



A search for excited leptons in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV[☆]

CMS Collaboration^{*}

CERN, Switzerland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 July 2011

Received in revised form 26 August 2011

Accepted 5 September 2011

Available online 10 September 2011

Editor: M. Doser

Keywords:

CMS

Physics

ABSTRACT

A search for excited leptons is carried out with the CMS detector at the LHC, using 36 pb⁻¹ of pp collision data recorded at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV. The search is performed for associated production of a lepton and an oppositely charged excited lepton $pp \rightarrow \ell \ell^*$, followed by the decay $\ell^* \rightarrow \ell \gamma$, resulting in the $\ell \ell \gamma$ final state, where $\ell = e, \mu$. No excess of events above the standard model expectation is observed. Interpreting the findings in the context of ℓ^* production through four-fermion contact interactions and subsequent decay via electroweak processes, first upper limits are reported for ℓ^* production at this collision energy. The exclusion region in the compositeness scale Λ and excited lepton mass M_{ℓ^*} parameter space is extended beyond previously established limits. For $\Lambda = M_{\ell^*}$, excited lepton masses are excluded below 1070 GeV/c² for e* and 1090 GeV/c² for μ^* at the 95% confidence level.

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1. Introduction

A fundamental question in the standard model (SM) of particle physics concerns the source of the mass hierarchy of quarks and leptons. A possible explanation for the three generations is a compositeness model in which the known leptons and quarks are bound states of either three fermions or a fermion–boson pair [1]. This substructure, if it exists, implies a large spectrum of excited states. Novel strong interactions would couple the excited fermions to ordinary quarks and leptons. These contact interactions can be described with an effective Lagrangian [2]:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{CI}} = \frac{g^{*2}}{2\Lambda^2} j^\mu j_\mu,$$

where Λ is the compositeness or contact interaction scale, g^{*2} represents a coupling constant chosen to be 4π , and j_μ is the fermion current:

$$j_\mu = \eta_L \bar{f}_L \gamma_\mu f_L + \eta'_L \bar{f}_L^* \gamma_\mu f_L^* + \eta''_L \bar{f}_L^* \gamma_\mu f_L + \text{h.c.} + (L \rightarrow R).$$

The SM and excited fermions are denoted by f and f^* , respectively. The subscripts L (R) refer to left- (right-) handed fermions. The η factors for left-handed currents are conventionally set to one, and those for right-handed currents are set to zero. The excited fermions are assumed to have spin and isospin of 1/2. Gauge-mediated transitions between ordinary and excited fermions are

described by an effective Lagrangian [2,3]:

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{GM}} = \frac{1}{2\Lambda} \bar{f}_R^* \sigma^{\mu\nu} \left[g_s f_s \frac{\lambda^a}{2} G_{\mu\nu}^a + g f \frac{\tau}{2} W_{\mu\nu} + g' f' \frac{Y}{2} B_{\mu\nu} \right] f_L + \text{h.c.},$$

where $G_{\mu\nu}^a$, $W_{\mu\nu}$, and $B_{\mu\nu}$ are the field strength tensors of the gluon, SU(2), and U(1) gauge fields, respectively, and g_s , g , and g' are the corresponding gauge couplings. The scaling parameters f_s , f , and f' are assumed to be equal to one. Previous searches at LEP [4–7], HERA [8,9], and the Tevatron [10–13] have found no evidence for such excited leptons. Searches for $\ell \ell q q$ contact interactions performed by studying the dilepton production at the Tevatron [14,15] and LHC [16] have resulted in lower limits on the compositeness or contact interaction scale Λ in the range of 3.3–4.5 TeV.

This Letter presents a search for excited leptons in pp collision data collected in 2010 at a centre-of-mass energy of 7 TeV with the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) [17] detector at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). The data sample corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 36 pb⁻¹. The production of an excited lepton ℓ^* (μ^* or e*) in association with an oppositely charged lepton of the same flavour via four-fermion contact interactions, followed by the electroweak decay $\ell^* \rightarrow \ell \gamma$, is considered. The production of excited leptons can also proceed via gauge-mediated interactions. However, the relative contribution of this production mechanism is below 0.5% for the range of excited lepton masses and compositeness scales considered in this search. The resulting final state, $\ell^+ \ell^- \gamma$, is fully reconstructed. The dominant SM background for

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

this search is the Drell–Yan production of $\ell^+\ell^-$ pairs, accompanied by a photon radiated either by an initial-state parton (ISR) or from one of the final-state leptons (FSR).

2. Experimental setup and event simulation

The central feature of the CMS apparatus is a superconducting solenoid of 6 m internal diameter, providing a magnetic field of 3.8 T. Within the field volume are the silicon pixel and strip trackers, the crystal electromagnetic calorimeter (ECAL), and the brass/scintillator hadron calorimeter (HCAL). The central tracker consists of 1440 silicon pixel and 15 148 silicon strip detector modules. It provides an impact parameter resolution of approximately 15 μm and a transverse momentum (p_T) resolution of 4% for 500 GeV/c charged particles. The ECAL has an energy resolution of better than 0.5% above 100 GeV. The calorimeter cells are grouped in projective towers of granularity $\Delta\eta \times \Delta\phi = 0.087 \times 0.087$ in the region $|\eta| < 1.74$ and 0.175×0.175 at higher values of η , where the pseudorapidity η is defined as $\eta = -\ln(\tan \frac{\theta}{2})$, with θ being the polar angle with respect to the direction of the counterclockwise beam, and ϕ the azimuthal angle, both measured in radians. A preshower detector consisting of two planes of silicon sensors interleaved with a total of 3 radiation lengths of lead is located in front of the ECAL, covering $1.65 < |\eta| < 2.6$. Muons are measured in gas-ionization detectors embedded in the steel return yoke, with detection planes made of three technologies: drift tubes in the barrel region ($|\eta| < 1.2$), cathode strip chambers in the endcaps ($0.9 < |\eta| < 2.4$), and resistive plate chambers covering both the barrel and the endcap regions. Matching the muons to the tracks measured in the silicon tracker results in a transverse momentum resolution between 1 and 5% for p_T values up to 1 TeV/c. The CMS detector and its performance are described in detail in Ref. [17].

Monte Carlo (MC) samples of the signal process are produced with the PYTHIA [18] event generator, using the compositeness model described in [2,3], for different values of the ℓ^* mass. The signal production cross sections are calculated at the leading order. Decays of excited leptons via contact interactions, not implemented in PYTHIA, are taken into account for the signal expectation according to Ref. [2]. For $\Lambda = 1$ TeV (4 TeV), the branching fraction of the decay $\ell^* \rightarrow \ell\gamma$ normalized to all possible decay modes is 23% (33%) for $M_{\ell^*} = 200$ GeV/c² and 2.3% (17%) for $M_{\ell^*} = 1$ TeV/c². As a cross-check, samples of the signal process are also simulated using a customized version of the COMPEP [19] event generator. For the event selection criteria used in this analysis, event rates predicted by PYTHIA and COMPEP are found to agree to within about 2%. This difference is taken as a systematic uncertainty on the predicted signal rate. The dominant background process, the Drell–Yan production of $\ell^+\ell^-$ pairs with an ISR or FSR photon, is simulated with the MADGRAPH [20] event generator. The expectation for this process is corrected with the prediction of the next-to-leading order BAUR generator [21]. The PYTHIA event generator is used to generate samples for other SM background processes, including WW, WZ, ZZ, $t\bar{t}$, and, for the electron channel, $\gamma\gamma$ production. All samples are generated using the CTEQ6L1 [22] parametrization for the parton distribution functions (PDF) and passed through a detailed simulation of the CMS detector response implemented with the GEANT4 package [23].

3. Event selection

This section describes the criteria used to select the events in the analysis. Trigger and particle identification efficiencies and their statistical uncertainties, determined via a tag-and-probe method [24] using samples of $Z \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-$ events, will be discussed below.

Events are collected with single-muon and double-photon triggers. Double-photon triggers require two electromagnetic clusters above a p_T threshold, and thus can be satisfied both by photons and electrons. The trigger efficiency is about 99% for $\mu^+\mu^-\gamma$ and close to 100% for $e^+e^-\gamma$ events passing our final selection criteria. The analysis accepts events with one isolated photon, two isolated leptons with high p_T , and at least one reconstructed primary vertex. In events containing more than one photon or more than two leptons, the highest- p_T objects are chosen. Events containing particles from LHC machine-induced backgrounds, such as beam halo and beam gas, are rejected by requiring that the fraction of high quality tracks be at least 25% in events with more than 10 tracks [25].

Details of the muon reconstruction and identification are given elsewhere [26,27]. When a track is found in the muon chambers (standalone muon), a matching track in the central detector is required. A fit combining hits from these two matching tracks is performed, resulting in a “global-muon track”. Alternatively, a track in the central detector, loosely matching with hits in the muon detectors after extrapolation to the muon chambers, results in a “tracker muon”. The tracker muons, together with the corresponding global-muon tracks, are selected for the analysis. Cosmic rays, muons from decay in flight of hadrons, and hadrons misidentified as muons are rejected using requirements on the quality of the global-muon fit, number of detector layers with hits in the muon chambers, and transverse impact parameter of the track. Two isolated muons with $p_T > 20$ GeV/c and $|\eta| < 2.4$ are used in the analysis. The reconstruction and identification efficiency for muons with $p_T > 20$ GeV/c is $(96 \pm 1)\%$.

Electrons and photons are detected in the ECAL as localized clusters [28,29]. The electron and photon identification procedures exploit the ECAL shower shape and isolation variables, the relative energy fraction deposited in the hadronic and electromagnetic calorimeters (H/E), and, for electrons, the presence of a track matching the ECAL cluster. Applying different selection criteria to these variables separates clusters originating from electrons, photons, and hadrons.

For electrons, a central-detector track matching the ECAL cluster is required. The track parameters are extrapolated to ECAL; the energy and extrapolated positions are required to be consistent with those of the ECAL cluster. Electrons are identified both in the ECAL barrel ($|\eta| < 1.44$) and endcaps ($1.57 < |\eta| < 2.5$), which are the regions covered by both the tracker and ECAL. Events in the $e^+e^-\gamma$ channel are required to contain at least two electrons with $p_T > 25$ GeV/c. This threshold excludes p_T regions with lower trigger efficiency. Electrons are selected with an average efficiency of $(91.4 \pm 0.3)\%$ in the barrel and $(90.6 \pm 0.6)\%$ in the endcaps.

