CERN-EP/81-23
23 March 1981

MEASUREMENT OF THE Λ_c^+ TRANSVERSE MOMENTUM PRODUCTION DISTRIBUTION
IN pp INTERACTIONS AT $\sqrt{s} = 62$ GeV

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ABSTRACT

The transverse momentum distribution of the Λ_c^+ charmed baryon produced in the reaction $pp \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ e^- X$ at 62 GeV in the pp c.m. system has been measured. The exponent of the best fit to the experimental data has the value $b = 2.5 \pm 0.4$; this value is in excellent agreement with theoretical predictions.

(Submitted to Nuovo Cimento Letters)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Detailed studies of charmed particles production in high-energy proton-proton interactions are of particular interest. The experiments performed so far have measured the total cross-section for inclusive ($pp \rightarrow D^+X$, $pp \rightarrow \Lambda_C^+X$)¹⁻⁴⁾ or associated ($pp \rightarrow \Lambda_C^+e^-X$, $pp \rightarrow e^-D^0X$, $pp \rightarrow \bar{\Lambda}_C^+e^+X$) production^{5,6)}. In these processes no direct measurement is available on the production distributions of the charmed particle.

In the field of $D\bar{D}$ production there was only one indirect measurement (coming from μ -production studies) of the transverse momentum distribution of the charmed mesons in the reaction $pp \rightarrow D\bar{D}X$ at $\sqrt{s} = 27$ GeV⁷⁾.

The purpose of this paper is to report the first measurement of the transverse momentum production distribution of the Λ_C^+ charmed baryon in the reaction

$$pp \rightarrow \Lambda_C^+ + e^- + \text{anything} , \quad (1)$$

at a centre-of mass energy of $\sqrt{s} = 62$ GeV, the Λ_C^+ being identified via its decay mode $\Lambda_C^+ \rightarrow pK^-\pi^+$.

2. EXPERIMENTAL SET-UP

The experiment was performed at the CERN Intersecting Storage Rings (ISR), using the split-field magnet (SFM) detector⁸⁾, with the addition of Čerenkov counters and electromagnetic shower detectors (EMSD)⁹⁾ to trigger on electrons produced at 90°, and a large-area time-of-flight system (TOF)¹⁰⁾ for particle identification. A schematic plan of the experimental set-up is shown in Fig. 1.

A multiwire proportional chamber (MWPC) with analog read-out ["dE/dx" chamber¹¹⁾], placed near the intersection region, was used at the software level to reduce the background, from electrons produced in the π^0 and η Dalitz decay and in γ conversions, down to about 50% level. The contamination from charged hadrons simulating electrons was reduced to the 2% level, after a software refinement of the trigger conditions.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

From the sample of selected events, a clear signal of Λ_c^+ decaying into $pK^-\pi^+$ ⁵⁾ was obtained. Let us briefly recall how the analysis was performed. (For full details, see Ref. 5.).

The events were first required to have at least one positive particle with $x_L \approx 2p_L/\sqrt{s} > 0.3$ and an error on the measured momentum $\Delta p/p < 30\%$. The positive particle, with the highest x_L , was assumed to be a proton (the π^+ contamination on the proton sample ranges from 20% to 2%, exponentially decreasing with increasing x_L). In the invariant mass $pK^-\pi^+$, the K^- (π^+) is any negative (positive) track not identified as $\bar{p}$ or π^- (p or K^+) by the time of flight. All possible combinations (the ratio combinations-to-events is only 1.15) were entered into the mass plot, provided they satisfied the following conditions:

- a) all particles were fitted to the vertex (within ± 5 cm) and had a momentum uncertainty $\Delta p/p < 30\%$;
- b) both K^- and π^+ were in the same rapidity hemisphere as that of the proton;
- c) the rapidity of both the K^- and the π^+ was greater than 1.0.

In order to enhance the Λ_c^+ signal, the following conditions were imposed on the hemisphere opposite to that of the Λ_c^+ : either the presence of a leading system of charged particles with $x_{\text{tot}} = \sum_{i=1}^n (x_{iL}) > 0.5$, or a signature for a leading system escaping detection, i.e. $x_{\text{tot}} < 0.1$. The above sum was extended to all particles fitted to the vertex and with $\Delta p/p < 30\%$. The results are shown in fig. 2. Here the mass spectra for e^- triggered events was subtracted from the mass spectra for e^+ triggered events. The presence of a "signal" in only the e^- triggered events is proof that the enhancement in the $pK^-\pi^+$ mass plot corresponds to a charmed baryon produced in association with an anticharmed particle decaying semileptonically. This is the source of the e^- triggers. The "signal" is therefore identified as the charmed baryon Λ_c^+ , first discovered by Samios and collaborators¹²⁾.

4. RESULTS

To study the transverse momentum (p_T) dependence of the produced Λ_c^+ , the $pK^- \pi^+$ mass spectrum was divided into two different mass ranges: the "IN" region $[2.28 \leq m(pK^- \pi^+) \leq 2.38 \text{ GeV}/c^2]$ and the "OUT" region $[2.18 < m(pK^- \pi^+) < 2.28 \text{ GeV}/c^2, 2.38 < m(pK^- \pi^+) < 2.48 \text{ GeV}/c^2]$. The events in the "OUT" region have been used to give the shape of the background to the events in the "IN" region. The p_T distribution of the Λ_c^+ was thus determined by subtracting the "OUT" p_T distribution from the "IN" p_T distribution. This was normalized to the total number of background events in the "IN" region. The corrections for the apparatus acceptance were applied to the real events, using single-track acceptance tables computed by means of a Monte Carlo simulation program.

Figure 3 shows the apparatus acceptance as a function of p_T , for $pK^- \pi^+$ events in the invariant mass range between $2.18 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ and $2.48 \text{ GeV}/c^2$.

The experimental data are shown in Fig. 4. They have been fitted with an exponential function of the form: $(1/p_T)(\Delta N/\Delta p_T) \propto \exp(-bp_T)$. The best fit for the exponent gives the following result:

$$b = 2.5 \pm 0.4.$$

The fit is indicated by the dashed line in Fig. 4.

Recent QCD calculations by Margolis and collaborators¹³⁾, using two-gluon annihilation as the main process for open charm production in pp collisions, lead to a value

$$b = 2.28 ,$$

which is in excellent agreement with our experimental result.

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Figure captions

- Fig. 1 : Top view of the SFM detector, showing the MWPCs and the external apparatus for particle identification (TOF). C_i ($i = 0, \dots, 5$) are the gas threshold Čerenkov counters. The electromagnetic shower detectors (EMSD) are of two types, lead/scintillator sandwiches and lead glass, indicated as SW_i ($i = 2, \dots, 5$) and LG_i ($i = 3, 4$), respectively. Only the coincidences C_0C_3 or C_0C_4 , associated with a minimum-energy release greater than 500 MeV in the EMSDs, were used in the "electron" trigger. The "dE/dx" chamber is indicated by the number 209.
- Fig. 2 : Difference between the $pK^-\pi^+$ invariant mass spectrum associated with e^- triggered events and the same mass combination relative to e^+ triggered events.
- Fig. 3 : Apparatus acceptance as a function of p_T for $pK^-\pi^+$ combinations in the mass range between $2.18 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ and $2.48 \text{ GeV}/c^2$.
- Fig. 4 : Experimental p_T distribution of the Λ_c^+ events. The dashed line is the best fit.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4