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Heading into the abyss: X-ray spectral timing of accreting black holes

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The innermost region of the accretion flow around X-ray bright, unobscured, Active Galactic and Black Hole Binaries (AGN and BHB) is being routinely mapped by X-ray spectral-timing of the reflection spectrum produced by irradiation of the accretion disc. The spin of the black hole can be determined by identifying the inner edge of the reflection region with the ISCO. The black hole in many of the objects studied then appears to be rapidly spinning. When an object has high spin and the corona lies close to the disc, as occurs some of the time for some sources, then most reflection originates within one gravitational radius of the event horizon.

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