Photons are selected as clusters in the ECAL barrel. To accept converted photons, no additional requirement based on the presence of matching tracks is applied. Only ECAL clusters that have not been previously matched to either of the two highest- p_T electrons can be identified as photons. Isolated photons with $p_T > 20$ GeV/c are used.

The photon should be separated from each of the selected leptons in the η – ϕ plane by $\Delta R > 0.5$, where $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta\phi)^2 + (\Delta\eta)^2}$ and $\Delta\phi$ and $\Delta\eta$ are the azimuthal angle and pseudorapidity differences between the photon and the lepton. Only events with dilepton invariant mass $M_{\ell\ell} > 60$ GeV/c² are selected for further analysis.

Of the two possible lepton–photon invariant mass combinations in each event, the higher value, $M_{\mu\gamma}^{\text{max}}$ or $M_{e\gamma}^{\text{max}}$, is used as the search variable. The use of the second mass combination does not improve the search sensitivity for the range of excited lepton masses probed.

Table 1

Predicted and observed numbers of events passing all the selection criteria for the muon and electron final states. Columns 2–4 list separately the numbers of background events from the following sources: final states containing two leptons and one photon, including the dominant process, Drell–Yan with ISR or FSR; final states with two leptons accompanied by a jet misidentified as a photon; and final states with one genuine lepton and one genuine photon, accompanied by a jet misidentified as a lepton. Contributions from final states with two or three misidentified jets are found to be negligible. Statistical and systematic uncertainties are summed in quadrature.

Final state	$\ell^+\ell^-\gamma$	$\ell^+\ell^- + \text{jet}$	$\ell\gamma + \text{jet}$	Total	Observed
$\mu^+\mu^-\gamma$	19.1 ± 1.4	5.5 ± 2.1	0.7 ± 0.9	25.3 ± 2.7	25
$e^+e^-\gamma$	11.0 ± 1.0	1.4 ± 0.8	1.0 ± 0.4	13.4 ± 1.4	7

4. Background estimation

Irreducible backgrounds from SM processes and instrumental backgrounds from events in which jets are mis-reconstructed as leptons or photons are evaluated separately. The contribution from SM processes with real leptons and photons, dominated by Drell–Yan with ISR/FSR production, is estimated from MC simulation. The predicted background yields are corrected to account for the difference in the efficiencies measured from data and simulated events. The scale factors are 0.967 ± 0.025 for photons, 0.989 ± 0.010 for muons, 0.978 ± 0.004 for electrons in the barrel, and 0.994 ± 0.006 for electrons in the endcaps.

Backgrounds from processes in which jets are misreconstructed as leptons or photons are measured with data samples selected to contain predominantly jets [29,30]. For each jet-enriched data sample, the misidentification rate is measured as the ratio of the number of objects passing all selection cuts (numerator) to the number of potentially misidentifiable objects (denominator). For the muon misidentification rate estimation, the denominator corresponds to the number of tracker muons with $|\eta| < 2.4$. For electrons, the denominator is the number of ECAL clusters with $H/E < 0.05$ and $p_T > 20$ GeV/c. For photons, the denominator is the number of photon candidates obtained by relaxing the isolation or shower-shape criterion.

Signal search samples containing one or more potentially misidentifiable objects are selected and used together with the measured misidentification rates in order to predict the number of background events with misidentified objects. A closure test of the misidentification-rate method was done using MC simulation. Good agreement between the expected and observed number of events is found. The background prediction is also tested by comparing the observed and expected numbers of events in several data control regions: samples where only one lepton and one photon are selected, and samples containing two leptons and a photon selected with a looser sets of criteria.

Table 1 compares the predicted and observed numbers of events passing all selection requirements. Because of the lower efficiency for particle identification and the stricter p_T requirement, yields in the electron channel are lower than in the muon channel.

Fig. 1 (left) shows the photon transverse momentum distributions in the electron (top) and muon (bottom) channels, and (right) the maximum lepton–photon invariant mass distributions for data, along with the predictions for a signal with $M_{\ell^*} = 200$ GeV/c², $\Lambda = 2$ TeV, and for the SM background processes. The background prediction describes the data well in these as well as in other kinematic variables.

5. Systematic uncertainties

The normalization and shape of the invariant mass distributions used to establish a possible excited lepton signal are subject to uncertainties from both experimental and theoretical sources. The

normalizations of the spectra are based on the integrated luminosity of the data sample, which is known to a precision of 4% [31]. The theoretical calculations of background process cross sections are affected by uncertainties in parton distribution functions [22] and the choice of factorization and renormalization scales. The uncertainties on the PDFs are evaluated using a reweighting technique with the CTEQ6M parametrization [22], while the uncertainties on the factorization and renormalization scales are estimated by varying them simultaneously from half to twice their central values. The resulting uncertainty on the background expectation is found to be 5%. In this section, all quoted uncertainties are obtained after requiring $M_{\ell\gamma}^{\max} > 180$ GeV/c².

The uncertainty on the number of background events from jets misidentified as leptons or photons is estimated by comparing misidentification rates measured in jet-enriched samples collected with different trigger requirements. Another source of uncertainty, estimated using MC simulations, is the difference between the misidentification rate observed in the jet-triggered samples, where it is measured, and the photon- or muon-triggered samples, where it is applied. The photon misidentification-rate uncertainty increases from 20% to 50% with photon p_T . This results in an uncertainty of 10% (7%) on the background prediction in the muon (electron) channel. The electron misidentification rate is known with a 25% (40%) uncertainty in the ECAL barrel (endcaps), resulting in a 10% uncertainty on the background prediction in the electron channel. The uncertainty on the muon misidentification rate is estimated to be 50%, and the resulting effect on the background expectation is 1%.

The uncertainties on the efficiency correction factors used in simulated events are included in the systematic uncertainties. They are 0.6% (1.1%) for electrons measured in the ECAL barrel (endcaps), 1% for muons, and 2.5% for photons. The effect on signal and background yields due to the particle identification uncertainties is smaller than 2% for the leptons and about 2.5% for the photons. The uncertainty on the photon and electron energy scale translates into an additional uncertainty of 0.5% for signal and 1.2% for background predictions.

Considering all sources of uncertainties mentioned above, the selection efficiencies for excited leptons are known to a precision of 3–4%, in both the electron and muon channels.

6. Results and discussion

In order to enhance the sensitivity of the analysis, the search is restricted to the high invariant mass region by applying a selection on $M_{\ell\gamma}^{\max}$ that depends on the excited lepton mass hypothesis. For each excited lepton mass, the entire analysis is repeated using various search regions and the region giving the best expected limits is taken. For excited lepton masses above 600 GeV/c², where almost no background is expected, the search region $M_{\ell\gamma}^{\max} > 500$ GeV/c² is used. The number of observed events, and the predicted numbers from SM backgrounds and from an excited lepton signal, as well as the selection efficiency, are listed in Table 2 for the two search channels with various excited lepton mass hypotheses and fixed $\Lambda = 2$ TeV. The uncertainties on the number of predicted background events and the signal efficiencies are the statistical and systematic uncertainties summed in quadrature. No excited lepton candidate events are found in any of the search regions. This lack of events is consistent with the SM background predictions.

Considering the production of excited leptons via a four-fermion contact interaction as an alternative hypothesis to the SM, upper limits on the ℓ^* production cross section times branching fraction of the $\ell^* \rightarrow \ell\gamma$ decay are set using a Bayesian method with a flat prior [32]. A log-normal prior is used for the integration over

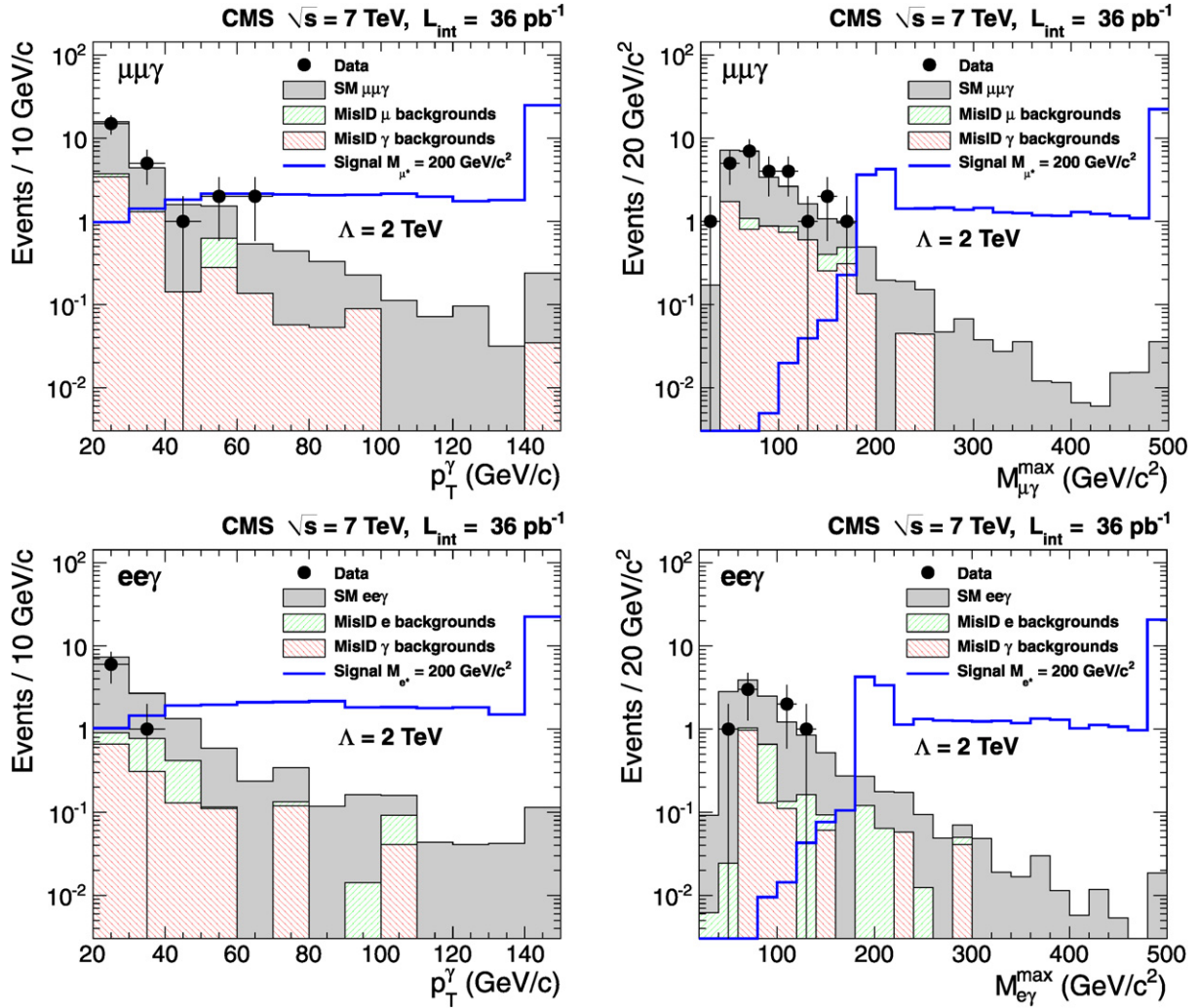


Fig. 1. Photon transverse momentum distributions (left) and maximum invariant mass distributions of the lepton–photon pair (right) in the muon (top) and electron (bottom) channels. The data are shown as solid circles with error bars and the expected SM background distributions are shown as hatched histograms. The solid-line histogram displays the expected excited lepton signal for $M_{\ell^*} = 200 \text{ GeV}/c^2$, $\Lambda = 2 \text{ TeV}$. For this particular M_{ℓ^*} , the search region is restricted to $M_{\ell\gamma}^{\text{max}} > 180 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. In each histogram, the last bin includes the overflows.

