

The uncertainties are summarized in Tables 3 and 4. The uncertainties in the e and μ selection efficiency (trigger, identification and isolation) are estimated using the “tag and probe” technique in $Z \rightarrow ee, \mu\mu$ data [59]. The identification efficiency of hadronic τ decays is estimated using the “tag and probe” technique in $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$

Table 3
Systematic uncertainties in the expected event yield in %. All uncertainties are treated as correlated between the categories, except where there are two numbers. In this case the number denoted with * is treated as uncorrelated between categories and the total uncertainty is the sum in quadrature of the two numbers.

Systematic uncertainty	H → $\mu\tau_e$			H → $\mu\tau_h$		
	0-Jet	1-Jet	2-Jet	0-Jet	1-Jet	2-Jet
Electron trigger/ID/isolation	3	3	3	–	–	–
Muon trigger/ID/isolation	2	2	2	2	2	2
Hadronic tau efficiency	–	–	–	9	9	9
Luminosity	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Z → $\tau\tau$ background	3 + 3*	3 + 5*	3 + 10*	3 + 5*	3 + 5*	3 + 10*
Z → $\mu\mu, ee$ background	30	30	30	30	30	30
Misidentified μ, e background	40	40	40	–	–	–
Misidentified τ_h background	–	–	–	30 + 10*	30	30
WW, ZZ + jets background	15	15	15	15	15	65
$t\bar{t}$ background	10	10	10 + 10*	10	10	10 + 33*
W + γ background	100	100	100	–	–	–
b-tagging veto	3	3	3	–	–	–
Single top production background	10	10	10	10	10	10

Table 4
Theoretical uncertainties in % for Higgs boson production. Anticorrelations arise due to migration of events between the categories and are expressed as negative numbers.

Systematic uncertainty	Gluon-gluon fusion			Vector boson fusion		
	0-Jet	1-Jet	2-Jet	0-Jet	1-Jet	2-Jet
Parton distribution function	+9.7	+9.7	+9.7	+3.6	+3.6	+3.6
Renormalization/factorization scale	+8	+10	–30	+4	+1.5	+2
Underlying event/parton shower	+4	–5	–10	+10	<1	–1

Table 5
Systematic uncertainties in % for the shape of the signal and background templates.

Systematic uncertainty	H → $\mu\tau_e$	H → $\mu\tau_h$
Hadronic tau energy scale	–	3
Jet energy scale	3–7	3–7
Unclustered energy scale	10	10
Z → $\tau\tau$ bias	100	–

data [56]. The uncertainty in the Z → $\tau\tau$ background comes predominantly from the uncertainty in the τ efficiency. The uncertainties in the estimation of the misidentified lepton rate come from the difference in rates measured in different data samples (QCD multijets and W + jets). The uncertainty in the production cross section of the backgrounds that have been estimated by simulation is also included.

There are several uncertainties on the H production cross section, which depend on the production mechanism contribution and the analysis category. They are given in Table 4. These affect the LFV H and the SM H background equally, and are treated as 100% correlated. The parton distribution function (PDF) uncertainty is evaluated by comparing the yields in each category, when spanning the parameter range of a number of different independent PDF sets including CT10 [60], MSTW [61], NNPDF [62] as recommended by PDF4LHC [63]. The scale uncertainty is estimated by varying the renormalization, μ_R , and factorization scales, μ_F , up and down by one half or two times the nominal scale ($\mu_R = \mu_F = M_H/2$) under the constraint $0.5 < \mu_F/\mu_R < 2$ [64]. The underlying event and parton shower uncertainty is estimated by using two different PYTHIA tunes, AUET2 and Z2*. Anticorrelations arise due to migration of events between the categories and are expressed as negative numbers.

6.2. M_{col} shape uncertainties

The systematic uncertainties that lead to a change in the shape of the M_{col} distribution are summarized in Table 5. In the embedded Z → $\tau\tau$ M_{col} distribution, used to estimate the Z → $\tau\tau$ background, a 1% shift has been observed with respect to Z → $\tau\tau$

simulations by comparing the means of both distributions. This occurs only in the H → $\mu\tau_e$ channel. The M_{col} distribution has been corrected for this effect and a 100% uncertainty on this shift is used as a systematic uncertainty for the possible bias. The jet energy scale has been studied extensively and a standard prescription for corrections [65] is used in all CMS analyses. The overall scale is set using γ + jets events and the most significant uncertainty arises from the photon energy scale. A number of other uncertainties such as jet fragmentation modeling, single pion response and uncertainties in the pileup corrections are also included. The jet energy scale uncertainties (3–7%) are applied as a function of p_T and η , including all correlations, to all jets in the event, propagated to the missing energy, and the resultant M_{col} distribution is used in the fit. There is also an additional uncertainty to account for the unclustered energy scale uncertainty. The unclustered energy comes from jets below 10 GeV and PF candidates not within jets. It is also propagated to the missing transverse energy. These effects cause a shift of the M_{col} distribution. The τ energy scale is estimated by comparing Z → $\tau\tau$ events in data and simulation. An uncertainty of 3% is derived from this comparison. The uncertainty is applied by shifting the p_T of the τ candidates in the event and using the resultant M_{col} distribution in the fit. Finally, the M_{col} distributions used in the fit have a statistical uncertainty in each mass bin that is included as an uncertainty which is uncorrelated between the bins.

Potential uncertainties in the shape of the misidentified lepton backgrounds have also been considered. In the H → $\mu\tau_e$ channel the misidentified lepton rates f_μ, f_e are measured and applied in bins of lepton p_T and η . These rates are all adjusted up or down by one standard deviation (σ) and the differences in the shape of the resultant M_{col} distributions are then used as nuisance parameters in the fit. In the H → $\mu\tau_h$ channel the τ misidentification rate f_τ is found to be approximately flat in p_T and η . To estimate the systematic uncertainty the p_T distribution of f_τ is fit with a linear function and the rate recomputed from the fitted slope and intercept. The modified M_{col} distribution that results from the recomputed background is then used to evaluate the systematic uncertainty.

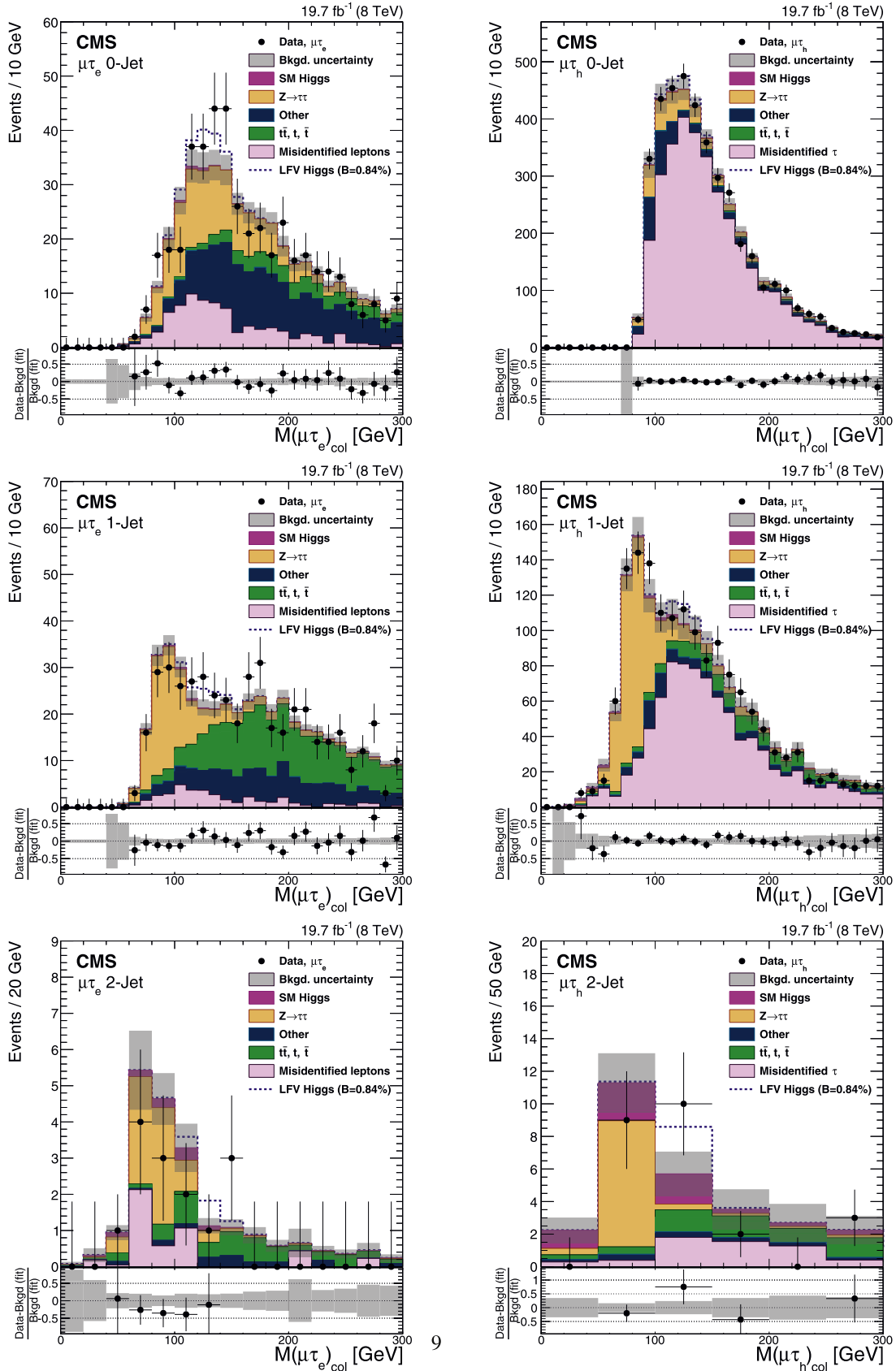


Fig. 3. Distributions of the collinear mass M_{col} after fitting for signal and background for the LfV $H \rightarrow \mu\tau$ candidates in the different channels and categories compared to data. The distribution of the simulated LfV Higgs boson sample is shown for the best fit branching fraction of $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 0.84\%$. The bottom panel in each plot shows the fractional difference between the observed data and the fitted background. Top left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ 0-jet; top right: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ 0-jet; middle left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ 1-jet; middle right: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ 1-jet; bottom left: $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$ 2-jet; bottom right $H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$ 2-jet.

