RESULTS OF THE CRYOGENIC DARK MATTER SEARCH (CDMS) OBTAINED USING A NEW ATHERMAL PHONON MEDIATED DETECTOR

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Through the simultaneous measurement of phonons and ionization, the fast large ionization and phonon (FLIP) detector can discriminate between bulk gamma and nuclear recoil interactions. Backgrounds at the Stanford Underground Facility (SUF) are known to contain large surface electron components that have similar charge to phonon ratio as nuclear recoil events. The new FLIP detector was able to use the rise time of the fast phonon signal to discriminate between surface electron and bulk nuclear recoil events above 15 keV. Exposures on the order of one kilogram-day from the silicon FLIP in initial runs at SUF yielded upper limits on the WIMP-nucleon cross section that were comparable to much larger exposures of other experiments. Significant improvements in this limit are expected in the next six months from the transfer of this technology to germanium, an increased number of detectors, and an improved phonon detector design.

1 Introduction

There exists a vast collection of observational evidence indicating that most of the matter in the universe is "dark" [1]. In addition, it is generally believed to be non-baryonic, weakly interacting and "cold"[2]. The Cryogenic Dark Matter Search (CDMS) experiment is designed to detect these weakly-interacting massive particles (WIMPs) directly, as they pass through cryogenic detectors on Earth.

Expected event rates of these particles in terrestrial detectors are very low, below 1 event per kilogram per day[4]. The primary experimental challenge clearly is to reduce background rates from radioactive contamination to far below this expected WIMP rate. A powerful technique used to lower back-

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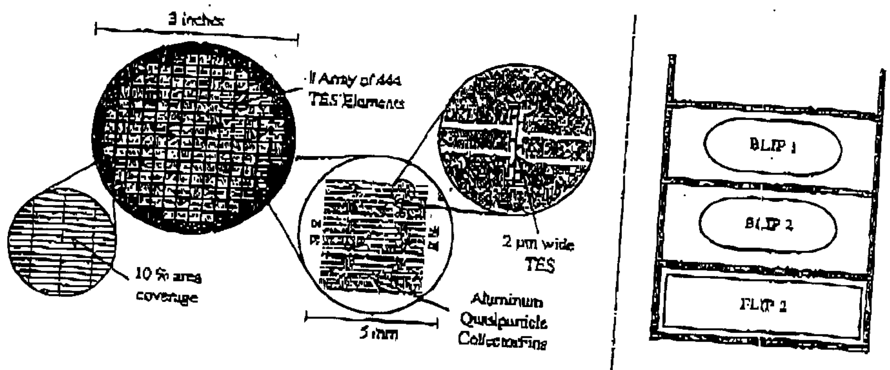

Figure 1. A diagram of the phonon sensor for the 100 g Si FLIP detector. The item on the top left depicts the basic layout of the W/Al QET phonon sensors into four quadrants. Each sensor consists of a parallel array of 444 QET elements covering the top surface of the silicon and providing the ground electrode for the charge measurement. On the right is a sketch of the recent run configuration with two NTD based detectors mounted above the Si FLIP.

ground contamination is event by event background rejection. The CDMS experiment has long used the partitioning of energy between charge and phonons in semiconductors to allow the discrimination of bulk electron recoils (such as caused by gammas) and nuclear recoils (such as caused by WIMPs)[5]. A large component of intrinsic backgrounds, however, has been found to be low energy betas[6]. These interact in a thin ($\sim 20\,\mu m$) surface "dead layer" which traps the generated charge pairs. A new type of cryogenic dark matter detector[7], using QET[8] (Quasiparticle-trap-assisted Electrothermal-feedback Transition-edge-sensor) technology has shown the ability to discriminate between surface events and bulk events using the rise time of the phonon signal.

2 Description of the Experiment

The CDMS experiment measures the small- energy (~ 1 keV) depositions (ionization and phonons) of a WIMP scattering with the nucleus of a semiconductor (silicon or germanium). The ionization measurement was made using conventional charge amplifier technology. The energy deposited directly in the form of heat (phonons) was measured with two different technologies. One is based on eutecticly bonded neutron-transmutation-doped (NTD) thermistors and is described in a paper in these proceedings[9], and the other based on athermal phonon QET technology.

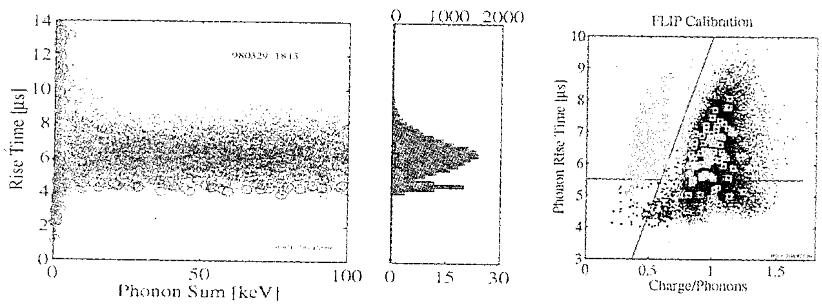

Figure 2. Phonon rise time discrimination. Left: a plot of phonon rise time vs. phonon energy during ^{60}Co calibration for events with large (dots) and small (circles) charge to phonon ratios. Middle: a histogram of the two populations. Right: a plot of phonon rise time vs. charge/phonons for ^{60}Co gammas (dots) and ^{252}Cf neutrons (large squares) in the 30-40 keV energy range.

When a particle event occurs in the 20 mK silicon absorber mass of a QET-based detector athermal phonons are detected rapidly (in a few μs) before they thermalize. Recently, new advances in sensor design have lead to an order of magnitude increase in the energy collection efficiency for QET sensors and enabled the discovery of new surface phonon phenomena.

The detectors are mounted on the bottom of copper support "towers" designed to block 4K radiation and to provide a low microphonic electrical connection. This assembly is placed inside a set of copper cylinders that are separated by $\sim$2 m from the Oxford 400 dilution refrigerator. Shielding the detectors are 1 cm of ancient lead inside the 20 mK chamber, and 25 cm of polyethylene, 15 cm of lead outside the copper cylinders. The lead was surrounded by plastic scintillator paddles that provide the active muon veto[10].

3 Detector Performance and Calibration

The capability of this detector to discriminate between background (photons and electrons) and signal candidate (nuclear recoil) events was calibrated *in situ* using external ^{60}Co gamma and ^{252}Cf neutron sources. Figure 2 shows the response of the QET-based detector to these calibration sources. The low charge collection events during the ^{60}Co calibration were attributed to electrons striking the surface of the detector. As can be seen in Figure 2 (right

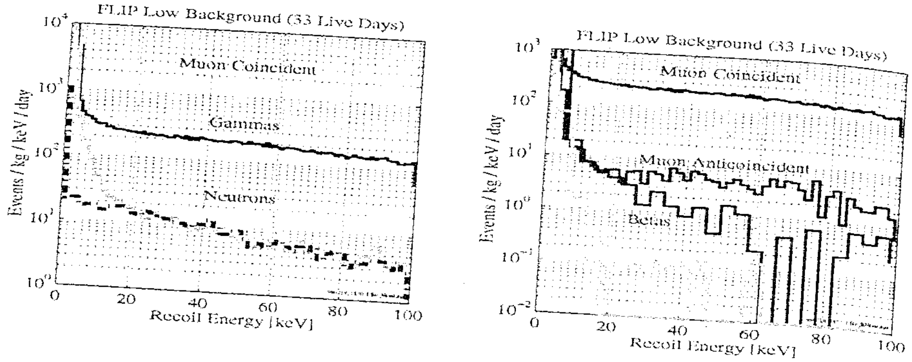

Figure 3. Background spectra in the Si FLIP detector at SUF. On the left are shown the rate of gammas and neutrons coincident with the muon shield. The black dotted line is the neutron rate predicted by Monte Carlo. On the right are gammas, betas (surface events) and neutrons anticoincident with muons.

and middle) the low-charge-collection events had significantly faster phonon rise time than bulk events. Nuclear recoil events (Fig. 2 (right)) had the rise time distribution of bulk gamma events. A calibration of this detector with an electron source is being conducted at the time of publication. Preliminary data suggests better than 99% rejection capability down to 20 keV.