Table 2
Minimum requirement on the highest invariant mass pair $M_{\ell\gamma}^{\text{cut}}$, number of events observed in data and expected SM background, signal efficiency, observed (expected) upper limits $\sigma_{\text{obs}}^{\text{lim}}$ ($\sigma_{\text{exp}}^{\text{lim}}$) on the ℓ^* production cross section times the branching fraction of the $\ell^* \rightarrow \ell\gamma$ decay, and expected numbers of signal events, for various excited lepton masses M_{ℓ^*} , assuming $\Lambda = 2 \text{ TeV}$. Invariant masses are given in GeV/c^2 and $\sigma_{\text{obs}}^{\text{lim}}$ ($\sigma_{\text{exp}}^{\text{lim}}$) in pb. The statistical and systematic uncertainties on signal efficiency are summed in quadrature.

Muon channel						
M_{μ^*}	$M_{\mu\gamma}^{\text{cut}}$	N_{data}	$N_{\text{predicted SM}}$	Signal eff. (%)	$\sigma_{\text{obs}}^{\text{lim}}$ ($\sigma_{\text{exp}}^{\text{lim}}$)	$N_{\text{predicted signal}}$
200	180	0	$1.35 \pm 0.15 \pm 0.14$	44.8 ± 1.8	0.19 (0.28)	47
400	350	0	$0.11 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.03$	51.0 ± 1.9	0.16 (0.17)	18.6
600	500	0	$0.04 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.03$	53.9 ± 2.0	0.15 (0.15)	7.3
800	500	0	$0.04 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.03$	55.6 ± 2.1	0.15 (0.15)	2.8
1000	500	0	$0.04 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.03$	56.9 ± 2.1	0.15 (0.15)	1.1
1200	500	0	$0.04 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.03$	56.9 ± 2.1	0.15 (0.15)	0.4
1500	500	0	$0.04 \pm 0.08 \pm 0.03$	58.5 ± 2.1	0.14 (0.14)	0.1
Electron channel						
M_{e^*}	$M_{e\gamma}^{\text{cut}}$	N_{data}	$N_{\text{predicted SM}}$	Signal eff. (%)	$\sigma_{\text{obs}}^{\text{lim}}$ ($\sigma_{\text{exp}}^{\text{lim}}$)	$N_{\text{expected signal}}$
200	180	0	$1.00 \pm 0.12 \pm 0.10$	38.7 ± 1.5	0.21 (0.30)	40
400	350	0	$0.10 \pm 0.07 \pm 0.02$	44.6 ± 1.7	0.19 (0.19)	16
600	500	0	$0.01 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.02$	47.0 ± 1.7	0.18 (0.18)	6.4
800	500	0	$0.01 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.02$	49.3 ± 1.8	0.17 (0.17)	2.5
1000	500	0	$0.01 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.02$	50.9 ± 1.8	0.16 (0.16)	1.0
1200	500	0	$0.01 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.02$	51.3 ± 1.8	0.16 (0.16)	0.4
1500	500	0	$0.01 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.02$	52.9 ± 1.8	0.16 (0.16)	0.1

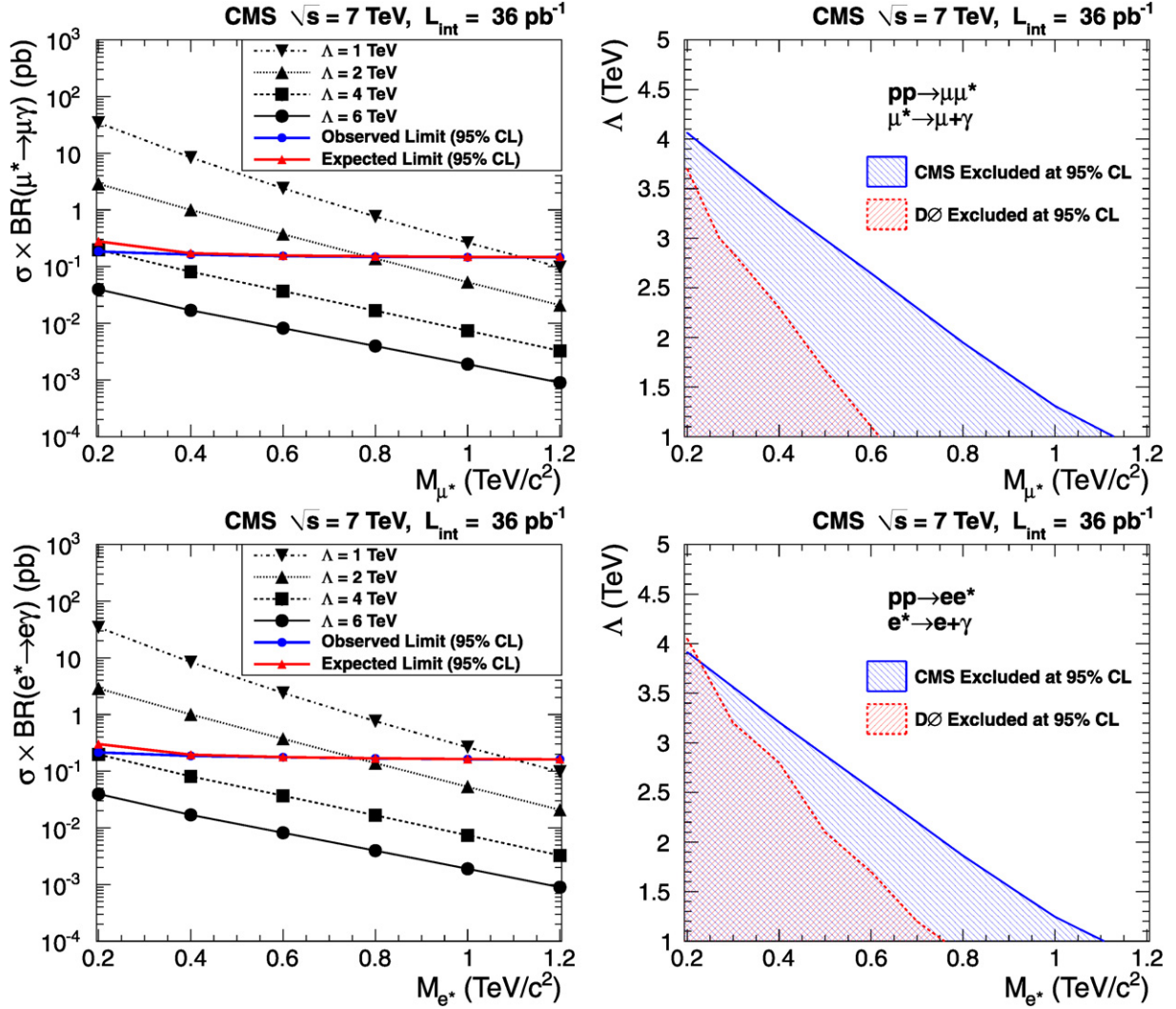


Fig. 2. Left: Observed and expected limits on the excited muon (top) and electron (bottom) production cross section times branching fraction at 95% CL, as functions of the excited lepton mass. The predictions for different Λ values are also shown. Right: The region in the (Λ, M_{ℓ^*}) plane excluded at the 95% CL by the present search, both for muons (top) and electrons (bottom). The previous most stringent limits from the D0 Collaboration [11,13] are also displayed.

the nuisance parameters. The corresponding expected limit is computed as the weighted average of limits over all possible numbers of observed events, where the weight is the Poisson probability to observe a given number of events in data assuming background-only hypothesis. The systematic uncertainties discussed in the previous section are taken into account in the statistical analysis. Cross sections higher than 0.16 pb to 0.21 pb for e^* production and higher than 0.14 pb to 0.19 pb for μ^* production are excluded at the 95% confidence level (CL) for excited lepton masses ranging from 200 GeV/c² to 1500 GeV/c², as shown in Fig. 2 (left) and given in Table 2. At a contact interaction scale of $\Lambda = M_{\ell^*}$, excited lepton masses are excluded below 1070 GeV/c² for electrons and 1090 GeV/c² for muons. If a higher contact interaction scale $\Lambda = 2$ TeV is considered, excited lepton masses are excluded below 760 GeV/c² for electrons and 780 GeV/c² for muons. Fig. 2 (right) displays the exclusion regions in the (Λ, M_{ℓ^*}) plane obtained from these limits, showing an improvement with respect to the previous most stringent limits established at hadron colliders [11,13].

7. Summary

We have searched for evidence of lepton compositeness in proton–proton collisions by looking for production of excited lep-

tons followed by decay to a lepton and a photon at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV. The data sample corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 36 pb⁻¹ collected with the CMS detector. No excess of events in the $\ell^+ \ell^- \gamma$ final state was found above the SM expectation in the electron or muon channel. We report the first upper limits on ℓ^* production at this collision energy and exclude a new region of the $\Lambda - M_{\ell^*}$ parameter space. At a contact interaction scale of $\Lambda = 2$ TeV, excited lepton masses are excluded at the 95% CL below 760 GeV/c² for electrons and 780 GeV/c² for muons. Assuming $\Lambda = M_{\ell^*}$ instead, excited lepton masses are excluded below 1070 GeV/c² for electrons and 1090 GeV/c² for muons, representing the most stringent limits to date.

