$K^{\pm}_{\ell 3}$ AND $K^0_{\ell 3}$ FORM FACTORS

Assuming that only the vector current contributes to $K \to \pi\ell\nu$ decays, we write the matrix element as

$$M \propto f_+(t)\left[(P_K + P_\pi)_\mu \overline{\ell}\gamma_\mu(1+\gamma_5)\nu\right] + f_-(t)\left[m_\ell \overline{\ell}(1+\gamma_5)\nu\right] \ , \tag{1}$$

where P_K and P_π are the four-momenta of the K and π mesons, m_ℓ is the lepton mass, and f_+ and f_- are dimensionless form factors which can depend only on $t = (P_K - P_\pi)^2$, the square of the four-momentum transfer to the leptons. If time-reversal invariance holds, f_+ and f_- are relatively real. $K_{\mu 3}$ experiments measure f_+ and f_-, while K_{e3} experiments are sensitive only to f_+ because the small electron mass makes the f_- term negligible.

(a) $K_{\mu 3}$ experiments. Analyses of $K_{\mu 3}$ data frequently assume a linear dependence of f_+ and f_- on t, *i.e.*,

$$f_\pm(t) = f_\pm(0)\left[1 + \lambda_\pm(t/m_\pi^2)\right] \tag{2}$$

Most $K_{\mu 3}$ data are adequately described by Eq. (2) for f_+ and a constant f_- (*i.e.*, $\lambda_- = 0$). There are two equivalent parametrizations commonly used in these analyses:

(1) $\lambda_+, \xi(0)$ parametrization. Analyses of $K_{\mu 3}$ data often introduce the ratio of the two form factors

$$\xi(t) = f_-(t)/f_+(t) \ .$$

The $K_{\mu 3}$ decay distribution is then described by the two parameters λ_+ and $\xi(0)$ (assuming time reversal invariance and $\lambda_- = 0$). These parameters can be determined by three different methods:

Method A. By studying the Dalitz plot or the pion spectrum of $K_{\mu 3}$ decay. The Dalitz plot density is (see, *e.g.*, Chounet *et al.* [1]):

$$\rho(E_\pi, E_\mu) \propto f_+^2(t)\left[A + B\xi(t) + C\xi(t)^2\right] \ ,$$

where

$$A = m_K\left(2E_\mu E_\nu - m_K E'_\pi\right) + m_\mu^2\left(\frac{1}{4}E'_\pi - E_\nu\right) \ ,$$

$$B = m_\mu^2\left(E_\nu - \frac{1}{2}E'_\pi\right) \ ,$$

$$C = \frac{1}{4}m_\mu^2 E'_\pi \ ,$$

$$E'_\pi = E_\pi^{\max} - E_\pi = \left(m_K^2 + m_\pi^2 - m_\mu^2\right)/2m_K - E_\pi \ .$$

Here E_π, E_μ, and E_ν are, respectively, the pion, muon, and neutrino energies in the kaon center of mass. The density ρ is fit to the data to determine the values of $\lambda_+, \xi(0)$, and their correlation.

Method B. By measuring the $K_{\mu3}/K_{e3}$ branching ratio and comparing it with the theoretical ratio (see, *e.g.*, Fearing *et al.* [2]) as given in terms of λ_+ and $\xi(0)$, assuming μ-e universality:

$$\begin{aligned}\Gamma(K^\pm_{\mu3})/\Gamma(K^\pm_{e3}) &= 0.6457 + 1.4115\lambda_+ + 0.1264\xi(0) \\ &\qquad + 0.0192\xi(0)^2 + 0.0080\lambda_+\xi(0) \ , \\ \Gamma(K^0_{\mu3})/\Gamma(K^0_{e3}) &= 0.6452 + 1.3162\lambda_+ + 0.1264\xi(0) \\ &\qquad + 0.0186\xi(0)^2 + 0.0064\lambda_+\xi(0) \ .\end{aligned}$$

This cannot determine λ_+ and $\xi(0)$ simultaneously but simply fixes a relationship between them.

