Contribution ID: 18

Type: not specified

Probing the photon Wigner distribution with dilepton production in UPCs

Friday 13 June 2025 09:10 (20 minutes)

In recent years, the description of lepton-pair production in ultra-peripheral collisions (UPCs) of heavy nuclei has attracted significant attention, particularly with the release of new RHIC data. The description of this process can be achieved by introducing the so-called Wigner distribution of the photons. They are related via Fourier transform to the generalised transverse momentum dependent distributions (GTMDs), which depend on two internal transverse momenta: k_T and Δ_T . The former is the usual intrinsic transverse momentum also found in the transverse momentum-dependent distributions, whereas the latter corresponds to the (transverse) momentum transfer.

Note that if one is interested in exploring the gluonic content of nuclear matter (e.g., by considering heavy quarkonium production), the QED channel corresponds to the background of the process. Therefore, understanding the *photon* GTMDs is crucial to single out the QCD channel and probe the *gluon* GTMDs.

In this talk I will present the theoretical framework that describes UPCs of heavy ions in terms of photon GT-MDs. In particular, I will address the counter-intuitive features that the presence of the two aforementioned transverse momenta generates. I will also discuss how the mass of the produced system modifies both the cross section and some of the various asymmetries that can be measured in this process, based on RHIC and LHC kinematics.

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Session Classification: Photon-photon physics, precision tests of SM and BSM

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