Acknowledgements

We wish to congratulate our colleagues in the CERN accelerator departments for the excellent performance of the LHC machine. We thank the technical and administrative staff at CERN and other CMS institutes, and acknowledge support from: FMSR (Austria); FNRS and FWO (Belgium); CNPq, CAPES, FAPERJ, and FAPESP (Brazil); MES (Bulgaria); CERN; CAS, MoST, and NSFC (China); COLCIENCIAS (Colombia); MSES (Croatia); RPF (Cyprus); Academy of Sciences and NICPB (Estonia); Academy of Finland, ME, and HIP

(Finland); CEA and CNRS/IN2P3 (France); BMBF, DFG, and HGF (Germany); GSRT (Greece); OTKA and NKTH (Hungary); CSIR, DAE, and DST (India); IPM (Iran); SFI (Ireland); INFN (Italy); NRF (Korea); LAS (Lithuania); CINVESTAV, CONACYT, SEP, and UASLP-FAI (Mexico); PAEC (Pakistan); SCSR (Poland); FCT (Portugal); JINR (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan); MST and MAE (Russia); MSTDS (Serbia); MICINN and CPAN (Spain); Swiss Funding Agencies (Switzerland); NSC (Taipei); TUBITAK and TAEK (Turkey); STFC (United Kingdom); DOE and NSF (USA).

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CMS Collaboration

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

Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

W. Adam, T. Bergauer, M. Dragicevic, J. Erö, C. Fabjan, M. Friedl, R. Frühwirth, V.M. Ghete, J. Hammer¹, S. Häseler, M. Hoch, N. Hörmann, J. Hrubec, M. Jeitler, W. Kiesenhofer, M. Krammer, D. Liko, I. Mikulec, M. Pernicka, H. Rohringer, R. Schöfbeck, J. Strauss, A. Taurok, F. Teischinger, P. Wagner, W. Waltenberger, G. Walzel, E. Widl, C.-E. Wulz

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. Bansal, L. Benucci, E.A. De Wolf, X. Janssen, J. Maes, T. Maes, L. Mucibello, S. Ochesanu, B. Roland, R. Rougny, M. Selvaggi, H. Van Haevermaet, P. Van Mechelen, N. Van Remortel

Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerpen, Belgium

F. Blekman, S. Blyweert, J. D'Hondt, O. Devroede, R. Gonzalez Suarez, A. Kalogeropoulos, M. Maes, W. Van Doninck, P. Van Mulders, G.P. Van Onsem, I. Villella

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel, Belgium

O. Charaf, B. Clerbaux, G. De Lentdecker, V. Dero, A.P.R. Gay, G.H. Hammad, T. Hreus, P.E. Marage, L. Thomas, C. Vander Velde, P. Vanlaer

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, Belgium

V. Adler, A. Cimmino, S. Costantini, M. Grunewald, B. Klein, J. Lellouch, A. Marinov, J. McCartin, D. Ryckbosch, F. Thyssen, M. Tytgat, L. Vanelderden, P. Verwilligen, S. Walsh, N. Zaganidis

Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

S. Basegmez, G. Bruno, J. Caudron, L. Ceard, E. Cortina Gil, J. De Favereau De Jeneret, C. Delaere¹, D. Favart, A. Giammanco, G. Grégoire, J. Hollar, V. Lemaître, J. Liao, O. Militaru, C. Nuttens, S. Oryn, D. Pagano, A. Pin, K. Piotrkowski, N. Schul

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

N. Beliy, T. Caebergs, E. Daubie

Université de Mons, Mons, Belgium

G.A. Alves, L. Brito, D. De Jesus Damiao, M.E. Pol, M.H.G. Souza

Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

W.L. Aldá Júnior, W. Carvalho, E.M. Da Costa, C. De Oliveira Martins, S. Fonseca De Souza, L. Mundim, H. Nogima, V. Oguri, W.L. Prado Da Silva, A. Santoro, S.M. Silva Do Amaral, A. Sznajder

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

C.A. Bernardes², F.A. Dias, T.R. Fernandez Perez Tomei, E.M. Gregores², C. Lagana, F. Marinho, P.G. Mercadante², S.F. Novaes, Sandra S. Padula

Instituto de Fisica Teorica, Universidade Estadual Paulista, Sao Paulo, Brazil

N. Darmenov¹, V. Genchev¹, P. Iaydjiev¹, S. Piperov, M. Rodozov, S. Stoykova, G. Sultanov, V. Tcholakov, R. Trayanov

Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Sofia, Bulgaria

A. Dimitrov, R. Hadjiiska, A. Karadzhinova, V. Kozuharov, L. Litov, M. Mateev, B. Pavlov, P. Petkov

University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

J.G. Bian, G.M. Chen, H.S. Chen, C.H. Jiang, D. Liang, S. Liang, X. Meng, J. Tao, J. Wang, J. Wang, X. Wang, Z. Wang, H. Xiao, M. Xu, J. Zang, Z. Zhang

Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing, China

Y. Ban, S. Guo, Y. Guo, W. Li, Y. Mao, S.J. Qian, H. Teng, B. Zhu, W. Zou

State Key Lab. of Nucl. Phys. and Tech., Peking University, Beijing, China

A. Cabrera, B. Gomez Moreno, A.A. Ocampo Rios, A.F. Osorio Oliveros, J.C. Sanabria

Universidad de Los Andes, Bogota, Colombia

N. Godinovic, D. Lelas, K. Lelas, R. Plestina³, D. Polic, I. Puljak

Technical University of Split, Split, Croatia

Z. Antunovic, M. Dzelalija

University of Split, Split, Croatia

V. Brigljevic, S. Duric, K. Kadija, S. Morovic

Institute Rudjer Boskovic, Zagreb, Croatia

A. Attikis, M. Galanti, J. Mousa, C. Nicolaou, F. Ptochos, P.A. Razis

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

M. Finger, M. Finger Jr.

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Y. Assran⁴, S. Khalil⁵, M.A. Mahmoud⁶

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

A. Hektor, M. Kadastik, M. Müntel, M. Raidal, L. Rebane, A. Tiko

National Institute of Chemical Physics and Biophysics, Tallinn, Estonia

V. Azzolini, P. Eerola, G. Fedi

Department of Physics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

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

Helsinki Institute of Physics, Helsinki, Finland

K. Banzuzi, A. Karjalainen, A. Korpela, T. Tuuva

Lappeenranta University of Technology, Lappeenranta, Finland

D. Sillou

Laboratoire d'Annecy-le-Vieux de Physique des Particules, IN2P3–CNRS, Annecy-le-Vieux, France

M. Besancon, S. Choudhury, M. Dejardin, D. Denegri, B. Fabbro, J.L. Faure, F. Ferri, S. Ganjour, F.X. Gentit, A. Givernaud, P. Gras, G. Hamel de Monchenault, P. Jarry, E. Locci, J. Malcles, M. Marionneau, L. Millischer, J. Rander, A. Rosowsky, I. Shreyber, M. Titov, P. Verrecchia

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

S. Baffioni, F. Beaudette, L. Benhabib, L. Bianchini, M. Bluj⁷, C. Broutin, P. Busson, C. Charlot, T. Dahms, L. Dobrzynski, S. Elgammal, R. Granier de Cassagnac, M. Haguenaue, P. Miné, C. Mironov, C. Ochando, P. Paganini, D. Sabes, R. Salerno, Y. Sirois, C. Thiebaux, B. Wyslouch⁸, A. Zabi

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

J.-L. Agram⁹, J. Andrea, D. Bloch, D. Bodin, J.-M. Brom, M. Cardaci, E.C. Chabert, C. Collard, E. Conte⁹, F. Drouhin⁹, C. Ferro, J.-C. Fontaine⁹, D. Gelé, U. Goerlach, S. Greder, P. Juillot, M. Karim⁹, A.-C. Le Bihan, Y. Mikami, P. Van Hove

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

F. Fassi, D. Mercier

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

C. Baty, S. Beauceron, N. Beaupere, M. Bedjidian, O. Bondu, G. Boudoul, D. Boumediene, H. Brun, J. Chasserat, R. Chierici, D. Contardo, P. Depasse, H. El Mamouni, J. Fay, S. Gascon, B. Ille, T. Kurca, T. Le Grand, M. Lethuillier, L. Mirabito, S. Perries, V. Sordini, S. Tosi, Y. Tschudi, P. Verdier

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

D. Lomidze

Institute of High Energy Physics and Informatization, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia

G. Anagnostou, S. Beranek, M. Edelhoff, L. Feld, N. Heracleous, O. Hindrichs, R. Jussen, K. Klein, J. Merz, N. Mohr, A. Ostapchuk, A. Perieanu, F. Raupach, J. Sammet, S. Schael, D. Sprenger, H. Weber, M. Weber, B. Wittmer

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

M. Ata, E. Dietz-Laursonn, M. Erdmann, T. Hebbeker, A. Hinzmann, K. Hoepfner, T. Klimkovich, D. Klingebiel, P. Kreuzer, D. Lanske[†], J. Lingemann, C. Magass, M. Merschmeyer, A. Meyer, P. Papacz, H. Pieta, H. Reithler, S.A. Schmitz, L. Sonnenschein, J. Steggemann, D. Teyssier

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

M. Bontenackels, M. Davids, M. Duda, G. Flügge, H. Geenen, M. Giffels, W. Haj Ahmad, D. Heydhausen, F. Hoehle, B. Kargoll, T. Kress, Y. Kuessel, A. Linn, A. Nowack, L. Perchalla, O. Pooth, J. Rennefeld, P. Sauerland, A. Stahl, M. Thomas, D. Tornier, M.H. Zoeller

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

M. Aldaya Martin, W. Behrenhoff, U. Behrens, M. Bergholz¹⁰, A. Bethani, K. Borras, A. Cakir, A. Campbell, E. Castro, D. Dammann, G. Eckerlin, D. Eckstein, A. Flossdorf, G. Flucke, A. Geiser, J. Hauk, H. Jung¹, M. Kasemann, I. Katkov¹¹, P. Katsas, C. Kleinwort, H. Kluge, A. Knutsson, M. Krämer, D. Krücker, E. Kuznetsova, W. Lange, W. Lohmann¹⁰, R. Mankel, M. Marienfeld, I.-A. Melzer-Pellmann, A.B. Meyer, J. Mnich, A. Mussgiller, J. Olzem, A. Petrukhin, D. Pitzl, A. Raspereza, A. Raval, M. Rosin, R. Schmidt¹⁰, T. Schoerner-Sadenius, N. Sen, A. Spiridonov, M. Stein, J. Tomaszewska, R. Walsh, C. Wissing

Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron, Hamburg, Germany

C. Autermann, V. Blobel, S. Bobrovskiy, J. Draeger, H. Enderle, U. Gebbert, M. Görner, K. Kaschube, G. Kaussen, H. Kirschenmann, R. Klanner, J. Lange, B. Mura, S. Naumann-Emme, F. Nowak, N. Pietsch, C. Sander, H. Schettler, P. Schleper, E. Schlieckau, M. Schröder, T. Schum, J. Schwandt, H. Stadie, G. Steinbrück, J. Thomsen

University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

C. Barth, J. Bauer, J. Berger, V. Buege, T. Chwalek, W. De Boer, A. Dierlamm, G. Dirkes, M. Feindt, J. Gruschke, C. Hackstein, F. Hartmann, M. Heinrich, H. Held, K.H. Hoffmann, S. Honc, J.R. Komaragiri, T. Kuhr, D. Martschei, S. Mueller, Th. Müller, M. Niegel, O. Oberst, A. Oehler, J. Ott, T. Peiffer, G. Quast, K. Rabbertz, F. Ratnikov, N. Ratnikova, M. Renz, C. Saout, A. Scheurer, P. Schieferdecker, F.-P. Schilling, G. Schott, H.J. Simonis, F.M. Stober, D. Troendle, J. Wagner-Kuhr, T. Weiler, M. Zeise, V. Zhukov¹¹, E.B. Ziebarth

Institut für Experimentelle Kernphysik, Karlsruhe, Germany

G. Daskalakis, T. Gerasis, S. Kesisoglou, A. Kyriakis, D. Loukas, I. Manolakos, A. Markou, C. Markou, C. Mavrommatis, E. Ntomari, E. Petrakou

Institute of Nuclear Physics "Demokritos", Aghia Paraskevi, Greece

L. Gouskos, T.J. Mertzimekis, A. Panagiotou, E. Stiliaris

University of Athens, Athens, Greece

I. Evangelou, C. Foudas, P. Kokkas, N. Manthos, I. Papadopoulos, V. Patras, F.A. Triantis

University of Ioánnina, Ioánnina, Greece

A. Aranyi, G. Bencze, L. Boldizsar, C. Hajdu¹, P. Hidas, D. Horvath¹², A. Kapusi, K. Krajczar¹³,
F. Sikler¹, G.I. Veres¹³, G. Vesztergombi¹³

KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Budapest, Hungary

N. Beni, J. Molnar, J. Palinkas, Z. Szillasi, V. Veszpremi

Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary

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

University of Debrecen, Debrecen, Hungary

S.B. Beri, V. Bhatnagar, N. Dhingra, R. Gupta, M. Jindal, M. Kaur, J.M. Kohli, M.Z. Mehta, N. Nishu,
L.K. Saini, A. Sharma, A.P. Singh, J. Singh, S.P. Singh

Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

S. Ahuja, B.C. Choudhary, P. Gupta, S. Jain, A. Kumar, A. Kumar, M. Naimuddin, K. Ranjan,
R.K. Shivpuri

University of Delhi, Delhi, India

S. Banerjee, S. Bhattacharya, S. Dutta, B. Gomber, S. Jain, R. Khurana, S. Sarkar

Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, India

R.K. Choudhury, D. Dutta, S. Kailas, V. Kumar, P. Mehta,
A.K. Mohanty¹, L.M. Pant, P. Shukla

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, India

T. Aziz, M. Guchait¹⁴, A. Gurtu, M. Maity¹⁵, D. Majumder, G. Majumder, K. Mazumdar, G.B. Mohanty,
A. Saha, K. Sudhakar, N. Wickramage

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research – EHEP, Mumbai, India

S. Banerjee, S. Dugad, N.K. Mondal

Tata Institute of Fundamental Research – HECR, Mumbai, India

H. Arfaei, H. Bakhshiansohi¹⁶, S.M. Etesami, A. Fahim¹⁶, M. Hashemi, A. Jafari¹⁶, M. Khakzad,
A. Mohammadi¹⁷, M. Mohammadi Najafabadi, S. Paktinat Mehdiabadi, B. Safarzadeh, M. Zeinali¹⁸

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

M. Abbrescia^{a,b}, L. Barbone^{a,b}, C. Calabria^{a,b}, A. Colaleo^a, D. Creanza^{a,c}, N. De Filippis^{a,c,1},
M. De Palma^{a,b}, L. Fiore^a, G. Iaselli^{a,c}, L. Lusito^{a,b}, G. Maggi^{a,c}, M. Maggi^a, N. Manna^{a,b},
B. Marangelli^{a,b}, S. My^{a,c}, S. Nuzzo^{a,b}, N. Pacifico^{a,b}, G.A. Pierro^a, A. Pompili^{a,b}, G. Pugliese^{a,c},
F. Romano^{a,c}, G. Roselli^{a,b}, G. Selvaggi^{a,b}, L. Silvestris^a, R. Trentadue^a, S. Tupputi^{a,b}, G. Zito^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, S. Braibant-Giacomelli^{a,b}, L. Brigliadori^a, P. Capiluppi^{a,b},
A. Castro^{a,b}, F.R. Cavallo^a, M. Cuffiani^{a,b}, G.M. Dallavalle^a, F. Fabbri^a, A. Fanfani^{a,b}, D. Fasanella^a,
P. Giacomelli^a, M. Giunta^a, C. Grandi^a, S. Marcellini^a, G. Masetti^b, M. Meneghelli^{a,b}, A. Montanari^a,
F.L. Navarria^{a,b}, F. Odorici^a, A. Perrotta^a, F. Primavera^a, A.M. Rossi^{a,b}, T. Rovelli^{a,b}, G. Siroli^{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,b}, M. Chiorboli^{a,b,1}, S. Costa^{a,b}, A. Tricomi^{a,b}, C. Tuve^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Catania, Catania, Italy

^b Università di Catania, Catania, Italy

G. Barbagli^a, V. Ciulli^{a,b}, C. Civinini^a, R. D'Alessandro^{a,b}, E. Focardi^{a,b}, S. Frosali^{a,b},
E. Gallo^a, S. Gonzi^{a,b}, P. Lenzi^{a,b}, M. Meschini^a, S. Paoletti^a, G. Sguazzoni^a,
A. Tropiano^{a,1}

^a INFN Sezione di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

^b Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

L. Benussi, S. Bianco, S. Colafranceschi¹⁹, F. Fabbri, D. Piccolo

INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy

P. Fabbriatore, R. Musenich

INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy

A. Benaglia^{a,b}, F. De Guio^{a,b,1}, L. Di Matteo^{a,b}, S. Gennai^{a,1}, A. Ghezzi^{a,b}, S. Malvezzi^a, A. Martelli^{a,b},
A. Massironi^{a,b}, D. Menasce^a, L. Moroni^a, M. Paganoni^{a,b}, D. Pedrini^a, S. Ragazzi^{a,b}, N. Redaelli^a,
S. Sala^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, C.A. Carrillo Montoya^{a,1}, N. Cavallo^{a,20}, A. De Cosa^{a,b}, F. Fabozzi^{a,20}, A.O.M. Iorio^{a,1},
L. Lista^a, M. Merola^{a,b}, P. Paolucci^a

^a INFN Sezione di Napoli, Napoli, Italy

^b Università di Napoli "Federico II", Napoli, Italy

P. Azzi^a, N. Bacchetta^a, P. Bellan^{a,b}, D. Bisello^{a,b}, A. Branca^a, R. Carlin^{a,b}, P. Checchia^a,
T. Dorigo^a, U. Dosselli^a, F. Fanzago^a, F. Gasparini^{a,b}, U. Gasparini^{a,b}, A. Gozzelino^a,
S. Lacaprara^{a,21}, I. Lazzizzera^{a,c}, M. Margoni^{a,b}, M. Mazzucato^a, A.T. Meneguzzo^{a,b},
M. Nespolo^{a,1}, L. Perrozzi^{a,1}, N. Pozzobon^{a,b}, P. Ronchese^{a,b}, F. Simonetto^{a,b}, E. Torassa^a,
M. Tosi^{a,b}, S. Vanini^{a,b}, P. Zotto^{a,b}, G. Zumerle^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Padova, Padova, Italy

^b Università di Padova, Padova, Italy

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

P. Baesso^{a,b}, U. Berzano^a, S.P. Ratti^{a,b}, C. Riccardi^{a,b}, P. Torre^{a,b}, P. Vitulo^{a,b}, C. Viviani^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

^b Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy

M. Biasini^{a,b}, G.M. Bilei^a, B. Caponeri^{a,b}, L. Fanò^{a,b}, P. Lariccia^{a,b}, A. Lucaroni^{a,b,1}, G. Mantovani^{a,b},
M. Menichelli^a, A. Nappi^{a,b}, F. Romeo^{a,b}, A. Santocchia^{a,b}, S. Taroni^{a,b,1}, M. Valdata^{a,b}

^a INFN Sezione di Perugia, Perugia, Italy

^b Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy

P. Azzurri^{a,c}, G. Bagliesi^a, J. Bernardini^{a,b}, T. Boccali^{a,1}, G. Broccolo^{a,c}, R. Castaldi^a,
R.T. D'Agnolo^{a,c}, R. Dell'Orso^a, F. Fiori^{a,b}, L. Foà^{a,c}, A. Giassi^a, A. Kraan^a,
F. Ligabue^{a,c}, T. Lomtadze^a, L. Martini^{a,22}, A. Messineo^{a,b}, F. Palla^a, G. Segneri^a,
A.T. Serban^a, P. Spagnolo^a, R. Tenchini^{a,*}, G. Tonelli^{a,b,1}, A. Venturi^{a,1},
P.G. Verdini^a

^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, D. Del Re^{a,b}, E. Di Marco^{a,b}, M. Diemoz^a, D. Franci^{a,b}, M. Grassi^{a,1},
E. Longo^{a,b}, P. Meridiani^a, S. Nourbakhsh^a, G. Organtini^{a,b}, F. Pandolfi^{a,b,1}, R. Paramatti^a,
S. Rahatlou^{a,b}, C. Rovelli^{a,b,1}

^a INFN Sezione di Roma, Roma, Italy

^b Università di Roma “La Sapienza”, Roma, Italy

N. Amapane^{a,b}, R. Arcidiacono^{a,c}, S. Argiro^{a,b}, M. Arneodo^{a,c}, C. Biino^a, C. Botta^{a,b,1}, N. Cartiglia^a,
R. Castello^{a,b}, M. Costa^{a,b}, N. Demaria^a, A. Graziano^{a,b,1}, C. Mariotti^a, M. Marone^{a,b}, S. Maselli^a,
E. Migliore^{a,b}, G. Mila^{a,b}, V. Monaco^{a,b}, M. Musich^{a,b}, M.M. Obertino^{a,c}, N. Pastrone^a, M. Pelliccioni^{a,b},
A. Potenza^{a,b}, A. Romero^{a,b}, M. Ruspa^{a,c}, R. Sacchi^{a,b}, V. Sola^{a,b}, A. Solano^{a,b}, A. Staiano^a,
A. Vilela Pereira^a