Method C. By measuring the muon polarization in $K_{\mu3}$ decay. In the rest frame of the K, the μ is expected to be polarized in the direction $\mathbf{A}$ with $\mathbf{P} = \mathbf{A}/\left|\mathbf{A}\right|$, where $\mathbf{A}$ is given (Cabibbo and Maksymowicz [3]) by

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{A} &= a_1(\xi)\mathbf{p}_\mu \\ &\quad - a_2(\xi)\left[\frac{\mathbf{p}_\mu}{m_\mu}\left(m_K - E_\pi + \frac{\mathbf{p}_\pi\cdot\mathbf{p}_\mu}{\left|\mathbf{p}_\mu\right|^2}(E_\mu - m_\mu)\right) + \mathbf{p}_\pi\right] \\ &\quad + m_K \mathrm{Im}\xi(t)(\mathbf{p}_\pi \times \mathbf{p}_\mu) \ .\end{aligned}$$

If time-reversal invariance holds, ξ is real, and thus there is no polarization perpendicular to the K-decay plane. Polarization experiments measure the weighted average of $\xi(t)$ over the t range of the experiment, where the weighting accounts for the variation with t of the sensitivity to $\xi(t)$.

(2) λ_+, λ_0 parametrization. Most of the more recent $K_{\mu 3}$ analyses have parameterized in terms of the form factors f_+ and f_0 which are associated with vector and scalar exchange, respectively, to the lepton pair. f_0 is related to f_+ and f_- by

$$f_0(t) = f_+(t) + \left[t/(m_K^2 - m_\pi^2)\right] f_-(t) \ .$$

Here $f_0(0)$ must equal $f_+(0)$ unless $f_-(t)$ diverges at $t = 0$. The earlier assumption that f_+ is linear in t and f_- is constant leads to f_0 linear in t:

$$f_0(t) = f_0(0) \left[1 + \lambda_0(t/m_\pi^2)\right] \ .$$

With the assumption that $f_0(0) = f_+(0)$, the two parametrizations, $(\lambda_+, \xi(0))$ and (λ_+, λ_0) are equivalent as long as correlation information is retained. (λ_+, λ_0) correlations tend to be less strong than $(\lambda_+, \xi(0))$ correlations.

The experimental results for $\xi(0)$ and its correlation with λ_+ are listed in the $K^\pm$ and K_L^0 sections of the Particle Listings in section $\xi_{\rm A}$, $\xi_{\rm B}$, or $\xi_{\rm C}$ depending on whether method A, B, or C discussed above was used. The corresponding values of λ_+ are also listed.

Because recent experiments tend to use the (λ_+, λ_0) parametrization, we include a subsection for λ_0 results. Wherever possible we have converted $\xi(0)$ results into λ_0 results and vice versa.

See the 1982 version of this note [4] for additional discussion of the $K_{\mu 3}^0$ parameters, correlations, and conversion between parametrizations, and also for a comparison of the experimental results.

(b) K_{e3} experiments. Analysis of K_{e3} data is simpler than that of $K_{\mu 3}$ because the second term of the matrix element assuming a pure vector current [Eq. (1) above] can be neglected. Here f_+ is usually assumed to be linear in t, and the linear coefficient λ_+ of Eq. (2) is determined.

If we remove the assumption of a pure vector current, then the matrix element for the decay, in addition to the terms in Eq. (2), would contain

$$
\begin{aligned}
&+2m_K\, f_S\, \overline{\ell}(1+\gamma_5)\nu \\
&\qquad +(2f_T/m_K)(P_K)_\lambda(P_\pi)_\mu\, \overline{\ell}\, \sigma_{\lambda\mu}(1+\gamma_5)\nu \ ,
\end{aligned}
$$

where f_S is the scalar form factor, and f_T is the tensor form factor. In the case of the K_{e3} decays where the f_- term can be neglected, experiments have yielded limits on $|f_S/f_+|$ and $|f_T/f_+|$.

References

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