4 Results

The 100 g silicon FLIP detector was operated continuously in SUF for a period of several months accumulating 33 total live days of data. An electronics threshold of ~3 keV was maintained throughout the course of background running, although the charge noise and phonon noise (creating a rise time cut threshold of ~15 keV) caused a large increase in backgrounds at low energies. The active muon shield was measured to be over 99.993% efficient for muons passing through the detector.

4.1 Muon Coincident

The measured gamma rate coincident with muons passing through the active veto was ~200 events per kg per keV per day (dru) (see Fig. 3). When a cut on charge/phonons was applied (conventional discrimination), the neutron rate was measured to be ~10 dru at 30 keV. This constant production of neutrons by muons was a very useful continuous calibration of detector performance and cut efficiencies. Both the coincident rates of gammas and neutrons were

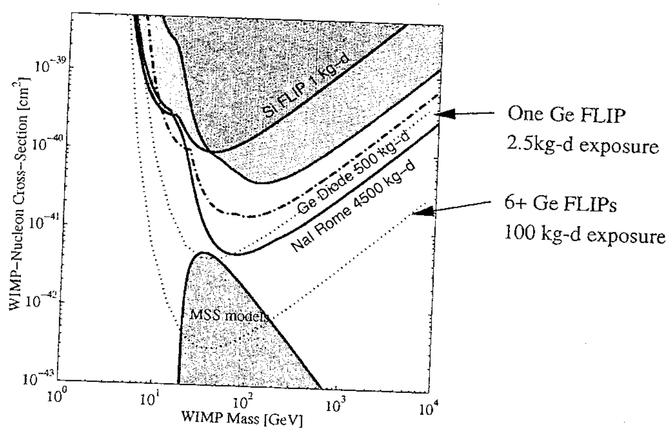

Figure 4. Upper limits on WIMP-nucleon cross section vs. WIMP mass. Upper shaded region was excluded by rates in the Si FLIP detector. Lower shaded region was excluded by the NTD-based germanium detectors. Dotted curves are: the projected limit from an identical FLIP detector fabricated out of germanium; germanium FLIPs with 100 kg-d exposure.

consistent with the rate predicted by Monte Carlo simulations. The deviation of the measured neutron rate from the Monte Carlo prediction at low energies was due to contamination by gammas allowed by poor discrimination.

4.2 Muon Anticoincident

The raw gamma event rate anticoincident with muons was lower than the coincident rate by more than a factor of 40. When a charge yield cut was applied, we saw a persistant surface background of very similar rates to those seen in the NTD-based detectors[9]. These events had significantly faster rise times (4-5 μs) than bulk events (7-8 μs) and clearly did not represent an unexpected neutron backgound. When a rise time cut was applied (6.25 μs) two events survive above $\sim$18 keV.

This final rate was used to calculate upper limits on the WIMP-nucleon cross section, following Smith and Lewin[4], for spin-independent couplings. Figure 4 shows the limit versus WIMP mass. Although the silicon FLIP detector is a factor of 10 less sensitive than the equivalent volume germanium detector, the limit is still competitive with that of the NTD-based detector (which lacks rise time discrimination) and other experiments with much larger exposures.

5 Future Improvements

Quasiparticle loss in the aluminum fins is now known to account for more than a factor of five signal loss. The bad placement of a cryogenic shunt resistor accounts for a factor of two unnecessary noise. Design improvements will be implemented shortly addressing both these issues and hopefully leading to a dramatically improved energy threshold and discrimination. The QET technology is rapidly being transfered to germanium which has a much greater sensitivity to a WIMP signal than silicon.

6 Conclusion

A new type of Dark Matter Detector based on QET technology has demonstrated a powerfull new discrimination technique for reducing surface backgrounds. The transfer of this technology to germanium will rapidly allow CDMS to achieve orders of magnitude better sensitivity to WIMP signals.

Acknowledgments

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