^a INFN Sezione di Torino, Torino, Italy

^b Università di Torino, Torino, Italy

^c Università del Piemonte Orientale (Novara), Torino, Italy

S. Belforte^a, F. Cossutti^a, G. Della Ricca^{a,b}, B. Gobbo^a, D. Montanino^{a,b}, A. Penzo^a

^a INFN Sezione di Trieste, Trieste, Italy

^b Università di Trieste, Trieste, Italy

S.G. Heo, S.K. Nam

Kangwon National University, Chunchon, Republic of Korea

S. Chang, J. Chung, D.H. Kim, G.N. Kim, J.E. Kim, D.J. Kong, H. Park, S.R. Ro, D. Son, D.C. Son, T. Son

Kyungpook National University, Daegu, Republic of Korea

Zero Kim, J.Y. Kim, S. Song

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

S. Choi, B. Hong, M. Jo, H. Kim, J.H. Kim, T.J. Kim, K.S. Lee, D.H. Moon, S.K. Park, K.S. Sim

Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

M. Choi, S. Kang, H. Kim, C. Park, I.C. Park, S. Park, G. Ryu

University of Seoul, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Y. Choi, Y.K. Choi, J. Goh, M.S. Kim, J. Lee, S. Lee, H. Seo, I. Yu

Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon, Republic of Korea

M.J. Bilinskas, I. Grigelionis, M. Janulis, D. Martisiute, P. Petrov, T. Sabonis

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

H. Castilla-Valdez, E. De La Cruz-Burelo, I. Heredia-de La Cruz, R. Lopez-Fernandez, R. Magaña Villalba,
A. Sánchez-Hernández, L.M. Villasenor-Cendejas

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

S. Carrillo Moreno, F. Vazquez Valencia

Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico

H.A. Salazar Ibarguen

Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico

E. Casimiro Linares, A. Morelos Pineda, M.A. Reyes-Santos

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

D. Krofcheck, J. Tam

University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

P.H. Butler, R. Doesburg, H. Silverwood

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

M. Ahmad, I. Ahmed, M.I. Asghar, H.R. Hoorani, W.A. Khan, T. Khurshid, S. Qazi

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

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

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

T. Frueboes, R. Gokieli, M. Górski, M. Kazana, K. Nawrocki, K. Romanowska-Rybinska, M. Szeleper, G. Wrochna, P. Zalewski

Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland

N. Almeida, P. Bargassa, A. David, P. Faccioli, P.G. Ferreira Parracho, M. Gallinaro, P. Musella, A. Nayak, J. Pela¹, P.Q. Ribeiro, J. Seixas, J. Varela

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

S. Afanasiev, I. Belotelov, I. Golutvin, A. Kamenev, V. Karjavin, G. Kozlov, A. Lanev, P. Moisenz, V. Palichik, V. Pereygin, M. Savina, S. Shmatov, V. Smirnov, A. Volodko, A. Zarubin

Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia

V. Golovtsov, Y. Ivanov, V. Kim, 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, V. Matveev, A. Pashenkov, A. Toropin, S. Troitsky

Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia

V. Epshteyn, V. Gavrillov, V. Kaftanov[†], M. Kossov¹, A. Krokhotin, N. Lychkovskaya, V. Popov, G. Safronov, S. Semenov, V. Stolin, E. Vlasov, A. Zhokin

Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia

E. Boos, M. Dubinin²³, L. Dudko, A. Ershov, A. Gribushin, O. Kodolova, I. Lokhtin, A. Markina, S. Obraztsov, M. Perfilov, S. Petrushanko, L. Sarycheva, V. Savrin, A. Snigirev

Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

V. Andreev, M. Azarkin, I. Dremin, M. Kirakosyan, A. Leonidov, S.V. Rusakov, A. Vinogradov

P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute, Moscow, Russia

I. Azhgirey, I. Bayshev, S. Bitiukov, V. Grishin¹, V. Kachanov, D. Konstantinov, A. Korablev, V. Krychkin, 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. Adzic²⁴, M. Djordjevic, D. Krpic²⁴, J. Milosevic

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

M. Aguilar-Benitez, J. Alcaraz Maestre, P. Arce, C. Battilana, E. Calvo, M. Cepeda, M. Cerrada, M. Chamizo Llatas, N. Colino, B. De La Cruz, A. Delgado Peris, C. Diez Pardos, D. Domínguez Vázquez, C. Fernandez Bedoya, J.P. Fernández Ramos, A. Ferrando, J. Flix, M.C. Fouz, P. Garcia-Abia, O. Gonzalez Lopez, S. Goy Lopez, J.M. Hernandez, M.I. Josa, G. Merino, J. Puerta Pelayo, I. Redondo, L. Romero, J. Santaolalla, M.S. Soares, C. Willmott

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

C. Albajar, G. Codispoti, J.F. de Trocóniz

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain

J. Cuevas, J. Fernandez Menendez, S. Folgueras, I. Gonzalez Caballero, L. Lloret Iglesias, J.M. Vizán García

Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain

J.A. Brochero Cifuentes, I.J. Cabrillo, A. Calderon, S.H. Chuang, J. Duarte Campderros, M. Felcini²⁵, M. Fernandez, G. Gomez, J. Gonzalez Sanchez, C. Jorda, P. Lobelle Pardo, A. Lopez Virto, J. Marco, R. Marco, C. Martinez Rivero, F. Matorras, F.J. Munoz Sanchez, J. Piedra Gomez²⁶, T. Rodrigo, A.Y. Rodríguez-Marrero, A. Ruiz-Jimeno, L. Scodellaro, M. Sobron Sanudo, I. Vila, R. Vilar Cortabitarte

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

D. Abbaneo, E. Auffray, G. Auzinger, P. Baillon, A.H. Ball, D. Barney, A.J. Bell²⁷, D. Benedetti, C. Bernet³, W. Bialas, P. Bloch, A. Bocci, S. Bolognesi, M. Bona, H. Breuker, K. Bunkowski, T. Camporesi, G. Cerminara, T. Christiansen, J.A. Coarasa Perez, B. Curé, D. D'Enterria, A. De Roeck, S. Di Guida, N. Dupont-Sagorin, A. Elliott-Peisert, B. Frisch, W. Funk, A. Gaddi, G. Georgiou, H. Gerwig, D. Gigi, K. Gill, D. Giordano, F. Glege, R. Gomez-Reino Garrido, M. Gouzevitch, P. Govoni, S. Gowdy, L. Guiducci, M. Hansen, C. Hartl, J. Harvey, J. Hegeman, B. Hegner, H.F. Hoffmann, A. Honma, V. Innocente, P. Janot, K. Kaadze, E. Karavakis, P. Lecoq, C. Lourenço, T. Mäki, M. Malberti, L. Malgeri, M. Mannelli, L. Masetti, A. Maurisset, F. Meijers, S. Mersi, E. Meschi, R. Moser, M.U. Mozer, M. Mulders, E. Nesvold¹, M. Nguyen, T. Orimoto, L. Orsini, E. Perez, A. Petrilli, A. Pfeiffer, M. Pierini, M. Pimiä, D. Piparo, G. Polese, A. Racz, W. Reece, J. Rodrigues Antunes, G. Rolandi²⁸, T. Rommerskirchen, M. Rovere, H. Sakulin, C. Schäfer, C. Schwick, I. Segoni, A. Sharma, P. Siegrist, P. Silva, M. Simon, P. Sphicas²⁹, M. Spiropulu²³, M. Stoye, P. Tropea, A. Tsiros, P. Vichoudis, M. Voutilainen, W.D. Zeuner

CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland

W. Bertl, K. Deiters, W. Erdmann, K. Gabathuler, R. Horisberger, Q. Ingram, H.C. Kaestli, S. König, D. Kotlinski, U. Langenegger, F. Meier, D. Renker, T. Rohe, J. Sibille³⁰, A. Starodumov³¹

Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland

L. Bäni, P. Bortignon, L. Caminada³², N. Chanon, Z. Chen, S. Cittolin, G. Dissertori, M. Dittmar, J. Eugster, K. Freudenreich, C. Grab, W. Hintz, P. Lecomte, W. Luster, C. Marchica³², P. Martinez Ruiz del Arbol, P. Milenov³³, F. Moortgat, C. Nägeli³², P. Nef, F. Nessi-Tedaldi, L. Pape, F. Pauss, T. Punz, A. Rizzi, F.J. Ronga, M. Rossini, L. Sala, A.K. Sanchez, M.-C. Sawley, B. Stieger, L. Tauscher[†], A. Thea, K. Theofilatos, D. Treille, C. Urscheler, R. Wallny, M. Weber, L. Wehrli, J. Weng

Institute for Particle Physics, ETH Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

E. Aguilo, C. AMSLER, V. Chiochia, S. De Visscher, C. Favaro, M. Ivova Rikova, B. Millan Mejias, P. Otiougo, C. Regenfus, P. Robmann, A. Schmidt, H. Snoek

Universität Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland

Y.H. Chang, K.H. Chen, C.M. Kuo, S.W. Li, W. Lin, Z.K. Liu, Y.J. Lu, D. Mekterovic, R. Volpe, J.H. Wu, S.S. Yu

National Central University, Chung-Li, Taiwan

P. Bartalini, P. Chang, Y.H. Chang, Y.W. Chang, Y. Chao, K.F. Chen, W.-S. Hou, Y. Hsiung, K.Y. Kao, Y.J. Lei, R.-S. Lu, J.G. Shiu, Y.M. Tzeng, M. Wang

National Taiwan University (NTU), Taipei, Taiwan

A. Adiguzel, M.N. Bakirci³⁴, S. Cerci³⁵, C. Dozen, I. Dumanoglu, E. Eskut, S. Girgis, G. Gokbulut, I. Hos, E.E. Kangal, A. Kayis Topaksu, G. Onengut, K. Ozdemir, S. Ozturk³⁶, A. Polatoz, K. Sogut³⁷, D. Sunar Cerci³⁵, B. Tali³⁵, H. Topakli³⁴, D. Uzun, L.N. Vergili, M. Vergili

Cukurova University, Adana, Turkey

I.V. Akin, T. Aliev, B. Bilin, S. Bilmis, M. Deniz, H. Gamsizkan, A.M. Guler, K. Ocalan, A. Ozpineci, M. Serin, R. Sever, U.E. Surat, E. Yildirim, M. Zeyrek