Table 6
Event yields in the signal region, $100 < M_{\text{col}} < 150$ GeV after fitting for signal and background. The expected contributions are normalized to an integrated luminosity of 19.7 fb^{-1} . The LFV Higgs boson signal is the expected yield for $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 0.84\%$ with the SM Higgs boson cross section.

Sample	$H \rightarrow \mu\tau_h$			$H \rightarrow \mu\tau_e$		
	0-Jet	1-Jet	2-Jet	0-Jet	1-Jet	2-Jet
Misidentified leptons	1770 ± 530	377 ± 114	1.8 ± 1.0	42 ± 17	16 ± 7	1.1 ± 0.7
$Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$	187 ± 10	59 ± 4	0.4 ± 0.2	65 ± 3	39 ± 2	1.3 ± 0.2
ZZ, WW	46 ± 8	15 ± 3	0.2 ± 0.2	41 ± 7	22 ± 4	0.7 ± 0.2
$W\gamma$	–	–	–	2 ± 2	2 ± 2	–
$Z \rightarrow ee$ or $\mu\mu$	110 ± 23	20 ± 7	0.1 ± 0.1	1.6 ± 0.7	1.8 ± 0.8	–
$t\bar{t}$	2.2 ± 0.6	24 ± 3	0.9 ± 0.5	4.8 ± 0.7	30 ± 3	1.8 ± 0.4
$t\bar{t}$	2.2 ± 1.1	13 ± 3	0.5 ± 0.5	1.9 ± 0.2	6.8 ± 0.8	0.2 ± 0.1
SM H background	7.1 ± 1.3	5.3 ± 0.8	1.6 ± 0.5	1.9 ± 0.3	1.6 ± 0.2	0.6 ± 0.1
Sum of backgrounds	2125 ± 530	513 ± 114	5.4 ± 1.4	160 ± 19	118 ± 9	5.6 ± 0.9
LFV Higgs boson signal	66 ± 18	30 ± 8	2.9 ± 1.1	23 ± 6	13 ± 3	1.2 ± 0.3
Data	2147	511	10	180	128	6

7. Results

The M_{col} distributions after the fit for signal and background contributions are shown in Fig. 3 and the event yields in the mass range $100 < M_{\text{col}} < 150$ GeV are shown in Table 6. The different channels and categories are combined to set a 95% CL upper limit on the branching fraction of LFV H decay in the $\mu\tau$ channel, $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau)$.

The observed and the median expected 95% CL upper limits on the $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau)$ for the H mass at 125 GeV are given for each category in Table 7. Combining all the channels, an expected upper limit of $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < (0.75 \pm 0.38)\%$ is obtained. The observed upper limit is $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < 1.51\%$ which is above the expected limit due to an excess of the observed number of events above the background prediction. The fit can then be used to estimate the branching fraction if this excess were to be interpreted as a signal. The best fit values for the branching fractions are given in Table 7. The limits and best fit branching fractions are also summarized graphically in Fig. 4. The combined categories give a best fit of $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = (0.84^{+0.39}_{-0.37})\%$. The combined excess is 2.4 standard deviations which corresponds to a p -value of 0.010 at $M_H = 125$ GeV. The observed and expected M_{col} distributions combined for all channels and categories are shown in Fig. 5. The distributions are weighted in each channel and category by the $S/(S+B)$ ratio, where S and B are respectively the signal and background yields corresponding to the result of the global fit. The values for S and B are obtained in the $100 < M_{\text{col}} < 150$ GeV region.

8. Limits on lepton-flavour-violating couplings

The constraint on $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau)$ can be interpreted in terms of LFV Yukawa couplings [4]. The LFV decays $H \rightarrow e\mu, e\tau, \mu\tau$ arise at tree level from the assumed flavour-violating Yukawa interactions, $Y_{\ell^\alpha \ell^\beta}$ where ℓ^α, ℓ^β denote the leptons, $\ell^\alpha, \ell^\beta = e, \mu, \tau$ and $\ell^\alpha \neq \ell^\beta$. The decay width $\Gamma(H \rightarrow \ell^\alpha \ell^\beta)$ in terms of the Yukawa couplings is given by:

$$\Gamma(H \rightarrow \ell^\alpha \ell^\beta) = \frac{m_H}{8\pi} (|Y_{\ell^\beta \ell^\alpha}|^2 + |Y_{\ell^\alpha \ell^\beta}|^2),$$

and the branching fraction by:

$$B(H \rightarrow \ell^\alpha \ell^\beta) = \frac{\Gamma(H \rightarrow \ell^\alpha \ell^\beta)}{\Gamma(H \rightarrow \ell^\alpha \ell^\beta) + \Gamma_{\text{SM}}}.$$

The SM H decay width is assumed to be $\Gamma_{\text{SM}} = 4.1$ MeV [66] for $M_H = 125$ GeV. The 95% CL constraint on the Yukawa couplings de-

Table 7

The expected upper limits, observed upper limits and best fit values for the branching fractions for different jet categories for the $H \rightarrow \mu\tau$ process. The one standard-deviation probability intervals around the expected limits are shown in parentheses.

	0-Jet (%)	1-Jet (%)	2-Jet (%)
Expected Limits			
$\mu\tau_e$	$<1.32 (\pm 0.67)$	$<1.66 (\pm 0.85)$	$<3.77 (\pm 1.92)$
$\mu\tau_h$	$<2.34 (\pm 1.19)$	$<2.07 (\pm 1.06)$	$<2.31 (\pm 1.18)$
$\mu\tau$		$<0.75 (\pm 0.38)$	
Observed limits			
$\mu\tau_e$	<2.04	<2.38	<3.84
$\mu\tau_h$	<2.61	<2.22	<3.68
$\mu\tau$		<1.51	
Best fit branching fractions			
$\mu\tau_e$	$0.87^{+0.66}_{-0.62}$	$0.81^{+0.85}_{-0.78}$	$0.05^{+1.58}_{-0.97}$
$\mu\tau_h$	$0.41^{+1.20}_{-1.22}$	$0.21^{+1.03}_{-1.09}$	$1.48^{+1.16}_{-0.93}$
$\mu\tau$		$0.84^{+0.39}_{-0.37}$	

rived from $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < 1.51\%$ and the expression for the branching fraction above is:

$$\sqrt{|Y_{\mu\tau}|^2 + |Y_{\tau\mu}|^2} < 3.6 \times 10^{-3}.$$

Fig. 6 compares this result to the constraints from previous indirect measurements.

9. Summary

The first direct search for lepton-flavour-violating decays of a Higgs boson to a $\mu\tau$ pair, based on the full 8 TeV data set collected by CMS in 2012 is presented. It improves upon previously published indirect limits [4,26] by an order of magnitude. A slight excess of events with a significance of 2.4σ is observed, corresponding to a p -value of 0.010. The best fit branching fraction is $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = (0.84^{+0.39}_{-0.37})\%$. A constraint of $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) < 1.51\%$ at 95% confidence level is set. The limit is used to constrain the Yukawa couplings, $\sqrt{|Y_{\mu\tau}|^2 + |Y_{\tau\mu}|^2} < 3.6 \times 10^{-3}$. It improves the current bound by an order of magnitude.

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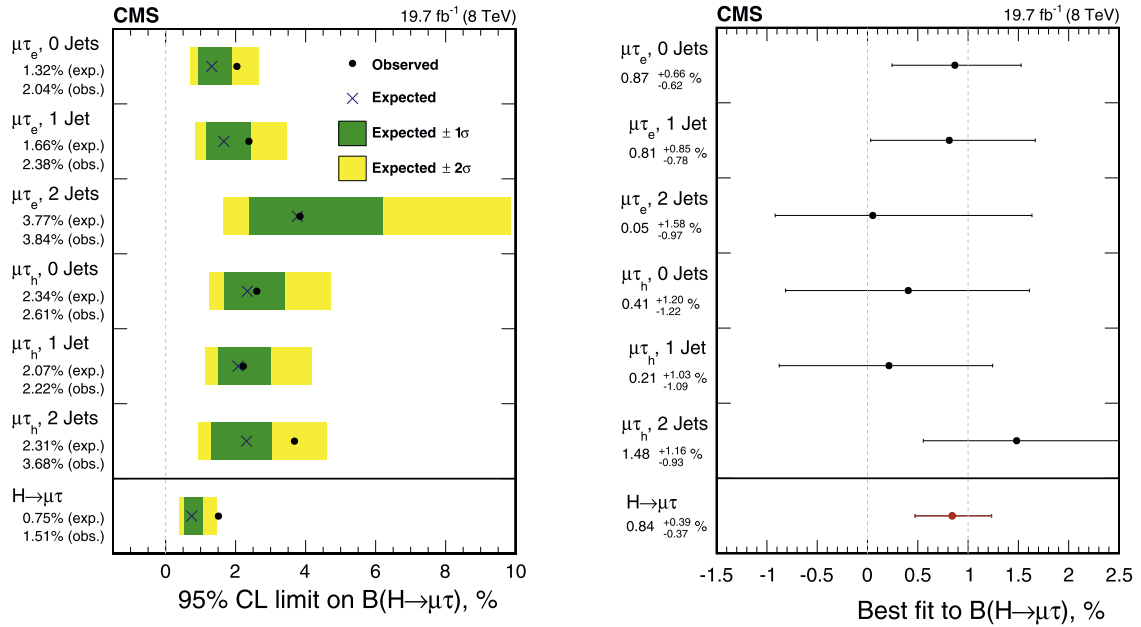


Fig. 4. Left: 95% CL upper limits by category for the LFV $H \rightarrow \mu\tau$ decays. Right: best fit branching fractions by category.

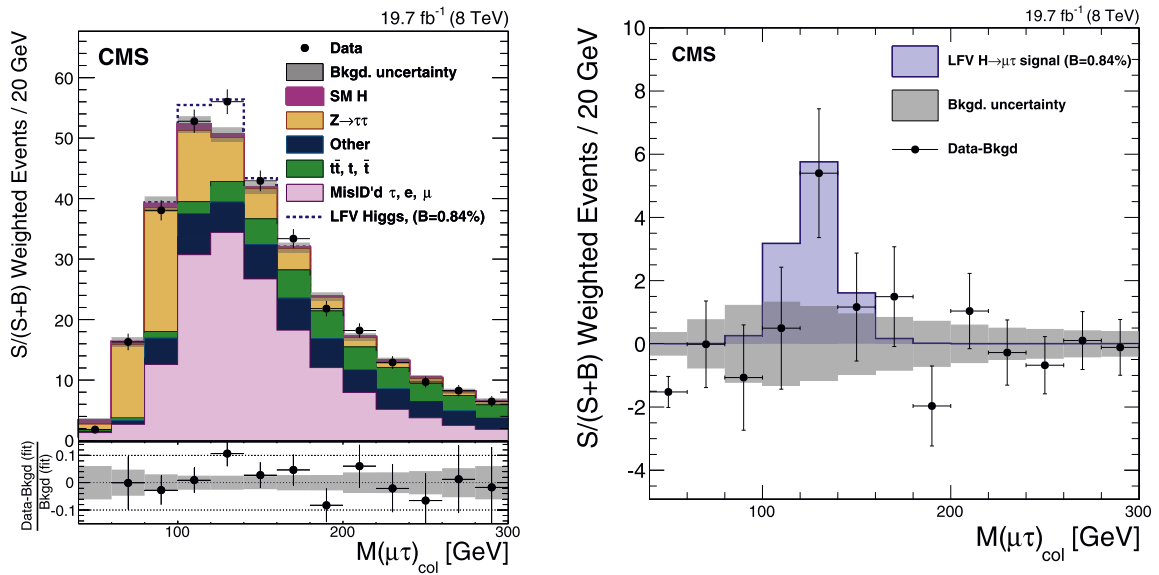


Fig. 5. Left: Distribution of M_{col} for all categories combined, with each category weighted by significance $S/(S+B)$. The significance is computed for the integral of the bins in the range $100 < M_{col} < 150$ GeV using $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 0.84\%$. The simulated Higgs signal shown is for $B(H \rightarrow \mu\tau) = 0.84\%$. The bottom panel shows the fractional difference between the observed data and the fitted background. Right: background subtracted M_{col} distribution for all categories combined.

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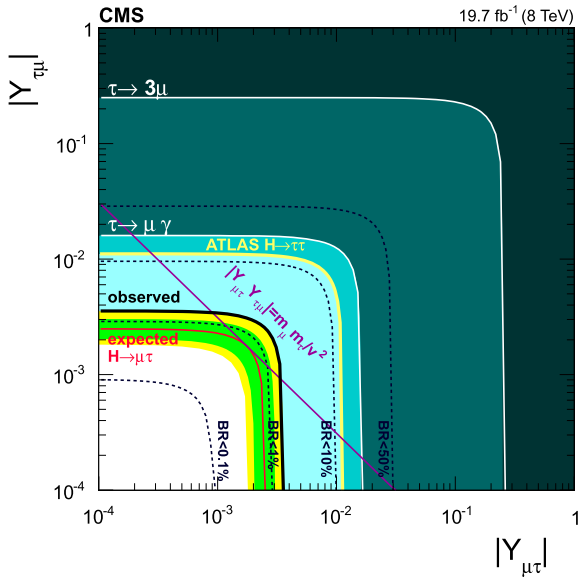


Fig. 6. Constraints on the flavour-violating Yukawa couplings, $|Y_{\mu\tau}|$ and $|Y_{\tau\mu}|$. The black dashed lines are contours of $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau)$ for reference. The expected limit (red solid line) with one sigma (green) and two sigma (yellow) bands, and observed limit (black solid line) are derived from the limit on $\mathcal{B}(H \rightarrow \mu\tau)$ from the present analysis. The shaded regions are derived constraints from null searches for $\tau \rightarrow 3\mu$ (dark green) and $\tau \rightarrow \mu\gamma$ (lighter green). The yellow line is the limit from a theoretical reinterpretation of an ATLAS $H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ search [4]. The light blue region indicates the additional parameter space excluded by our result. The purple diagonal line is the theoretical naturalness limit $Y_{ij}Y_{ji} \leq m_i m_j / v^2$. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

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CMS Collaboration

V. Khachatryan, A.M. Sirunyan, A. Tumasyan

Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

W. Adam, T. Bergauer, M. Dragicevic, J. Erö, M. Friedl, R. Frühwirth¹, V.M. Ghete, C. Hartl, N. Hörmann, J. Hrubec, M. Jeitler¹, W. Kiesenhofer, V. Knünz, M. Krammer¹, I. Krätschmer, D. Liko, I. Mikulec, D. Rabady², B. Rahbaran, H. Rohringer, R. Schöfbeck, J. Strauss, W. Treberer-Treberspurg, W. Waltenberger, C.-E. Wulz¹

Institut für Hochenergiephysik der OeAW, Wien, Austria

V. Mossolov, N. Shumeiko, J. Suarez Gonzalez

National Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Belarus

S. Alderweireldt, S. Bansal, T. Cornelis, E.A. De Wolf, X. Janssen, A. Knutsson, J. Lauwers, S. Luyckx, S. Ochesanu, R. Rougny, M. Van De Klundert, H. Van Haevermaet, P. Van Mechelen, N. Van Remortel, A. Van Spilbeek

Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium

F. Blekman, S. Blyweert, J. D'Hondt, N. Daci, N. Heracleous, J. Keaveney, S. Lowette, M. Maes, A. Olbrechts, Q. Python, D. Strom, S. Tavernier, W. Van Doninck, P. Van Mulders, G.P. Van Onsem, I. Villella

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium

C. Caillol, B. Clerbaux, G. De Lentdecker, D. Dobur, L. Favart, A.P.R. Gay, A. Grebenyuk, A. Léonard, A. Mohammadi, L. Perniè², A. Randle-conde, T. Reis, T. Seva, L. Thomas, C. Vander Velde, P. Vanlaer, J. Wang, F. Zenoni

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium

V. Adler, K. Beernaert, L. Benucci, A. Cimmino, S. Costantini, S. Crucy, A. Fagot, G. Garcia, J. McCartin, A.A. Ocampo Rios, D. Poyraz, D. Ryckbosch, S. Salva Diblen, M. Sigamani, N. Strobbe, F. Thyssen, M. Tytgat, E. Yazgan, N. Zaganidis

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

S. Basegmez, C. Beluffi³, G. Bruno, R. Castello, A. Caudron, L. Ceard, G.G. Da Silveira, C. Delaere, T. du Pree, D. Favart, L. Forthomme, A. Giammanco⁴, J. Hollar, A. Jafari, P. Jez, M. Komm, V. Lemaitre, C. Nuttens, D. Pagano, L. Perrini, A. Pin, K. Piotrkowski, A. Popov⁵, L. Quertenmont, M. Selvaggi, M. Vidal Marono, J.M. Vizan Garcia

Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

N. Belyi, T. Caebegs, E. Daubie, G.H. Hammad

Université de Mons, Mons, Belgium

W.L. Aldá Júnior, G.A. Alves, L. Brito, M. Correa Martins Junior, T. Dos Reis Martins, J. Molina, C. Mora Herrera, M.E. Pol, P. Rebelo Teles

Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

W. Carvalho, J. Chinellato⁶, A. Custódio, E.M. Da Costa, D. De Jesus Damiao, C. De Oliveira Martins, S. Fonseca De Souza, H. Malbouisson, D. Matos Figueiredo, L. Mundim, H. Nogima, W.L. Prado Da Silva, J. Santaolalla, A. Santoro, A. Sznajder, E.J. Tonelli Manganote⁶, A. Vilela Pereira

Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

C.A. Bernardes^b, S. Dogra^a, T.R. Fernandez Perez Tomei^a, E.M. Gregores^b, P.G. Mercadante^b, S.F. Novaes^a, Sandra S. Padula^a

^a Universidade Estadual Paulista, São Paulo, Brazil

^b Universidade Federal do ABC, São Paulo, Brazil

A. Aleksandrov, V. Genchev², R. Hadjiiska, P. Iaydjiev, A. Marinov, S. Piperov, M. Rodozov, S. Stoykova, G. Sultanov, M. Vutova

Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Sofia, Bulgaria

A. Dimitrov, I. Glushkov, L. Litov, B. Pavlov, P. Petkov

University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

J.G. Bian, G.M. Chen, H.S. Chen, M. Chen, T. Cheng, R. Du, C.H. Jiang, R. Plestina⁷, F. Romeo, J. Tao, Z. Wang

Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China

C. Asawatangtrakuldee, Y. Ban, S. Liu, Y. Mao, S.J. Qian, D. Wang, Z. Xu, F. Zhang⁸, L. Zhang, W. Zou

State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, Peking University, Beijing, China

C. Avila, A. Cabrera, L.F. Chaparro Sierra, C. Florez, J.P. Gomez, B. Gomez Moreno, J.C. Sanabria

Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia

N. Godinovic, D. Lelas, D. Polic, I. Puljak

University of Split, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, Split, Croatia

Z. Antunovic, M. Kovac

University of Split, Faculty of Science, Split, Croatia

V. Brigljevic, K. Kadija, J. Luetic, D. Mekterovic, L. Sudic

Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia

A. Attikis, G. Mavromanolakis, J. Mousa, C. Nicolaou, F. Ptochos, P.A. Razis, H. Rykaczewski

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

M. Bodlak, M. Finger, M. Finger Jr.⁹

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Y. Assran¹⁰, A. Ellithi Kamel¹¹, M.A. Mahmoud¹², A. Radi^{13,14}

Academy of Scientific Research and Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Egyptian Network of High Energy Physics, Cairo, Egypt

M. Kadastik, M. Murumaa, M. Raidal, A. Tiko

National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia

P. Eerola, M. Voutilainen

Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

J. Härkönen, V. Karimäki, R. Kinnunen, M.J. Kortelainen, T. Lampén, K. Lassila-Perini, S. Lehti, T. Lindén, P. Luukka, T. Mäenpää, T. Peltola, E. Tuominen, J. Tuominiemi, E. Tuovinen, L. Wendland

Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland

J. Talvitie, T. Tuuva

Lappeenranta University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland

M. Besancon, F. Couderc, M. Dejardin, D. Denegri, B. Fabbro, J.L. Faure, C. Favaro, F. Ferri, S. Ganjour, A. Givernaud, P. Gras, G. Hamel de Monchenault, P. Jarry, E. Locci, J. Malcles, J. Rander, A. Rosowsky, M. Titov

DSM/IRFU, CEA/Saclay, Gif-sur-Yvette, France

S. Baffioni, F. Beaudette, P. Busson, E. Chapon, C. Charlot, T. Dahms, L. Dobrzynski, N. Filipovic, A. Florent, R. Granier de Cassagnac, L. Mastrolorenzo, P. Miné, I.N. Naranjo, M. Nguyen, C. Ochando, G. Ortona, P. Paganini, S. Regnard, R. Salerno, J.B. Sauvan, Y. Sirois, C. Veelken, Y. Yilmaz, A. Zabi

Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France

J.-L. Agram¹⁵, J. Andrea, A. Aubin, D. Bloch, J.-M. Brom, E.C. Chabert, C. Collard, E. Conte¹⁵, J.-C. Fontaine¹⁵, D. Gelé, U. Goerlach, C. Goetzmann, A.-C. Le Bihan, K. Skovpen, P. Van Hove

Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien, Université de Strasbourg, Université de Haute Alsace Mulhouse, CNRS/IN2P3, Strasbourg, France

S. Gadrat

Centre de Calcul de l'Institut National de Physique Nucleaire et de Physique des Particules, CNRS/IN2P3, Villeurbanne, France

S. Beauceron, N. Beaupere, C. Bernet⁷, G. Boudoul², E. Bouvier, S. Brochet, C.A. Carrillo Montoya, J. Chasserat, R. Chierici, D. Contardo², B. Courbon, P. Depasse, H. El Mamouni, J. Fan, J. Fay, S. Gascon, M. Gouzevitch, B. Ille, T. Kurca, M. Lethuillier, L. Mirabito, A.L. Pequegnot, S. Perries, J.D. Ruiz Alvarez, D. Sabes, L. Sgandurra, V. Sordini, M. Vander Donckt, P. Verdier, S. Viret, H. Xiao

Université de Lyon, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, CNRS-IN2P3, Institut de Physique Nucléaire de Lyon, Villeurbanne, France

L. Rurua

E. Andronikashvili Institute of Physics, Academy of Science, Tbilisi, Georgia

C. Autermann, S. Beranek, M. Bontenackels, M. Edelhoff, L. Feld, A. Heister, K. Klein, M. Lipinski, A. Ostapchuk, M. Preuten, F. Raupach, J. Sammet, S. Schael, J.F. Schulte, H. Weber, B. Wittmer, V. Zhukov⁵

RWTH Aachen University, I. Physikalisches Institut, Aachen, Germany

M. Ata, M. Brodski, E. Dietz-Laursonn, D. Duchardt, M. Erdmann, R. Fischer, A. Güth, T. Hebbeker, C. Heidemann, K. Hoepfner, D. Klingebiel, S. Knutzen, P. Kreuzer, M. Merschmeyer, A. Meyer, P. Millet, M. Olschewski, K. Padeken, P. Papacz, H. Reithler, S.A. Schmitz, L. Sonnenschein, D. Teyssier, S. Thüer

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut A, Aachen, Germany

V. Cherepanov, Y. Erdogan, G. Flügge, H. Geenen, M. Geisler, W. Haj Ahmad, F. Hoehle, B. Kargoll, T. Kress, Y. Kuessel, A. Künsken, J. Lingemann², A. Nowack, I.M. Nugent, C. Pistone, O. Pooth, A. Stahl

RWTH Aachen University, III. Physikalisches Institut B, Aachen, Germany

M. Aldaya Martin, I. Asin, N. Bartosik, J. Behr, U. Behrens, A.J. Bell, A. Bethani, K. Borras, A. Burgmeier, A. Cakir, L. Calligaris, A. Campbell, S. Choudhury, F. Costanza, C. Diez Pardos, G. Dolinska, S. Dooling, T. Dorland, G. Eckerlin, D. Eckstein, T. Eichhorn, G. Flucke, J. Garay Garcia, A. Geiser, A. Gikhko, P. Gunnellini, J. Hauk, M. Hempel¹⁶, H. Jung, A. Kalogeropoulos, O. Karacheban¹⁶, M. Kasemann, P. Katsas, J. Kieseler, C. Kleinwort, I. Korol, D. Krücker, W. Lange, J. Leonard, K. Lipka, A. Lobanov, W. Lohmann¹⁶, B. Lutz, R. Mankel, I. Marfin¹⁶, I.-A. Melzer-Pellmann, A.B. Meyer, G. Mittag, J. Mnich, A. Mussgiller, S. Naumann-Emme, A. Nayak, E. Ntomari, H. Perrey, D. Pitzl, R. Placakyte, A. Raspereza, P.M. Ribeiro Cipriano, B. Roland, E. Ron, M.Ö. Sahin, J. Salfeld-Nebgen, P. Saxena, T. Schoerner-Sadenius, M. Schröder, C. Seitz, S. Spannagel, A.D.R. Vargas Trevino, R. Walsh, C. Wissing

Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany

V. Blobel, M. Centis Vignali, A.R. Draeger, J. Erfle, E. Garutti, K. Goebel, M. Görner, J. Haller, M. Hoffmann, R.S. Höing, A. Junkes, H. Kirschenmann, R. Klanner, R. Kogler, T. Lapsien, T. Lenz, I. Marchesini, D. Marconi, J. Ott, T. Peiffer, A. Perieanu, N. Pietsch, J. Poehlsen, T. Poehlsen, D. Rathjens, C. Sander, H. Schettler, P. Schleper, E. Schlieckau, A. Schmidt, M. Seidel, V. Sola, H. Stadie, G. Steinbrück, D. Troendle, E. Usai, L. Vanelderren, A. Vanhoefer

University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

C. Barth, C. Baus, J. Berger, C. Böser, E. Butz, T. Chwalek, W. De Boer, A. Descroix, A. Dierlamm, M. Feindt, F. Frensch, M. Giffels, A. Gilbert, F. Hartmann², T. Hauth, U. Husemann, I. Katkov⁵, A. Kornmayer², P. Lobelle Pardo, M.U. Mozer, T. Müller, Th. Müller, A. Nürnberg, G. Quast, K. Rabbertz, S. Röcker, H.J. Simonis, F.M. Stober, R. Ulrich, J. Wagner-Kuhr, S. Wayand, T. Weiler, R. Wolf

Institut für Experimentelle Kernphysik, Karlsruhe, Germany

G. Anagnostou, G. Daskalakis, T. Gerasis, V.A. Giakoumopoulou, A. Kyriakis, D. Loukas, A. Markou, C. Markou, A. Psallidas, I. Topsis-Giotis

Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics (INPP), NCSR Demokritos, Aghia Paraskevi, Greece

A. Agapitos, S. Kesisoglou, A. Panagiotou, N. Saoulidou, E. Stiliaris, E. Tziaferi

University of Athens, Athens, Greece

X. Aslanoglou, I. Evangelou, G. Flouris, C. Foudas, P. Kokkas, N. Manthos, I. Papadopoulos, E. Paradas, J. Strologas

University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece

G. Bencze, C. Hajdu, P. Hidas, D. Horvath¹⁷, F. Sikler, V. Veszpremi, G. Vesztergombi¹⁸, A.J. Zsigmond

Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary

N. Beni, S. Czellar, J. Karancsi¹⁹, J. Molnar, J. Palinkas, Z. Szillasi

Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary

A. Makovec, P. Raics, Z.L. Trocsanyi, B. Ujvari

University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary

S.K. Swain

National Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhubaneswar, India

S.B. Beri, V. Bhatnagar, R. Gupta, U. Bhawandeep, A.K. Kalsi, M. Kaur, R. Kumar, M. Mittal, N. Nishu, J.B. Singh

Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

Ashok Kumar, Arun Kumar, S. Ahuja, A. Bhardwaj, B.C. Choudhary, A. Kumar, S. Malhotra, M. Naimuddin, K. Ranjan, V. Sharma

University of Delhi, Delhi, India

S. Banerjee, S. Bhattacharya, K. Chatterjee, S. Dutta, B. Gomber, Sa. Jain, Sh. Jain, R. Khurana, A. Modak, S. Mukherjee, D. Roy, S. Sarkar, M. Sharan

Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, India

A. Abdulsalam, D. Dutta, V. Kumar, A.K. Mohanty², L.M. Pant, P. Shukla, A. Topkar

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India

T. Aziz, S. Banerjee, S. Bhowmik²⁰, R.M. Chatterjee, R.K. Dewanjee, S. Dugad, S. Ganguly, S. Ghosh, M. Guchait, A. Gurtu²¹, G. Kole, S. Kumar, M. Maity²⁰, G. Majumder, K. Mazumdar, G.B. Mohanty, B. Parida, K. Sudhakar, N. Wickramage²²

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, India

S. Sharma

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, India

H. Bakhshiansohi, H. Behnamian, S.M. Etesami²³, A. Fahim²⁴, R. Goldouzian, M. Khakzad, M. Mohammadi Najafabadi, M. Naseri, S. Paktinat Mehdiabadi, F. Rezaei Hosseinabadi, B. Safarzadeh²⁵, M. Zeinali

Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran

M. Felcini, M. Grunewald

University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

M. Abbrescia^{a,b}, C. Calabria^{a,b}, S.S. Chhibra^{a,b}, A. Colaleo^a, D. Creanza^{a,c}, L. Cristella^{a,b},
N. De Filippis^{a,c}, M. De Palma^{a,b}, L. Fiore^a, G. Iaselli^{a,c}, G. Maggi^{a,c}, M. Maggi^a, S. My^{a,c}, S. Nuzzo^{a,b},
A. Pompili^{a,b}, G. Pugliese^{a,c}, R. Radogna^{a,b,2}, G. Selvaggi^{a,b}, A. Sharma^a, L. Silvestris^{a,2}, R. Venditti^{a,b},
P. Verwilligen^a

^a INFN Sezione di Bari, Bari, Italy

^b Università di Bari, Bari, Italy

^c Politecnico di Bari, Bari, Italy

G. Abbiendi^a, A.C. Benvenuti^a, D. Bonacorsi^{a,b}, S. Braibant-Giacomelli^{a,b}, L. Brigliadori^{a,b},
R. Campanini^{a,b}, P. Capiluppi^{a,b}, A. Castro^{a,b}, F.R. Cavallo^a, G. Codispoti^{a,b}, M. Cuffiani^{a,b},
G.M. Dallavalle^a, F. Fabbri^a, A. Fanfani^{a,b}, D. Fasanella^{a,b}, P. Giacomelli^a, C. Grandi^a, L. Guiducci^{a,b},
S. Marcellini^a, G. Masetti^a, A. Montanari^a, F.L. Navarra^{a,b}, A. Perrotta^a, A.M. Rossi^{a,b}, T. Rovelli^{a,b},
G.P. Siroli^{a,b}, N. Tosi^{a,b}, R. Travaglini^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

^b Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

S. Albergo^{a,b}, G. Cappello^a, M. Chiorboli^{a,b}, S. Costa^{a,b}, F. Giordano^{a,2}, R. Potenza^{a,b}, A. Tricomi^{a,b},
C. Tuve^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Catania, Catania, Italy

^b Università di Catania, Catania, Italy

^c CSFNSM, Catania, Italy

G. Barbagli^a, V. Ciulli^{a,b}, C. Civinini^a, R. D'Alessandro^{a,b}, E. Focardi^{a,b}, E. Gallo^a, S. Gonzi^{a,b}, V. Gori^{a,b},
P. Lenzi^{a,b}, M. Meschini^a, S. Paoletti^a, G. Sguazzoni^a, A. Tropiano^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

^b Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

L. Benussi, S. Bianco, F. Fabbri, D. Piccolo

INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy

R. Ferretti^{a,b}, F. Ferro^a, M. Lo Vetere^{a,b}, E. Robutti^a, S. Tosi^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy

^b Università di Genova, Genova, Italy

M.E. Dinardo^{a,b}, S. Fiorendi^{a,b}, S. Gennai^{a,2}, R. Gerosa^{a,b,2}, A. Ghezzi^{a,b}, P. Govoni^{a,b}, M.T. Lucchini^{a,b,2},
S. Malvezzi^a, R.A. Manzoni^{a,b}, A. Martelli^{a,b}, B. Marzocchi^{a,b,2}, D. Menasce^a, L. Moroni^a,
M. Paganoni^{a,b}, D. Pedrini^a, S. Ragazzi^{a,b}, N. Redaelli^a, T. Tabarelli de Fatis^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy

^b Università di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy

S. Buontempo^a, N. Cavallo^{a,c}, S. Di Guida^{a,d,2}, F. Fabozzi^{a,c}, A.O.M. Iorio^{a,b}, L. Lista^a, S. Meola^{a,d,2},
M. Merola^a, P. Paolucci^{a,2}

^a INFN Sezione di Napoli, Roma, Italy

^b Università di Napoli 'Federico II', Roma, Italy

^c Napoli, Italy, Università della Basilicata, Roma, Italy

^d Potenza, Italy, Università G. Marconi, Roma, Italy

P. Azzi^a, N. Bacchetta^a, D. Bisello^{a,b}, A. Branca^{a,b}, R. Carlin^{a,b}, P. Checchia^a, M. Dall'Osso^{a,b}, T. Dorigo^a,
U. Dosselli^a, F. Gasparini^{a,b}, U. Gasparini^{a,b}, A. Gozzelino^a, K. Kanishchev^{a,c}, S. Lacaprara^a,
M. Margoni^{a,b}, A.T. Meneguzzo^{a,b}, J. Pazzini^{a,b}, N. Pozzobon^{a,b}, P. Ronchese^{a,b}, F. Simonetto^{a,b},
E. Torassa^a, M. Tosi^{a,b}, P. Zotto^{a,b}, A. Zucchetta^{a,b}, G. Zumerle^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Padova, Trento, Italy

^b Università di Padova, Trento, Italy

^c Padova, Italy, Università di Trento, Trento, Italy

M. Gabusi^{a,b}, S.P. Ratti^{a,b}, V. Re^a, C. Riccardi^{a,b}, P. Salvini^a, P. Vitulo^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Pavia, Pavia, Italy^b Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

M. Biasini ^{a,b}, G.M. Bilei ^a, D. Ciangottini ^{a,b,2}, L. Fanò ^{a,b}, P. Lariccia ^{a,b}, G. Mantovani ^{a,b}, M. Menichelli ^a,
A. Saha ^a, A. Santocchia ^{a,b}, A. Spiezia ^{a,b,2}

^a INFN Sezione di Perugia, Perugia, Italy^b Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy

K. Androsov ^{a,26}, P. Azzurri ^a, G. Bagliesi ^a, J. Bernardini ^a, T. Boccali ^a, G. Broccolo ^{a,c}, R. Castaldi ^a,
M.A. Ciocci ^{a,26}, R. Dell'Orso ^a, S. Donato ^{a,c,2}, G. Fedi ^{a,b}, F. Fiori ^{a,c}, L. Foà ^{a,c}, A. Giassi ^a, M.T. Grippo ^{a,26},
F. Ligabue ^{a,c}, T. Lomtadze ^a, L. Martini ^{a,b}, A. Messineo ^{a,b}, C.S. Moon ^{a,27}, F. Palla ^{a,2}, A. Rizzi ^{a,b},
A. Savoy-Navarro ^{a,28}, A.T. Serban ^a, P. Spagnolo ^a, P. Squillacioti ^{a,26}, R. Tenchini ^a, G. Tonelli ^{a,b},
A. Venturi ^a, P.G. Verdini ^a, C. Vernieri ^{a,c}

^a INFN Sezione di Pisa, Pisa, Italy^b Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy^c Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Pisa, Italy

L. Barone ^{a,b}, F. Cavallari ^a, G. D'imperio ^{a,b}, D. Del Re ^{a,b}, M. Diemoz ^a, C. Jorda ^a, E. Longo ^{a,b},
F. Margaroli ^{a,b}, P. Meridiani ^a, F. Micheli ^{a,b,2}, G. Organtini ^{a,b}, R. Paramatti ^a, S. Rahatlou ^{a,b}, C. Rovelli ^a,
F. Santanastasio ^{a,b}, L. Soffi ^{a,b}, P. Traczyk ^{a,b,2}

^a INFN Sezione di Roma, Roma, Italy^b Università di Roma, Roma, Italy

N. Amapane ^{a,b}, R. Arcidiacono ^{a,c}, S. Argiro ^{a,b}, M. Arneodo ^{a,c}, R. Bellan ^{a,b}, C. Biino ^a, N. Cartiglia ^a,
S. Casasso ^{a,b,2}, M. Costa ^{a,b}, R. Covarelli ^{a,b}, A. Degano ^{a,b}, N. Demaria ^a, L. Finco ^{a,b,2}, C. Mariotti ^a,
S. Maselli ^a, E. Migliore ^{a,b}, V. Monaco ^{a,b}, M. Musich ^a, M.M. Obertino ^{a,c}, L. Pacher ^{a,b}, N. Pastrone ^a,
M. Pelliccioni ^a, G.L. Pinna Angioni ^{a,b}, A. Potenza ^{a,b}, A. Romero ^{a,b}, M. Ruspa ^{a,c}, R. Sacchi ^{a,b},
A. Solano ^{a,b}, A. Staiano ^a, U. Tamponi ^a

^a INFN Sezione di Torino, Novara, Italy^b Università di Torino, Novara, Italy^c Torino, Italy, Università del Piemonte Orientale, Novara, Italy

S. Belforte ^a, V. Candelise ^{a,b,2}, M. Casarsa ^a, F. Cossutti ^a, G. Della Ricca ^{a,b}, B. Gobbo ^a, C. La Licata ^{a,b},
M. Marone ^{a,b}, A. Schizzi ^{a,b}, T. Umer ^{a,b}, A. Zanetti ^a

^a INFN Sezione di Trieste, Trieste, Italy^b Università di Trieste, Trieste, Italy

S. Chang, A. Kropivnitskaya, S.K. Nam

Kangwon National University, Chunchon, Republic of Korea

D.H. Kim, G.N. Kim, M.S. Kim, D.J. Kong, S. Lee, Y.D. Oh, H. Park, A. Sakharov, D.C. Son

Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Republic of Korea

T.J. Kim, M.S. Ryu

Chonbuk National University, Jeonju, Republic of Korea

J.Y. Kim, D.H. Moon, S. Song

Chonnam National University, Institute for Universe and Elementary Particles, Kwangju, Republic of Korea

S. Choi, D. Gyun, B. Hong, M. Jo, H. Kim, Y. Kim, B. Lee, K.S. Lee, S.K. Park, Y. Roh

Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

H.D. Yoo

Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

M. Choi, J.H. Kim, I.C. Park, G. Ryu

University of Seoul, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Y. Choi, Y.K. Choi, J. Goh, D. Kim, E. Kwon, J. Lee, I. Yu

Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Republic of Korea

A. Juodagalvis

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

J.R. Komaragiri, M.A.B. Md Ali²⁹, W.A.T. Wan Abdullah

National Centre for Particle Physics, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

E. Casimiro Linares, H. Castilla-Valdez, E. De La Cruz-Burelo, I. Heredia-de La Cruz,
A. Hernandez-Almada, R. Lopez-Fernandez, A. Sanchez-Hernandez

Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del IPN, Mexico City, Mexico

S. Carrillo Moreno, F. Vazquez Valencia

Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico

I. Pedraza, H.A. Salazar Ibarguen

Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

A. Morelos Pineda

Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí, Mexico

D. Krofcheck

University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

P.H. Butler, S. Reucroft

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

A. Ahmad, M. Ahmad, Q. Hassan, H.R. Hoorani, W.A. Khan, T. Khurshid, M. Shoaib

National Centre for Physics, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan

H. Bialkowska, M. Bluj, B. Boimska, T. Frueboes, M. Górski, M. Kazana, K. Nawrocki,
K. Romanowska-Rybinska, M. Szleper, P. Zalewski

National Centre for Nuclear Research, Swierk, Poland

G. Brona, K. Bunkowski, M. Cwiok, W. Dominik, K. Doroba, A. Kalinowski, M. Konecki, J. Krolikowski,
M. Misiura, M. Olszewski

Institute of Experimental Physics, Faculty of Physics, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

P. Bargassa, C. Beirão Da Cruz E Silva, P. Faccioli, P.G. Ferreira Parracho, M. Gallinaro, L. Lloret Iglesias,
F. Nguyen, J. Rodrigues Antunes, J. Seixas, J. Varela, P. Vischia

Laboratório de Instrumentação e Física Experimental de Partículas, Lisboa, Portugal

P. Bunin, I. Golutvin, I. Gorbunov, V. Karjavin, V. Konoplyanikov, G. Kozlov, A. Lanev, A. Malakhov,
V. Matveev³⁰, P. Moisenz, V. Palichik, V. Perelygin, M. Savina, S. Shmatov, S. Shulha, N. Skatchkov,
V. Smirnov, A. Zarubin

Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia

V. Golovtsov, Y. Ivanov, V. Kim³¹, E. Kuznetsova, P. Levchenko, V. Murzin, V. Oreshkin, I. Smirnov, V. Sulimov, L. Uvarov, S. Vavilov, A. Vorobyev, An. Vorobyev

Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina (St. Petersburg), Russia

Yu. Andreev, A. Dermenev, S. Gninenko, N. Golubev, M. Kirsanov, N. Krasnikov, A. Pashenkov, D. Tlisov, A. Toropin

Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia

V. Epshteyn, V. Gavrilov, N. Lychkovskaya, V. Popov, I. Pozdnyakov, G. Safronov, S. Semenov, A. Spiridonov, V. Stolin, E. Vlasov, A. Zhokin

Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia

V. Andreev, M. Azarkin³², I. Dremin³², M. Kirakosyan, A. Leonidov³², G. Mesyats, S.V. Rusakov, A. Vinogradov

P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia

A. Belyaev, E. Boos, V. Bunichev, M. Dubinin³³, L. Dudko, A. Ershov, V. Klyukhin, O. Kodolova, I. Lokhtin, S. Obraztsov, S. Petrushanko, V. Savrin, A. Snigirev

Skobel'syn Institute of Nuclear Physics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

I. Azhgirey, I. Bayshev, S. Bitioukov, V. Kachanov, A. Kalinin, D. Konstantinov, V. Krychkine, V. Petrov, R. Ryutin, A. Sobol, L. Tourtchanovitch, S. Troshin, N. Tyurin, A. Uzunian, A. Volkov

State Research Center of Russian Federation, Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, Russia

P. Adzic³⁴, M. Ekmedzic, J. Milosevic, V. Rekovic

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia

J. Alcaraz Maestre, C. Battilana, E. Calvo, M. Cerrada, M. Chamizo Llatas, N. Colino, B. De La Cruz, A. Delgado Peris, D. Domínguez Vázquez, A. Escalante Del Valle, C. Fernandez Bedoya, J.P. Fernández Ramos, J. Flix, M.C. Fouz, P. Garcia-Abia, O. Gonzalez Lopez, S. Goy Lopez, J.M. Hernandez, M.I. Josa, E. Navarro De Martino, A. Pérez-Calero Yzquierdo, J. Puerta Pelayo, A. Quintario Olmeda, I. Redondo, L. Romero, M.S. Soares

Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain

C. Albajar, J.F. de Trocóniz, M. Missiroli, D. Moran

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

H. Brun, J. Cuevas, J. Fernandez Menendez, S. Folgueras, I. Gonzalez Caballero

Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain

J.A. Brochero Cifuentes, I.J. Cabrillo, A. Calderon, J. Duarte Campderros, M. Fernandez, G. Gomez, A. Graziano, A. Lopez Virto, J. Marco, R. Marco, C. Martinez Rivero, F. Matorras, F.J. Munoz Sanchez, J. Piedra Gomez, T. Rodrigo, A.Y. Rodríguez-Marrero, A. Ruiz-Jimeno, L. Scodellaro, I. Vila, R. Vilar Cortabitarte

Instituto de Física de Cantabria (IFCA), CSIC-Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain

D. Abbaneo, E. Auffray, G. Auzinger, M. Bachtis, P. Baillon, A.H. Ball, D. Barney, A. Benaglia, J. Bendavid, L. Benhabib, J.F. Benitez, P. Bloch, A. Bocci, A. Bonato, O. Bondu, C. Botta, H. Breuker, T. Camporesi, G. Cerminara, S. Colafranceschi³⁵, M. D'Alfonso, D. d'Enterria, A. Dabrowski, A. David, F. De Guio, A. De Roeck, S. De Visscher, E. Di Marco, M. Dobson, M. Dordevic, B. Dorney, N. Dupont-Sagorin, A. Elliott-Peisert, G. Franzoni, W. Funk, D. Gigi, K. Gill, D. Giordano, M. Girone, F. Glege, R. Guida,

S. Gundacker, M. Guthoff, J. Hammer, M. Hansen, P. Harris, J. Hegeman, V. Innocente, P. Janot, K. Kousouris, K. Krajczar, P. Lecoq, C. Lourenço, N. Magini, L. Malgeri, M. Mannelli, J. Marrouche, L. Masetti, F. Meijers, S. Mersi, E. Meschi, F. Moortgat, S. Morovic, M. Mulders, S. Orfanelli, L. Orsini, L. Pape, E. Perez, A. Petrilli, G. Petrucciani, A. Pfeiffer, M. Pimiä, D. Piparo, M. Plagge, A. Racz, G. Rolandi³⁶, M. Rovere, H. Sakulin, C. Schäfer, C. Schwick, A. Sharma, P. Siegrist, P. Silva, M. Simon, P. Sphicas³⁷, D. Spiga, J. Steggemann, B. Stieger, M. Stoye, Y. Takahashi, D. Treille, A. Tsirou, G.I. Veres¹⁸, N. Wardle, H.K. Wöhri, H. Wollny, W.D. Zeuner

CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland

W. Bertl, K. Deiters, W. Erdmann, R. Horisberger, Q. Ingram, H.C. Kaestli, D. Kotlinski, U. Langenegger, D. Renker, T. Rohe

Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland

F. Bachmair, L. Bäni, L. Bianchini, M.A. Buchmann, B. Casal, N. Chanon, G. Dissertori, M. Dittmar, M. Donegà, M. Dünser, P. Eller, C. Grab, D. Hits, J. Hoss, G. Kasieczka, W. Luster mann, B. Mangano, A.C. Marini, M. Marionneau, P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol, M. Masciovecchio, D. Meister, N. Mohr, P. Musella, C. Nägeli³⁸, F. Nessi-Tedaldi, F. Pandolfi, F. Pauss, L. Perrozzi, M. Peruzzi, M. Quittnat, L. Rebane, M. Rossini, A. Starodumov³⁹, M. Takahashi, K. Theofilatos, R. Wallny, H.A. Weber

Institute for Particle Physics, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

C. Amsler⁴⁰, M.F. Canelli, V. Chiochia, A. De Cosa, A. Hinzmann, T. Hreus, B. Kilminster, C. Lange, J. Ngadiuba, D. Pinna, P. Robmann, F.J. Ronga, S. Taroni, Y. Yang

Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland

M. Cardaci, K.H. Chen, C. Ferro, C.M. Kuo, W. Lin, Y.J. Lu, R. Volpe, S.S. Yu

National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan

P. Chang, Y.H. Chang, Y. Chao, K.F. Chen, P.H. Chen, C. Dietz, U. Grundler, W.-S. Hou, Y.F. Liu, R.-S. Lu, M. Miñano Moya, E. Petrakou, Y.M. Tzeng, R. Wilken

National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan

B. Asavapibhop, G. Singh, N. Srimanobhas, N. Suwonjandee

Chulalongkorn University, Faculty of Science, Department of Physics, Bangkok, Thailand

A. Adiguzel, M.N. Bakirci⁴¹, S. Cerci⁴², C. Dozen, I. Dumanoglu, E. Eskut, S. Girgis, G. Gokbulut, Y. Guler, E. Gurpinar, I. Hos, E.E. Kangal⁴³, A. Kayis Topaksu, G. Onengut⁴⁴, K. Ozdemir⁴⁵, S. Ozturk⁴¹, A. Polatoz, D. Sunar Cerci⁴², B. Tali⁴², H. Topakli⁴¹, M. Vergili, C. Zorbilmez

Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey

I.V. Akin, B. Bilin, S. Bilmis, H. Gamsizkan⁴⁶, B. Isildak⁴⁷, G. Karapinar⁴⁸, K. Ocalan⁴⁹, S. Sekmen, U.E. Surat, M. Yalvac, M. Zeyrek

Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey

E.A. Albayrak⁵⁰, E. Gülmez, M. Kaya⁵¹, O. Kaya⁵², T. Yetkin⁵³

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

K. Cankocak, F.I. Vardarli

Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

L. Levchuk, P. Sorokin

National Scientific Center, Kharkov Institute of Physics and Technology, Kharkov, Ukraine

J.J. Brooke, E. Clement, D. Cussans, H. Flacher, J. Goldstein, M. Grimes, G.P. Heath, H.F. Heath, J. Jacob, L. Kreczko, C. Lucas, Z. Meng, D.M. Newbold⁵⁴, S. Paramesvaran, A. Poll, T. Sakuma, S. Seif El Nasr-storey, S. Senkin, V.J. Smith

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

K.W. Bell, A. Belyaev⁵⁵, C. Brew, R.M. Brown, D.J.A. Cockerill, J.A. Coughlan, K. Harder, S. Harper, E. Olaiya, D. Petyt, C.H. Shepherd-Themistocleous, A. Thea, I.R. Tomalin, T. Williams, W.J. Womersley, S.D. Worm

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom

M. Baber, R. Bainbridge, O. Buchmuller, D. Burton, D. Colling, N. Cripps, P. Dauncey, G. Davies, M. Della Negra, P. Dunne, A. Elwood, W. Ferguson, J. Fulcher, D. Futyan, G. Hall, G. Iles, M. Jarvis, G. Karapostoli, M. Kenzie, R. Lane, R. Lucas⁵⁴, L. Lyons, A.-M. Magnan, S. Malik, B. Mathias, J. Nash, A. Nikitenko³⁹, J. Pela, M. Pesaresi, K. Petridis, D.M. Raymond, S. Rogerson, A. Rose, C. Seez, P. Sharp[†], A. Tapper, M. Vazquez Acosta, T. Virdee, S.C. Zenz

Imperial College, London, United Kingdom

J.E. Cole, P.R. Hobson, A. Khan, P. Kyberd, D. Leggat, D. Leslie, I.D. Reid, P. Symonds, L. Teodorescu, M. Turner

Brunel University, Uxbridge, United Kingdom

J. Dittmann, K. Hatakeyama, A. Kasmi, H. Liu, N. Pastika, T. Scarborough, Z. Wu

Baylor University, Waco, USA

O. Charaf, S.I. Cooper, C. Henderson, P. Rumerio

The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA

A. Avetisyan, T. Bose, C. Fantasia, P. Lawson, C. Richardson, J. Rohlf, J.St. John, L. Sulak

Boston University, Boston, USA

J. Alimena, E. Berry, S. Bhattacharya, G. Christopher, D. Cutts, Z. Demiragli, N. Dhingra, A. Ferapontov, A. Garabedian, U. Heintz, E. Laird, G. Landsberg, Z. Mao, M. Narain, S. Sagir, T. Sinthuprasith, T. Speer, J. Swanson

Brown University, Providence, USA

R. Breedon, G. Breto, M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez, S. Chauhan, M. Chertok, J. Conway, R. Conway, P.T. Cox, R. Erbacher, M. Gardner, W. Ko, R. Lander, M. Mulhearn, D. Pellett, J. Pilot, F. Ricci-Tam, S. Shalhout, J. Smith, M. Squires, D. Stolp, M. Tripathi, S. Wilbur, R. Yohay

University of California, Davis, Davis, USA

R. Cousins, P. Everaerts, C. Farrell, J. Hauser, M. Ignatenko, G. Rakness, E. Takasugi, V. Valuev, M. Weber

University of California, Los Angeles, USA

K. Burt, R. Clare, J. Ellison, J.W. Gary, G. Hanson, J. Heilman, M. Ivova Rikova, P. Jandir, E. Kennedy, F. Lacroix, O.R. Long, A. Luthra, M. Malberti, M. Olmedo Negrete, A. Shrinivas, S. Sumowidagdo, S. Wimpenny

University of California, Riverside, Riverside, USA

J.G. Branson, G.B. Cerati, S. Cittolin, R.T. D'Agnolo, A. Holzner, R. Kelley, D. Klein, J. Letts, I. Macneill, D. Olivito, S. Padhi, C. Palmer, M. Pieri, M. Sani, V. Sharma, S. Simon, M. Tadel, Y. Tu, A. Vartak, C. Welke, F. Würthwein, A. Yagil, G. Zevi Della Porta

University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA

D. Barge, J. Bradmiller-Feld, C. Campagnari, T. Danielson, A. Dishaw, V. Dutta, K. Flowers, M. Franco Sevilla, P. Geffert, C. George, F. Golf, L. Gouskos, J. Incandela, C. Justus, N. Mccoll, S.D. Mullin, J. Richman, D. Stuart, W. To, C. West, J. Yoo

University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA

A. Apresyan, A. Bornheim, J. Bunn, Y. Chen, J. Duarte, A. Mott, H.B. Newman, C. Pena, M. Pierini, M. Spiropulu, J.R. Vlimant, R. Wilkinson, S. Xie, R.Y. Zhu

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA

V. Azzolini, A. Calamba, B. Carlson, T. Ferguson, Y. Iiyama, M. Paulini, J. Russ, H. Vogel, I. Vorobiev

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA

J.P. Cumalat, W.T. Ford, A. Gaz, M. Krohn, E. Luiggi Lopez, U. Nauenberg, J.G. Smith, K. Stenson, S.R. Wagner

University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, USA

J. Alexander, A. Chatterjee, J. Chaves, J. Chu, S. Dittmer, N. Eggert, N. Mirman, G. Nicolas Kaufman, J.R. Patterson, A. Ryd, E. Salvati, L. Skinnari, W. Sun, W.D. Teo, J. Thom, J. Thompson, J. Tucker, Y. Weng, L. Winstrom, P. Wittich

Cornell University, Ithaca, USA

D. Winn

Fairfield University, Fairfield, USA

S. Abdullin, M. Albrow, J. Anderson, G. Apollinari, L.A.T. Bauerdick, A. Beretvas, J. Berryhill, P.C. Bhat, G. Bolla, K. Burkett, J.N. Butler, H.W.K. Cheung, F. Chlebana, S. Cihangir, V.D. Elvira, I. Fisk, J. Freeman, E. Gottschalk, L. Gray, D. Green, S. Grünendahl, O. Gutsche, J. Hanlon, D. Hare, R.M. Harris, J. Hirschauer, B. Hooberman, S. Jindariani, M. Johnson, U. Joshi, B. Klima, B. Kreis, S. Kwan[†], J. Linacre, D. Lincoln, R. Lipton, T. Liu, R. Lopes De Sá, J. Lykken, K. Maeshima, J.M. Marraffino, V.I. Martinez Outschoorn, S. Maruyama, D. Mason, P. McBride, P. Merkel, K. Mishra, S. Mrenna, S. Nahn, C. Newman-Holmes, V. O'Dell, O. Prokofyev, E. Sexton-Kennedy, A. Soha, W.J. Spalding, L. Spiegel, L. Taylor, S. Tkaczyk, N.V. Tran, L. Uplegger, E.W. Vaandering, R. Vidal, A. Whitbeck, J. Whitmore, F. Yang

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, USA

D. Acosta, P. Avery, P. Bortignon, D. Bourilkov, M. Carver, D. Curry, S. Das, M. De Gruttola, G.P. Di Giovanni, R.D. Field, M. Fisher, I.K. Furic, J. Hugon, J. Konigsberg, A. Korytov, T. Kypreos, J.F. Low, K. Matchev, H. Mei, P. Milenov⁵⁶, G. Mitselmakher, L. Muniz, A. Rinkevicius, L. Shchutska, M. Snowball, D. Sperka, J. Yelton, M. Zakaria

University of Florida, Gainesville, USA

S. Hewamanage, S. Linn, P. Markowitz, G. Martinez, J.L. Rodriguez

Florida International University, Miami, USA

J.R. Adams, T. Adams, A. Askew, J. Bochenek, B. Diamond, J. Haas, S. Hagopian, V. Hagopian, K.F. Johnson, H. Prosper, V. Veeraraghavan, M. Weinberg

Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA

M.M. Baarmand, M. Hohlmann, H. Kalakhety, F. Yumiceva

Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, USA

M.R. Adams, L. Apanasevich, D. Berry, R.R. Betts, I. Bucinskaite, R. Cavanaugh, O. Evdokimov, L. Gauthier, C.E. Gerber, D.J. Hofman, P. Kurt, C. O'Brien, I.D. Sandoval Gonzalez, C. Silkworth, P. Turner, N. Varelas

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, USA

B. Bilki⁵⁷, W. Clarida, K. Dilsiz, M. Haytmyradov, V. Khristenko, J.-P. Merlo, H. Mermerkaya⁵⁸, A. Mestvirishvili, A. Moeller, J. Nachtman, H. Ogul, Y. Onel, F. Ozok⁵⁰, A. Penzo, R. Rahmat, S. Sen, P. Tan, E. Tiras, J. Wetzel, K. Yi

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA

I. Anderson, B.A. Barnett, B. Blumenfeld, S. Bolognesi, D. Fehling, A.V. Gritsan, P. Maksimovic, C. Martin, M. Swartz, M. Xiao

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA

P. Baringer, A. Bean, G. Benelli, C. Bruner, J. Gray, R.P. Kenny III, D. Majumder, M. Malek, M. Murray, D. Noonan, S. Sanders, J. Sekaric, R. Stringer, Q. Wang, J.S. Wood

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA

I. Chakaberia, A. Ivanov, K. Kaadze, S. Khalil, M. Makouski, Y. Maravin, L.K. Saini, N. Skhirtladze, I. Svintradze

Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA

J. Gronberg, D. Lange, F. Rebassoo, D. Wright

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA

A. Baden, A. Belloni, B. Calvert, S.C. Eno, J.A. Gomez, N.J. Hadley, S. Jabeen, R.G. Kellogg, T. Kolberg, Y. Lu, A.C. Mignerey, K. Pedro, A. Skuja, M.B. Tonjes, S.C. Tonwar

University of Maryland, College Park, USA

A. Apyan, R. Barbieri, K. Bierwagen, W. Busza, I.A. Cali, L. Di Matteo, G. Gomez Ceballos, M. Goncharov, D. Gulhan, M. Klute, Y.S. Lai, Y.-J. Lee, A. Levin, P.D. Luckey, C. Paus, D. Ralph, C. Roland, G. Roland, G.S.F. Stephens, K. Sumorok, D. Velicanu, J. Veverka, B. Wyslouch, M. Yang, M. Zanetti, V. Zhukova

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA

B. Dahmes, A. Gude, S.C. Kao, K. Klapoetke, Y. Kubota, J. Mans, S. Nourbakhsh, R. Rusack, A. Singovsky, N. Tambe, J. Turkewitz

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

J.G. Acosta, S. Oliveros

University of Mississippi, Oxford, USA

E. Avdeeva, K. Bloom, S. Bose, D.R. Claes, A. Dominguez, R. Gonzalez Suarez, J. Keller, D. Knowlton, I. Kravchenko, J. Lazo-Flores, F. Meier, F. Ratnikov, G.R. Snow, M. Zvada

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, USA

J. Dolen, A. Godshalk, I. Iashvili, A. Kharchilava, A. Kumar, S. Rappoccio

State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, USA

G. Alverson, E. Barberis, D. Baumgartel, M. Chasco, A. Massironi, D.M. Morse, D. Nash, T. Orimoto, D. Trocino, R.-J. Wang, D. Wood, J. Zhang

Northeastern University, Boston, USA

K.A. Hahn, A. Kubik, N. Mucia, N. Odell, B. Pollack, A. Pozdnyakov, M. Schmitt, S. Stoynev, K. Sung, M. Velasco, S. Won

Northwestern University, Evanston, USA

A. Brinkerhoff, K.M. Chan, A. Drozdetskiy, M. Hildreth, C. Jessop, D.J. Karmgard, N. Kellams, K. Lannon, S. Lynch, N. Marinelli, Y. Musienko³⁰, T. Pearson, M. Planer, R. Ruchti, G. Smith, N. Valls, M. Wayne, M. Wolf, A. Woodard

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA

L. Antonelli, J. Brinson, B. Bylsma, L.S. Durkin, S. Flowers, A. Hart, C. Hill, R. Hughes, K. Kotov, T.Y. Ling, W. Luo, D. Puigh, M. Rodenburg, B.L. Winer, H. Wolfe, H.W. Wulsin

The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA

O. Driga, P. Elmer, J. Hardenbrook, P. Hebda, S.A. Koay, P. Lujan, D. Marlow, T. Medvedeva, M. Mooney, J. Olsen, P. Piroué, X. Quan, H. Saka, D. Stickland², C. Tully, J.S. Werner, A. Zuranski

Princeton University, Princeton, USA

E. Brownson, S. Malik, H. Mendez, J.E. Ramirez Vargas

University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, USA

V.E. Barnes, D. Benedetti, D. Bortoletto, L. Gutay, Z. Hu, M.K. Jha, M. Jones, K. Jung, M. Kress, N. Leonardo, D.H. Miller, N. Neumeister, F. Primavera, B.C. Radburn-Smith, X. Shi, I. Shipsey, D. Silvers, A. Svyatkovskiy, F. Wang, W. Xie, L. Xu, J. Zablocki

Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA

N. Parashar, J. Stupak

Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, USA

A. Adair, B. Akgun, K.M. Ecklund, F.J.M. Geurts, W. Li, B. Michlin, B.P. Padley, R. Redjimi, J. Roberts, J. Zabel

Rice University, Houston, USA

B. Betchart, A. Bodek, P. de Barbaro, R. Demina, Y. Eshaq, T. Ferbel, M. Galanti, A. Garcia-Bellido, P. Goldenzweig, J. Han, A. Harel, O. Hindrichs, A. Khukhunaishvili, S. Korjenevski, G. Petrillo, M. Verzetti, D. Vishnevskiy

University of Rochester, Rochester, USA

R. Ciesielski, L. Demortier, K. Goulianos, C. Mesropian

The Rockefeller University, New York, USA

S. Arora, A. Barker, J.P. Chou, C. Contreras-Campana, E. Contreras-Campana, D. Duggan, D. Ferencek, Y. Gershtein, R. Gray, E. Halkiadakis, D. Hidas, S. Kaplan, A. Lath, S. Panwalkar, M. Park, S. Salur, S. Schnetzer, D. Sheffield, S. Somalwar, R. Stone, S. Thomas, P. Thomassen, M. Walker

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, USA

K. Rose, S. Spanier, A. York

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

O. Bouhali⁵⁹, A. Castaneda Hernandez, M. Dalchenko, M. De Mattia, S. Dildick, R. Eusebi, W. Flanagan, J. Gilmore, T. Kamon⁶⁰, V. Khotilovich, V. Krutelyov, R. Montalvo, I. Osipenkov, Y. Pakhotin, R. Patel, A. Perloff, J. Roe, A. Rose, A. Safonov, I. Suarez, A. Tatarinov, K.A. Ulmer

Texas A&M University, College Station, USA

N. Akchurin, C. Cowden, J. Damgov, C. Dragoiu, P.R. Duderu, J. Faulkner, K. Kovitangoon, S. Kunori, S.W. Lee, T. Libeiro, I. Volobouev

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA

E. Appelt, A.G. Delannoy, S. Greene, A. Gurrola, W. Johns, C. Maguire, Y. Mao, A. Melo, M. Sharma, P. Sheldon, B. Snook, S. Tuo, J. Velkovska

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA

M.W. Arenton, S. Boutle, B. Cox, B. Francis, J. Goodell, R. Hirosky, A. Ledovskoy, H. Li, C. Lin, C. Neu, E. Wolfe, J. Wood

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA

C. Clarke, R. Harr, P.E. Karchin, C. Kottachchi Kankanamge Don, P. Lamichhane, J. Sturdy

Wayne State University, Detroit, USA

D.A. Belknap, D. Carlsmith, M. Cepeda, S. Dasu, L. Dodd, S. Duric, E. Friis, R. Hall-Wilton, M. Herndon, A. Hervé, P. Klabbers, A. Lanaro, C. Lazaridis, A. Levine, R. Loveless, A. Mohapatra, I. Ojalvo, T. Perry, G.A. Pierro, G. Polese, I. Ross, T. Sarangi, A. Savin, W.H. Smith, D. Taylor, C. Vuosalo, N. Woods

University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA

† Deceased.

¹ Also at Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria.

² Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland.

³ Also at Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien, Université de Strasbourg, Université de Haute Alsace Mulhouse, CNRS/IN2P3, Strasbourg, France.

⁴ Also at National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia.

⁵ Also at Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia.

⁶ Also at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brazil.

⁷ Also at Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3-CNRS, Palaiseau, France.

⁸ Also at Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium.

⁹ Also at Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia.

¹⁰ Also at Suez University, Suez, Egypt.

¹¹ Also at Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt.

¹² Also at Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt.

¹³ Also at British University in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt.

¹⁴ Now at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt.

¹⁵ Also at Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse, France.

¹⁶ Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany.

¹⁷ Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary.

¹⁸ Also at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

¹⁹ Also at University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary.

²⁰ Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India.

²¹ Now at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

²² Also at University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka.

²³ Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran.

²⁴ Also at University of Tehran, Department of Engineering Science, Tehran, Iran.

²⁵ Also at Plasma Physics Research Center, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

²⁶ Also at Università degli Studi di Siena, Siena, Italy.

²⁷ Also at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) – IN2P3, Paris, France.

²⁸ Also at Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA.

²⁹ Also at International Islamic University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

³⁰ Also at Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia.

³¹ Also at St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, St. Petersburg, Russia.

³² Also at National Research Nuclear University 'Moscow Engineering Physics Institute' (MEPhI), Moscow, Russia.

³³ Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA.

³⁴ Also at Faculty of Physics, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia.

³⁵ Also at Facoltà Ingegneria, Università di Roma, Roma, Italy.

³⁶ Also at Scuola Normale e Sezione dell'INFN, Pisa, Italy.

³⁷ Also at University of Athens, Athens, Greece.

³⁸ Also at Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland.

³⁹ Also at Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia.

⁴⁰ Also at Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics, Bern, Switzerland.

⁴¹ Also at Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey.

⁴² Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey.

⁴³ Also at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey.

⁴⁴ Also at Cag University, Mersin, Turkey.

⁴⁵ Also at Piri Reis University, Istanbul, Turkey.

⁴⁶ Also at Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey.

⁴⁷ Also at Ozyegin University, Istanbul, Turkey.

⁴⁸ Also at Izmir Institute of Technology, Izmir, Turkey.

⁴⁹ Also at Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey.

⁵⁰ Also at Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey.

⁵¹ Also at Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey.

⁵² Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey.

⁵³ Also at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey.

⁵⁴ Also at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom.

⁵⁵ Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom.

⁵⁶ Also at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia.

⁵⁷ Also at Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, USA.

⁵⁸ Also at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey.

⁵⁹ Also at Texas A&M University at Qatar, Doha, Qatar.

⁶⁰ Also at Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Korea.