Middle East Technical University, Physics Department, Ankara, Turkey

M. Deliomeroğlu, D. Demir³⁸, E. Gülmez, B. Isildak, M. Kaya³⁹, O. Kaya³⁹, M. Özbek, S. Ozkorucuklu⁴⁰, N. Sonmez⁴¹

Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

L. Levchuk

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

F. Bostock, J.J. Brooke, T.L. Cheng, E. Clement, D. Cussans, R. Frazier, J. Goldstein, M. Grimes, D. Hartley, G.P. Heath, H.F. Heath, L. Kreczko, S. Metson, D.M. Newbold⁴², K. Nirunpong, A. Poll, S. Senkin, V.J. Smith

University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom

L. Basso⁴³, K.W. Bell, A. Belyaev⁴³, C. Brew, R.M. Brown, B. Camanzi, D.J.A. Cockerill, J.A. Coughlan, K. Harder, S. Harper, J. Jackson, B.W. Kennedy, E. Olaiya, D. Petyt, B.C. Radburn-Smith, C.H. Shepherd-Themistocleous, I.R. Tomalin, W.J. Womersley, S.D. Worm

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom

R. Bainbridge, G. Ball, J. Ballin, R. Beuselinck, O. Buchmuller, D. Colling, N. Cripps, M. Cutajar, G. Davies, M. Della Negra, W. Ferguson, J. Fulcher, D. Futyan, A. Gilbert, A. Guneratne Bryer, G. Hall, Z. Hatherell, J. Hays, G. Iles, M. Jarvis, G. Karapostoli, L. Lyons, B.C. MacEvoy, A.-M. Magnan, J. Marrouche, B. Mathias, R. Nandi, J. Nash, A. Nikitenko³¹, A. Papageorgiou, M. Pesaresi, K. Petridis, M. Pioppi⁴⁴, D.M. Raymond, S. Rogerson, N. Rompotis, A. Rose, M.J. Ryan, C. Seez, P. Sharp, A. Sparrow, A. Tapper, S. Tourneur, M. Vazquez Acosta, T. Virdee, S. Wakefield, N. Wardle, D. Wardrope, T. Whyntie

Imperial College, London, United Kingdom

M. Barrett, M. Chadwick, J.E. Cole, P.R. Hobson, A. Khan, P. Kyberd, D. Leslie, W. Martin, I.D. Reid, L. Teodorescu

Brunel University, Uxbridge, United Kingdom

K. Hatakeyama, H. Liu

Baylor University, Waco, USA

C. Henderson

The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA

T. Bose, E. Carrera Jarrin, C. Fantasia, A. Heister, J.St. John, P. Lawson, D. Lazic, J. Rohlf, D. Sperka, L. Sulak

Boston University, Boston, USA

A. Avetisyan, S. Bhattacharya, J.P. Chou, D. Cutts, A. Ferapontov, U. Heintz, S. Jabeen, G. Kukartsev, G. Landsberg, M. Luk, M. Narain, D. Nguyen, M. Segala, T. Sinthuprasith, T. Speer, K.V. Tsang

Brown University, Providence, USA

R. Breedon, G. Breto, M. Calderon De La Barca Sanchez, S. Chauhan, M. Chertok, J. Conway, P.T. Cox, J. Dolen, R. Erbacher, E. Friis, W. Ko, A. Kopecky, R. Lander, H. Liu, S. Maruyama, T. Miceli, M. Nikolic, D. Pellett, J. Robles, S. Salur, T. Schwarz, M. Searle, J. Smith, M. Squires, M. Tripathi, R. Vasquez Sierra, C. Veelken

University of California, Davis, Davis, USA

V. Andreev, K. Arisaka, D. Cline, R. Cousins, A. Deisher, J. Duris, S. Erhan, C. Farrell, J. Hauser, M. Ignatenko, C. Jarvis, C. Plager, G. Rakness, P. Schlein[†], J. Tucker, V. Valuev

University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA

J. Babb, A. Chandra, R. Clare, J. Ellison, J.W. Gary, F. Giordano, G. Hanson, G.Y. Jeng, S.C. Kao, F. Liu, H. Liu, O.R. Long, A. Luthra, H. Nguyen, B.C. Shen[†], R. Stringer, J. Sturdy, S. Sumowidagdo, R. Wilken, S. Wimpenny

University of California, Riverside, Riverside, USA

W. Andrews, J.G. Branson, G.B. Cerati, D. Evans, F. Golf, A. Holzner, R. Kelley, M. Lebourgeois, J. Letts, B. Mangano, S. Padhi, C. Palmer, G. Petrucciani, H. Pi, M. Pieri, R. Ranieri, M. Sani, V. Sharma, S. Simon, E. Sudano, M. Tadel, Y. Tu, A. Vartak, S. Wasserbaech⁴⁵, F. Würthwein, A. Yagil, J. Yoo

University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, USA

D. Barge, R. Bellan, C. Campagnari, M. D'Alfonso, T. Danielson, K. Flowers, P. Geffert, J. Incandela, C. Justus, P. Kalavase, S.A. Koay, D. Kovalskyi, V. Krutelyov, S. Lowette, N. Mccoll, V. Pavlunin, F. Rebassoo, J. Ribnik, J. Richman, R. Rossin, D. Stuart, W. To, J.R. Vlimant

University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, USA

A. Apresyan, A. Bornheim, J. Bunn, Y. Chen, M. Gataullin, Y. Ma, A. Mott, H.B. Newman, C. Rogan, K. Shin, V. Timciuc, P. Traczyk, J. Veverka, R. Wilkinson, Y. Yang, R.Y. Zhu

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA

B. Akgun, R. Carroll, T. Ferguson, Y. Iiyama, D.W. Jang, S.Y. Jun, Y.F. Liu, M. Paulini, J. Russ, H. Vogel, I. Vorobiev

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA

J.P. Cumalat, M.E. Dinardo, B.R. Drell, C.J. Edelmaier, W.T. Ford, A. Gaz, B. Heyburn, E. Luiggi Lopez, U. Nauenberg, J.G. Smith, K. Stenson, K.A. Ulmer, S.R. Wagner, S.L. Zang

University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, USA

L. Agostino, J. Alexander, D. Cassel, A. Chatterjee, N. Eggert, L.K. Gibbons, B. Heltsley, W. Hopkins, A. Khukhunaishvili, B. Kreis, G. Nicolas Kaufman, J.R. Patterson, D. Puigh, A. Ryd, M. Saelim, E. Salvati, X. Shi, W. Sun, W.D. Teo, J. Thom, J. Thompson, J. Vaughan, Y. Weng, L. Winstrom, P. Wittich

Cornell University, Ithaca, USA

A. Biselli, G. Cirino, D. Winn

Fairfield University, Fairfield, USA

S. Abdullin, M. Albrow, J. Anderson, G. Apollinari, M. Atac, J.A. Bakken, L.A.T. Bauerdick, A. Beretvas, J. Berryhill, P.C. Bhat, I. Bloch, F. Borchering, K. Burkett, J.N. Butler, V. Chetluru, H.W.K. Cheung,

F. Chlebana, S. Cihangir, W. Cooper, D.P. Eartly, V.D. Elvira, S. Esen, I. Fisk, J. Freeman, Y. Gao, E. Gottschalk, D. Green, K. Gunthoti, O. Gutsche, J. Hanlon, R.M. Harris, J. Hirschauer, B. Hooberman, H. Jensen, M. Johnson, U. Joshi, R. Khatiwada, B. Klima, K. Kousouris, S. Kunori, S. Kwan, C. Leonidopoulos, P. Limon, D. Lincoln, R. Lipton, J. Lykken, K. Maeshima, J.M. Marraffino, D. Mason, P. McBride, T. Miao, K. Mishra, S. Mrenna, Y. Musienko⁴⁶, C. Newman-Holmes, V. O'Dell, R. Pordes, O. Prokofyev, N. Saoulidou, E. Sexton-Kennedy, S. Sharma, W.J. Spalding, L. Spiegel, P. Tan, L. Taylor, S. Tkaczyk, L. Uplegger, E.W. Vaandering, R. Vidal, J. Whitmore, W. Wu, F. Yang, F. Yumiceva, J.C. Yun

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, USA

D. Acosta, P. Avery, D. Bourilkov, M. Chen, S. Das, M. De Gruttola, G.P. Di Giovanni, D. Dobur, A. Drozdetskiy, R.D. Field, M. Fisher, Y. Fu, I.K. Furic, J. Gartner, B. Kim, J. Konigsberg, A. Korytov, A. Kropivnitskaya, T. Kypreos, K. Matchev, G. Mitselmakher, L. Muniz, C. Prescott, R. Remington, A. Rinkevicius, M. Schmitt, B. Scurlock, P. Sellers, N. Skhirtladze, M. Snowball, D. Wang, J. Yelton, M. Zakaria

University of Florida, Gainesville, USA

V. Gaultney, L. Kramer, L.M. Lebolo, S. Linn, P. Markowitz, G. Martinez, J.L. Rodriguez

Florida International University, Miami, USA

T. Adams, A. Askew, J. Bochenek, J. Chen, B. Diamond, S.V. Gleyzer, J. Haas, S. Hagopian, V. Hagopian, M. Jenkins, K.F. Johnson, H. Prosper, L. Quertenmont, S. Sekmen, V. Veeraraghavan

Florida State University, Tallahassee, USA

M.M. Baarmand, B. Dorney, S. Guragain, M. Hohlmann, H. Kalakhety, R. Ralich, I. Vodopiyanov

Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, USA

M.R. Adams, I.M. Anghel, L. Apanasevich, Y. Bai, V.E. Bazterra, R.R. Betts, J. Callner, R. Cavanaugh, C. Dragoiu, L. Gauthier, C.E. Gerber, D.J. Hofman, S. Khalatyan, G.J. Kunde⁴⁷, F. Lacroix, M. Malek, C. O'Brien, C. Silkworth, C. Silvestre, A. Smoron, D. Strom, N. Varelas

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

U. Akgun, E.A. Albayrak, B. Bilki, W. Clarida, F. Duru, C.K. Lae, E. McCliment, J.-P. Merlo, H. Mermerkaya⁴⁸, A. Mestvirishvili, A. Moeller, J. Nachtman, C.R. Newsom, E. Norbeck, J. Olson, Y. Onel, F. Ozok, S. Sen, J. Wetzel, T. Yetkin, K. Yi

The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA

B.A. Barnett, B. Blumenfeld, A. Bonato, C. Eskew, D. Fehling, G. Giurgiu, A.V. Gritsan, Z.J. Guo, G. Hu, P. Maksimovic, S. Rappoccio, M. Swartz, N.V. Tran, A. Whitbeck

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA

P. Baringer, A. Bean, G. Benelli, O. Grachov, R.P. Kenny Iii, M. Murray, D. Noonan, S. Sanders, J.S. Wood, V. Zhukova

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA

A.F. Barfuss, T. Bolton, I. Chakaberia, A. Ivanov, S. Khalil, M. Makouski, Y. Maravin, S. Shrestha, I. Svintradze, Z. Wan

Kansas State University, Manhattan, USA

J. Gronberg, D. Lange, D. Wright

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, USA

A. Baden, M. Boutemeur, S.C. Eno, D. Ferencek, J.A. Gomez, N.J. Hadley, R.G. Kellogg, M. Kirn, Y. Lu, A.C. Mignerey, K. Rossato, P. Rumerio, F. Santanastasio, A. Skuja, J. Temple, M.B. Tonjes, S.C. Tonwar, E. Twedt

University of Maryland, College Park, USA

B. Alver, G. Bauer, J. Bendavid, W. Busza, E. Butz, I.A. Cali, M. Chan, V. Dutta, P. Everaerts, G. Gomez Ceballos, M. Goncharov, K.A. Hahn, P. Harris, Y. Kim, M. Klute, Y.-J. Lee, W. Li, C. Loizides, P.D. Luckey, T. Ma, S. Nahn, C. Paus, D. Ralph, C. Roland, G. Roland, M. Rudolph, G.S.F. Stephans, F. Stöckli, K. Sumorok, K. Sung, E.A. Wenger, R. Wolf, S. Xie, M. Yang, Y. Yilmaz, A.S. Yoon, M. Zanetti

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA

S.I. Cooper, P. Cushman, B. Dahmes, A. De Benedetti, P.R. Duderø, G. Franzoni, J. Haupt, K. Klapoetke, Y. Kubota, J. Mans, N. Pastika, V. Rekovic, R. Rusack, M. Sasseville, A. Singovsky, N. Tambe

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

L.M. Cremaldi, R. Godang, R. Kroeger, L. Perera, R. Rahmat, D.A. Sanders, D. Summers

University of Mississippi, University, USA

K. Bloom, S. Bose, J. Butt, D.R. Claes, A. Dominguez, M. Eads, J. Keller, T. Kelly, I. Kravchenko, J. Lazo-Flores, H. Malbouisson, S. Malik, G.R. Snow

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, USA

U. Baur, A. Godshalk, I. Iashvili, S. Jain, A. Kharchilava, A. Kumar, S.P. Shipkowski, K. Smith, J. Zennamo

State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, USA

G. Alverson, E. Barberis, D. Baumgartel, O. Boeriu, M. Chasco, S. Reucroft, J. Swain, D. Trocino, D. Wood, J. Zhang

Northeastern University, Boston, USA

A. Anastassov, A. Kubik, N. Odell, R.A. Ofierzynski, B. Pollack, A. Pozdnyakov, M. Schmitt, S. Stoynev, M. Velasco, S. Won

Northwestern University, Evanston, USA

L. Antonelli, D. Berry, A. Brinkerhoff, M. Hildreth, C. Jessop, D.J. Karmgard, J. Kolb, T. Kolberg, K. Lannon, W. Luo, S. Lynch, N. Marinelli, D.M. Morse, T. Pearson, R. Ruchti, J. Slaunwhite, N. Valls, M. Wayne, J. Ziegler

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA

B. Bylsma, L.S. Durkin, J. Gu, C. Hill, P. Killewald, K. Kotov, T.Y. Ling, M. Rodenburg, G. Williams

The Ohio State University, Columbus, USA

N. Adam, E. Berry, P. Elmer, D. Gerbaudo, V. Halyo, P. Hebda, A. Hunt, J. Jones, E. Laird, D. Lopes Pegna, D. Marlow, T. Medvedeva, M. Mooney, J. Olsen, P. Piroué, X. Quan, B. Safdi, H. Saka, D. Stickland, C. Tully, J.S. Werner, A. Zuranski

Princeton University, Princeton, USA

J.G. Acosta, X.T. Huang, A. Lopez, H. Mendez, S. Oliveros, J.E. Ramirez Vargas, A. Zatserklyaniy

University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, USA

E. Alagoz, V.E. Barnes, G. Bolla, L. Borrello, D. Bortoletto, M. De Mattia, A. Everett, A.F. Garfinkel, L. Gutay, Z. Hu, M. Jones, O. Koybasi, M. Kress, A.T. Laasanen, N. Leonardo, C. Liu, V. Maroussov, P. Merkel, D.H. Miller, N. Neumeister, I. Shipsey, D. Silvers, A. Svyatkovskiy, H.D. Yoo, J. Zablocki, Y. Zheng

Purdue University, West Lafayette, USA

P. Jindal, N. Parashar

Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, USA

C. Boulahouache, K.M. Ecklund, F.J.M. Geurts, B.P. Padley, R. Redjimi, J. Roberts, J. Zabel

Rice University, Houston, USA

B. Betchart, A. Bodek, Y.S. Chung, R. Covarelli, P. de Barbaro, R. Demina, Y. Eshaq, H. Flacher, A. Garcia-Bellido, P. Goldenzweig, Y. Gotra, J. Han, A. Harel, D.C. Miner, D. Orbaker, G. Petrillo, W. Sakumoto, D. Vishnevskiy, M. Zielinski

University of Rochester, Rochester, USA

A. Bhatti, R. Ciesielski, L. Demortier, K. Goulios, G. Lungu, S. Malik, C. Mesropian

The Rockefeller University, New York, USA

O. Atramentov, A. Barker, D. Duggan, Y. Gershtein, R. Gray, E. Halkiadakis, D. Hidas, D. Hits, A. Lath, S. Panwalkar, R. Patel, K. Rose, S. Schnetzer, S. Somalwar, R. Stone, S. Thomas

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

G. Cerizza, M. Hollingsworth, S. Spanier, Z.C. Yang, A. York

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

R. Eusebi, W. Flanagan, J. Gilmore, A. Gurrola, T. Kamon, V. Khotilovich, R. Montalvo, I. Osipenkov, Y. Pakhotin, J. Pivarski, A. Safonov, S. Sengupta, A. Tatarinov, D. Toback, M. Weinberger

Texas A&M University, College Station, USA

N. Akchurin, C. Bardak, J. Damgov, C. Jeong, K. Kovitanggoon, S.W. Lee, T. Libeiro, P. Mane, Y. Roh, A. Sill, I. Volobouev, R. Wigmans, E. Yazgan

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA

E. Appelt, E. Brownson, D. Engh, C. Florez, W. Gabella, M. Issah, W. Johns, P. Kurt, C. Maguire, A. Melo, P. Sheldon, B. Snook, S. Tuo, J. Velkovska

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA

M.W. Arenton, M. Balazs, S. Boutle, B. Cox, B. Francis, R. Hirosky, A. Ledovskoy, C. Lin, C. Neu, R. Yohay

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, USA

S. Gollapinni, R. Harr, P.E. Karchin, P. Lamichhane, M. Mattson, C. Milstène, A. Sakharov

Wayne State University, Detroit, USA

M. Anderson, M. Bachtis, J.N. Bellinger, D. Carlsmith, S. Dasu, J. Efron, L. Gray, K.S. Grogg, M. Grothe, R. Hall-Wilton, M. Herndon, A. Hervé, P. Klabbers, J. Klukas, A. Lanaro, C. Lazaridis, J. Leonard, R. Loveless, A. Mohapatra, F. Palmonari, D. Reeder, I. Ross, A. Savin, W.H. Smith, J. Swanson, M. Weinberg

University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: Roberto.Tenchini@cern.ch (R. Tenchini).

† Deceased.

- ¹ Also at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research, Geneva, Switzerland.
- ² Also at Universidade Federal do ABC, Santo Andre, Brazil.
- ³ Also at Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, IN2P3–CNRS, Palaiseau, France.
- ⁴ Also at Suez Canal University, Suez, Egypt.
- ⁵ Also at British University, Cairo, Egypt.
- ⁶ Also at Fayoum University, El-Fayoum, Egypt.
- ⁷ Also at Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland.
- ⁸ Also at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA.
- ⁹ Also at Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse, France.
- ¹⁰ Also at Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany.
- ¹¹ Also at Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia.
- ¹² Also at Institute of Nuclear Research ATOMKI, Debrecen, Hungary.
- ¹³ Also at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.
- ¹⁴ Also at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research – HECR, Mumbai, India.
- ¹⁵ Also at University of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India.
- ¹⁶ Also at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran.
- ¹⁷ Also at Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran.
- ¹⁸ Also at Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, Iran.
- ¹⁹ Also at Facoltà Ingegneria Università di Roma, Roma, Italy.
- ²⁰ Also at Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy.
- ²¹ Also at Laboratori Nazionali di Legnaro dell'INFN, Legnaro, Italy.
- ²² Also at Università degli Studi di Siena, Siena, Italy.
- ²³ Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA.
- ²⁴ Also at Faculty of Physics of University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia.
- ²⁵ Also at University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, USA.
- ²⁶ Also at University of Florida, Gainesville, USA.
- ²⁷ Also at Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland.
- ²⁸ Also at Scuola Normale e Sezione dell'INFN, Pisa, Italy.
- ²⁹ Also at University of Athens, Athens, Greece.
- ³⁰ Also at The University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA.
- ³¹ Also at Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia.
- ³² Also at Paul Scherrer Institut, Villigen, Switzerland.
- ³³ Also at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Physics and Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia.
- ³⁴ Also at Gaziosmanpasa University, Tokat, Turkey.
- ³⁵ Also at Adiyaman University, Adiyaman, Turkey.
- ³⁶ Also at The University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA.
- ³⁷ Also at Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey.
- ³⁸ Also at Izmir Institute of Technology, Izmir, Turkey.
- ³⁹ Also at Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey.
- ⁴⁰ Also at Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey.
- ⁴¹ Also at Ege University, Izmir, Turkey.
- ⁴² Also at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom.
- ⁴³ Also at School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom.
- ⁴⁴ Also at INFN Sezione di Perugia, Università di Perugia, Perugia, Italy.
- ⁴⁵ Also at Utah Valley University, Orem, USA.
- ⁴⁶ Also at Institute for Nuclear Research, Moscow, Russia.
- ⁴⁷ Also at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, USA.
- ⁴⁸ Also at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey.