

Search for dark particles from the atmosphere and beam dumps

宋宁强

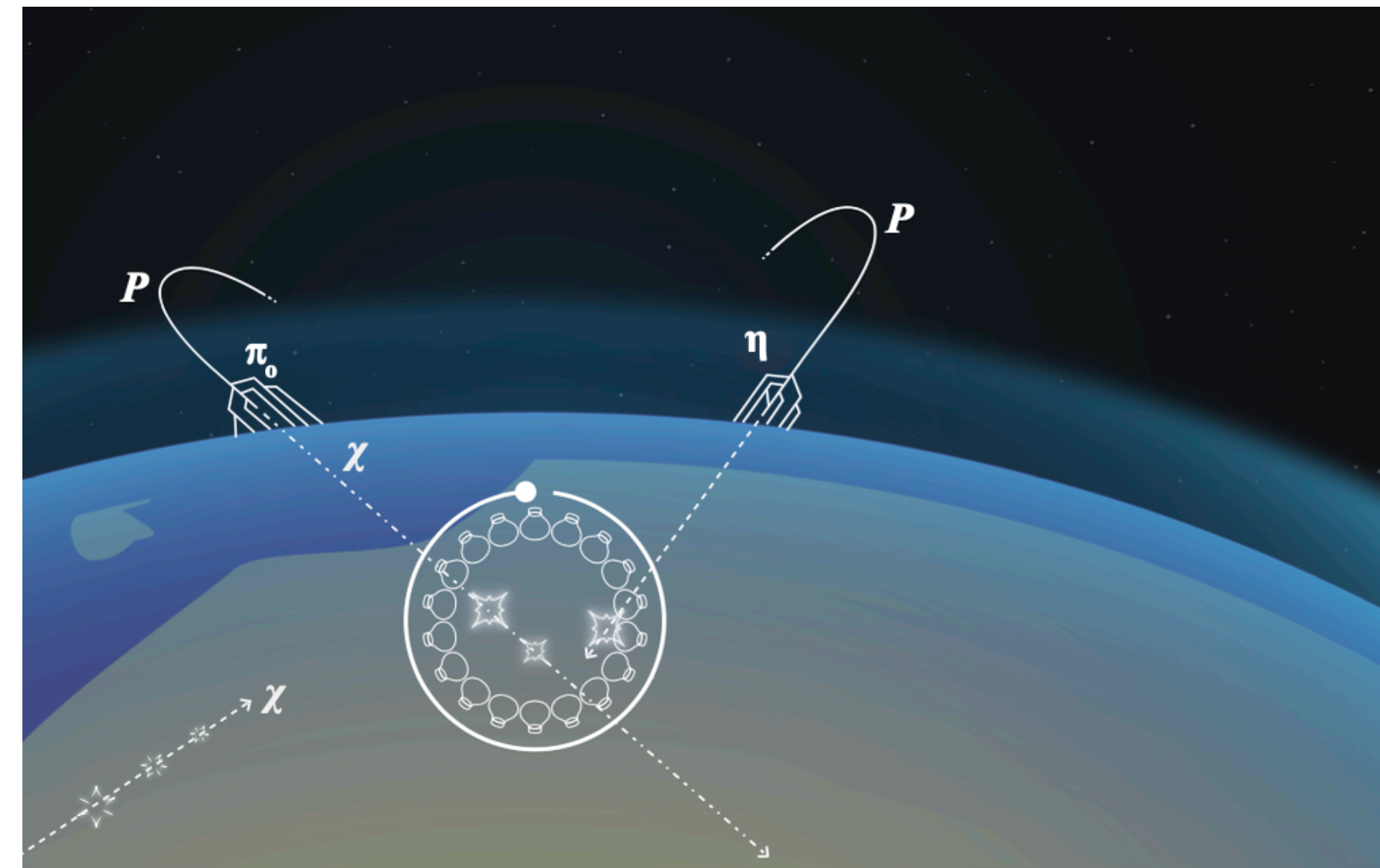
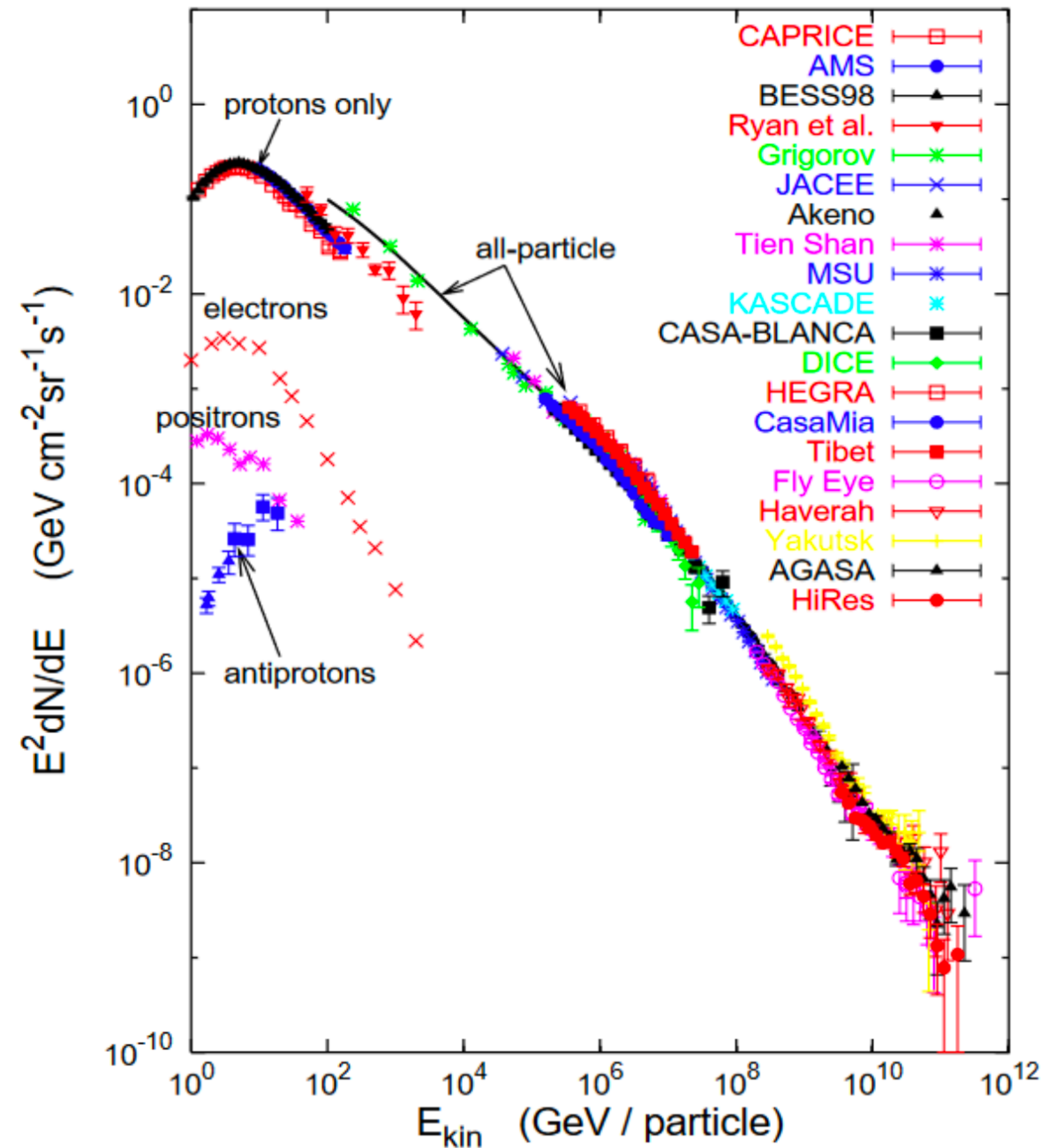
中国科学院理论物理研究所

April 26, 2026



Atmospheric beam dump and new physics

- Heavy neutral leptons
- Hadrophilic dark matter
- Axion-like particles
- Long-lived neutralinos
- Monopoles
- Dark photon
- Millicharged particles
- ...



Dark Photon Kinetic Mixing

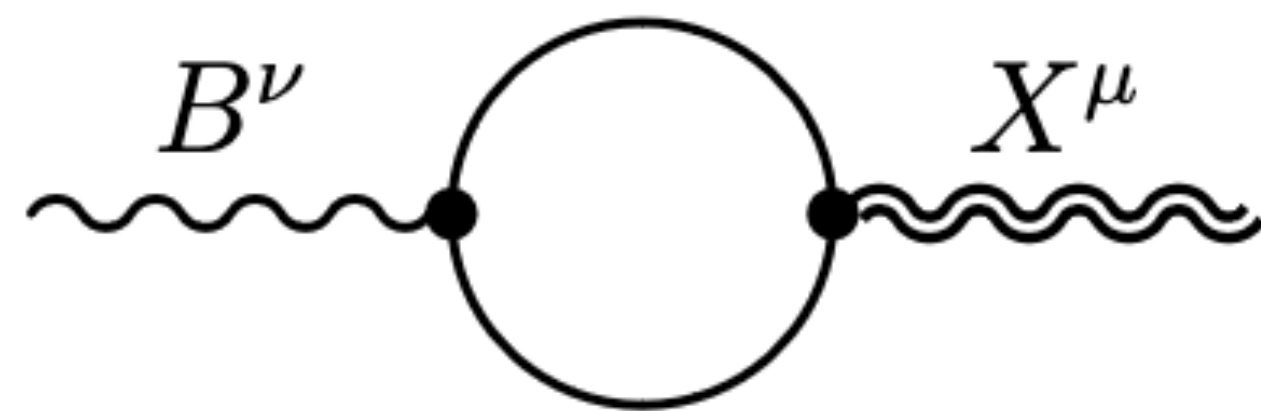
Extra $U(1)$? $SU(3)_c \times SU(2)_L \times U(1)_Y \times U(1)'$

Pospelov' 2008

Ackerman, Buckley, Carrol, Kamionkowski' 2008

Arkani-Hame, Finkbeine, Slatyer, Weiner' 2008

$$\mathcal{L} = -\frac{1}{4}(F_{\mu\nu}F^{\mu\nu} - 2\epsilon F_{\mu\nu}F'^{\mu\nu} + F'_{\mu\nu}F'^{\mu\nu}) - J^\mu A_\mu$$



$$\epsilon = -\frac{g' g_X}{16\pi^2} \sum_i Y_i q_i \ln \frac{M_i^2}{\mu^2} \sim 10^{-1} - 10^{-3}$$

Millicharge Particles

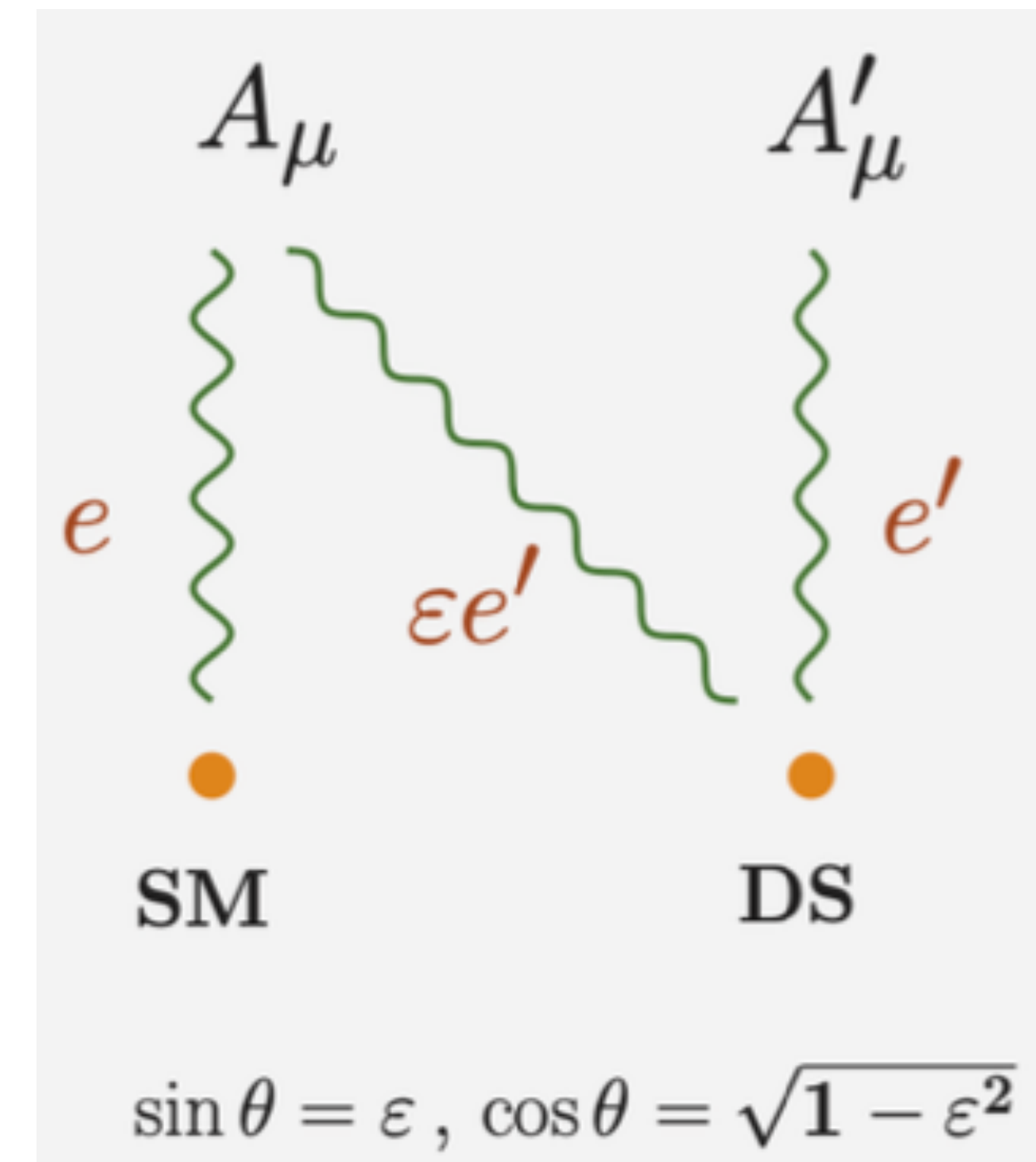
Massless dark photon $\mathcal{L}_0 = -\frac{1}{4}F_{a\mu\nu}F_a^{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{4}F_{b\mu\nu}F_b^{\mu\nu} - \frac{\varepsilon}{2}F_{a\mu\nu}F_b^{\mu\nu}$

$$\mathcal{L} = e J_\mu A_b^\mu + e' J'_\mu A_a^\mu$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} A_a^\mu \\ A_b^\mu \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} & 0 \\ -\frac{\varepsilon}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \cos\theta & -\sin\theta \\ \sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} A'^\mu \\ A^\mu \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{L}' &= \left[\frac{e' \cos\theta}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} J'_\mu + e \left(\sin\theta - \frac{\varepsilon \cos\theta}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} \right) J_\mu \right] A'^\mu \\ &+ \left[-\frac{e' \sin\theta}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} J'_\mu + e \left(\cos\theta + \frac{\varepsilon \sin\theta}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} \right) J_\mu \right] A^\mu \end{aligned}$$

$$\mathcal{L}' = e' J'_\mu A'^\mu + \left[-\frac{e' \varepsilon}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} J'_\mu + \frac{e}{\sqrt{1-\varepsilon^2}} J_\mu \right] A^\mu$$



Feldman, Liu, Nath, arXiv: hep-ph/0702123

Fabbrichesi et al arXiv: 2005.01515

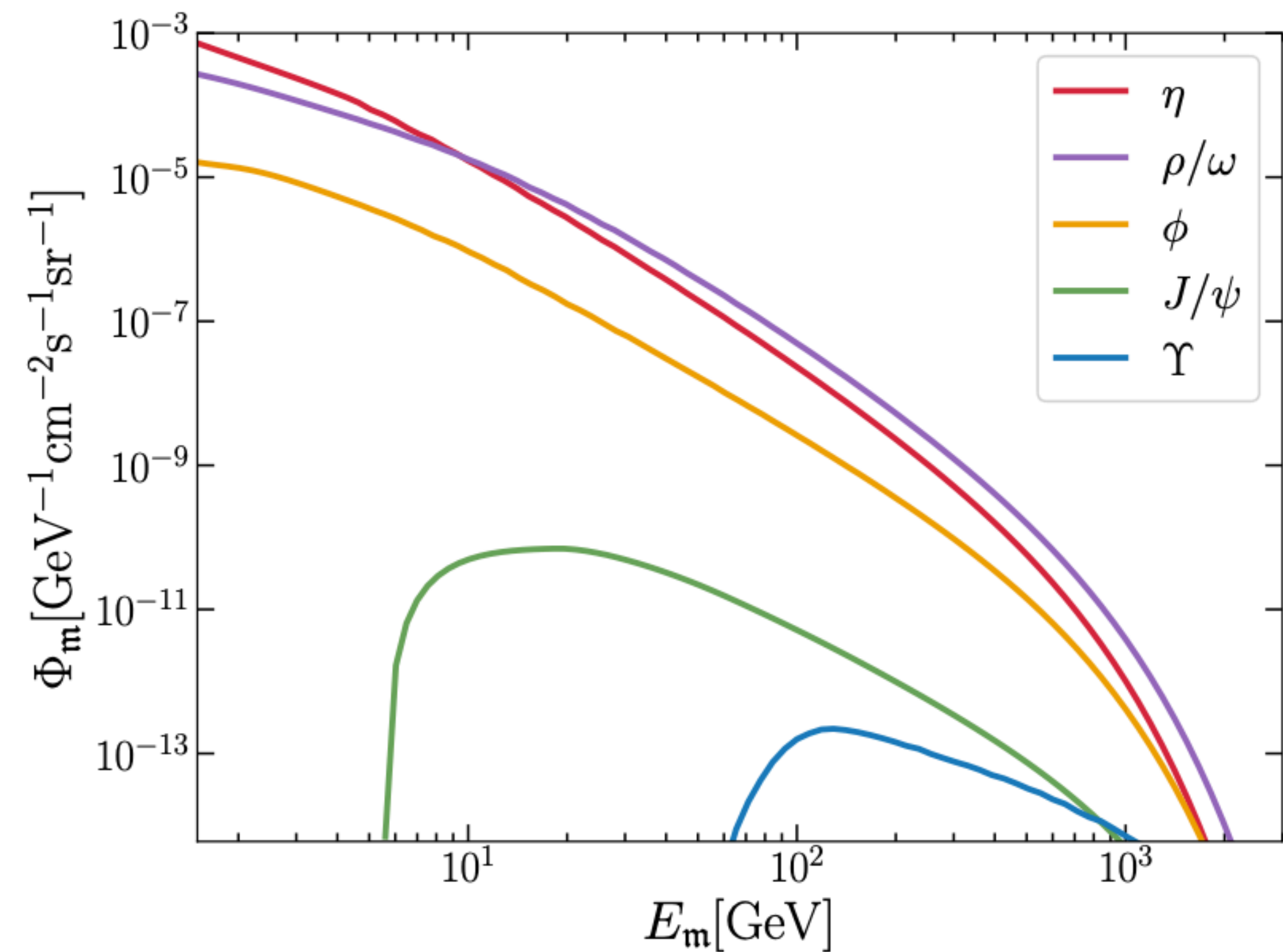
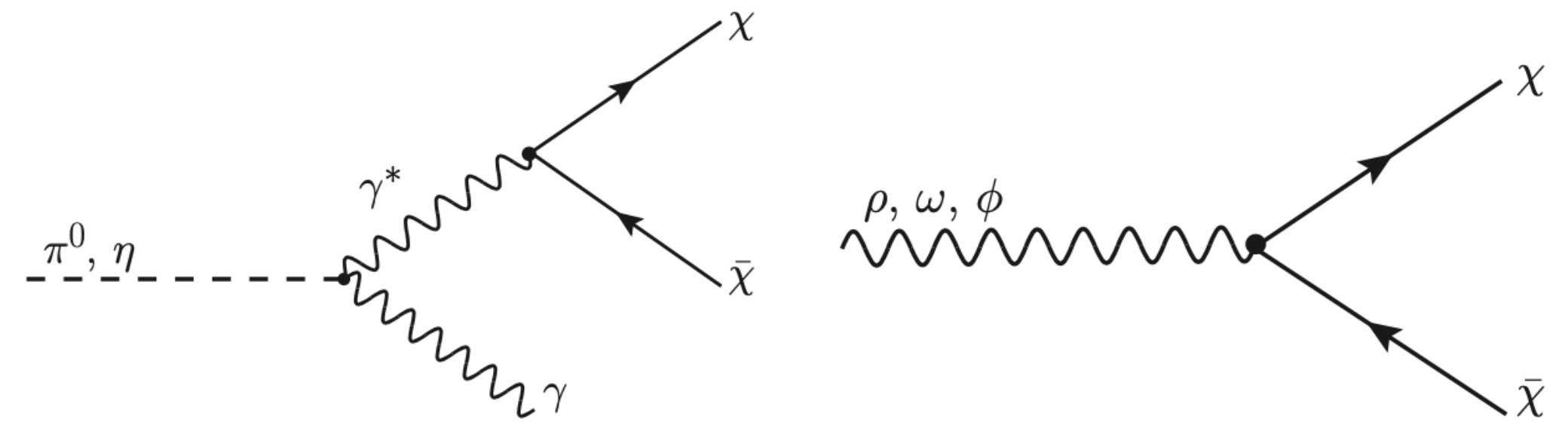
Millicharge Particles from Meson Decay

$$\Phi_m(\gamma_m) = \Omega_{\text{eff}} \int \mathcal{I}_{\text{CR}}(\gamma_{\text{cm}}) \frac{\sigma_m(\gamma_{\text{cm}})}{\sigma_{\text{in}}(\gamma_{\text{cm}})} P(\gamma_m|\gamma_{\text{cm}}) d\gamma_{\text{cm}}$$

$$\gamma_{\text{cm}} = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{s}/m_p$$

$$P(\gamma_m|\gamma_{\text{cm}}) \approx \sum_{\alpha} \frac{1}{\sigma_m} \times \frac{d\sigma_m}{dx_F} \times \frac{dx_F^{(\alpha)}}{d\gamma_m}$$

Plestid et al PRD/2002.11732



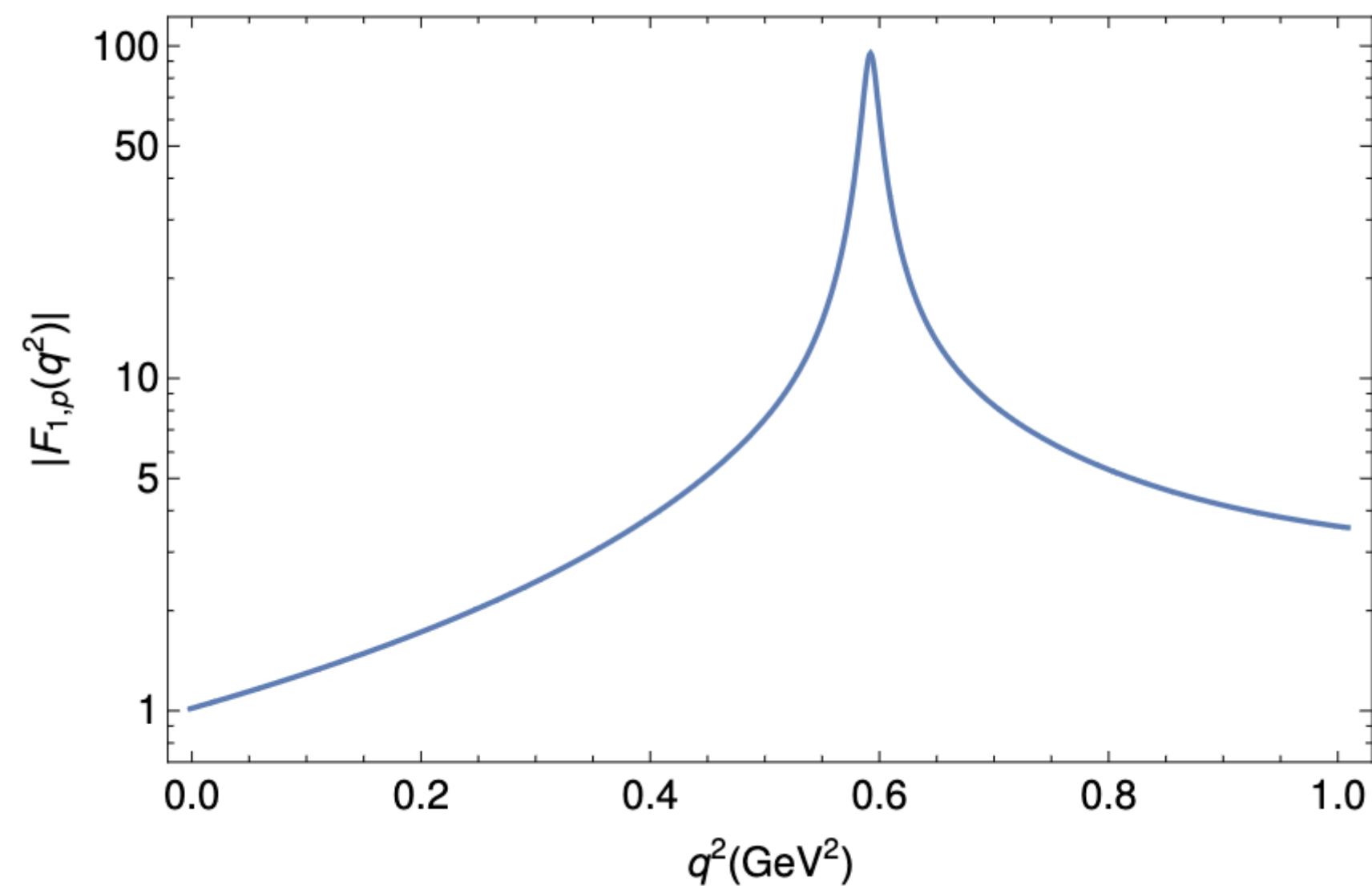
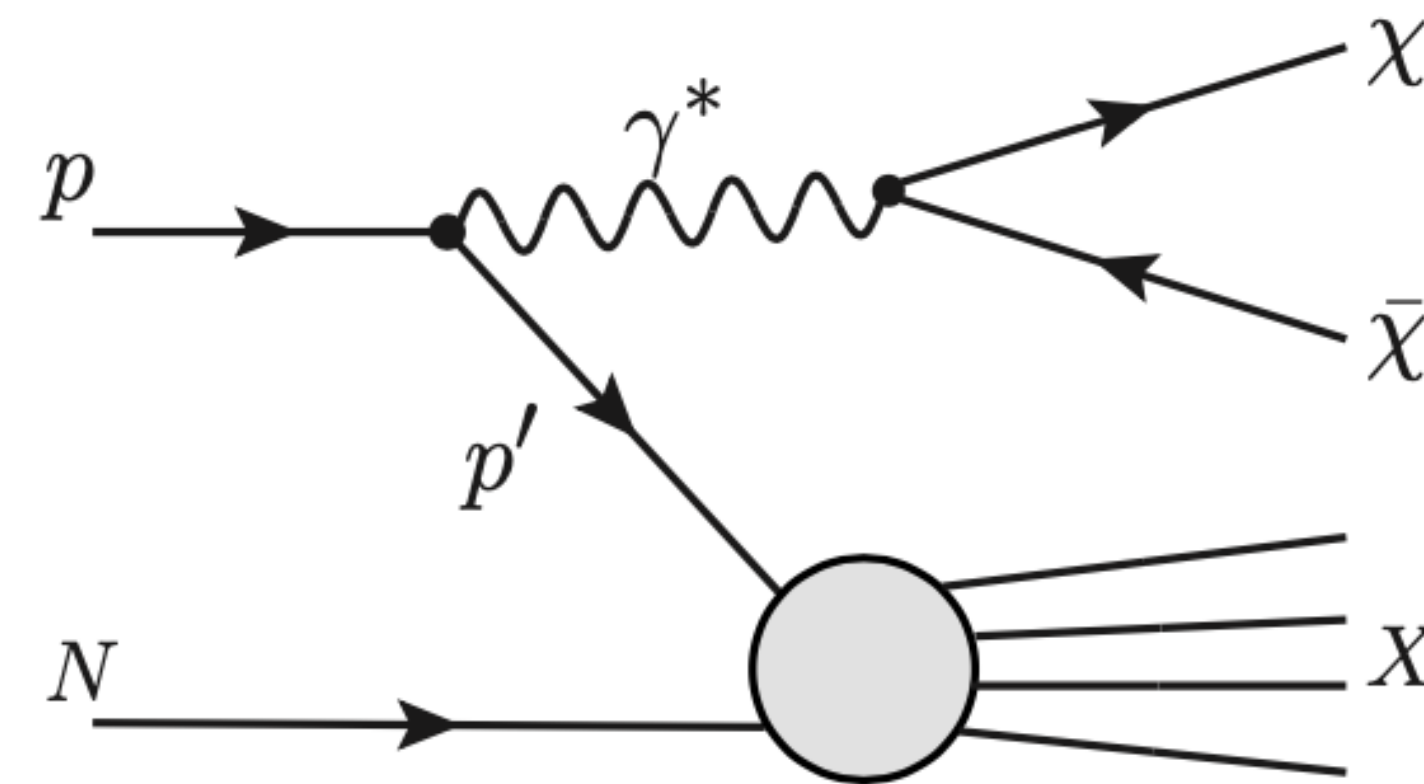
Millicharge Particles from Proton Bremsstrahlung

Fermi-Weizsacker-Williams (FWW) approximation with the splitting-kernel approach

$$d\sigma^{\text{PB}}(s) \simeq d\mathcal{P}_{p \rightarrow \gamma^* p'} \times \sigma_{pN}(s')$$

$$\frac{d^2 \mathcal{P}_{p \rightarrow \gamma^* p}^{\text{FWW}}}{dE_k d \cos \theta_k} = |\mathbf{J}(z, p_T^2)| \frac{d^2 \mathcal{P}_{p \rightarrow \gamma^* p}^{\text{FWW}}}{dz dp_T^2} = |\mathbf{J}(z, p_T^2)| |F_V(k)|^2 \omega(z, p_T^2)$$

EM form factor Kernel



deNiverville et al PRD/1609.01770

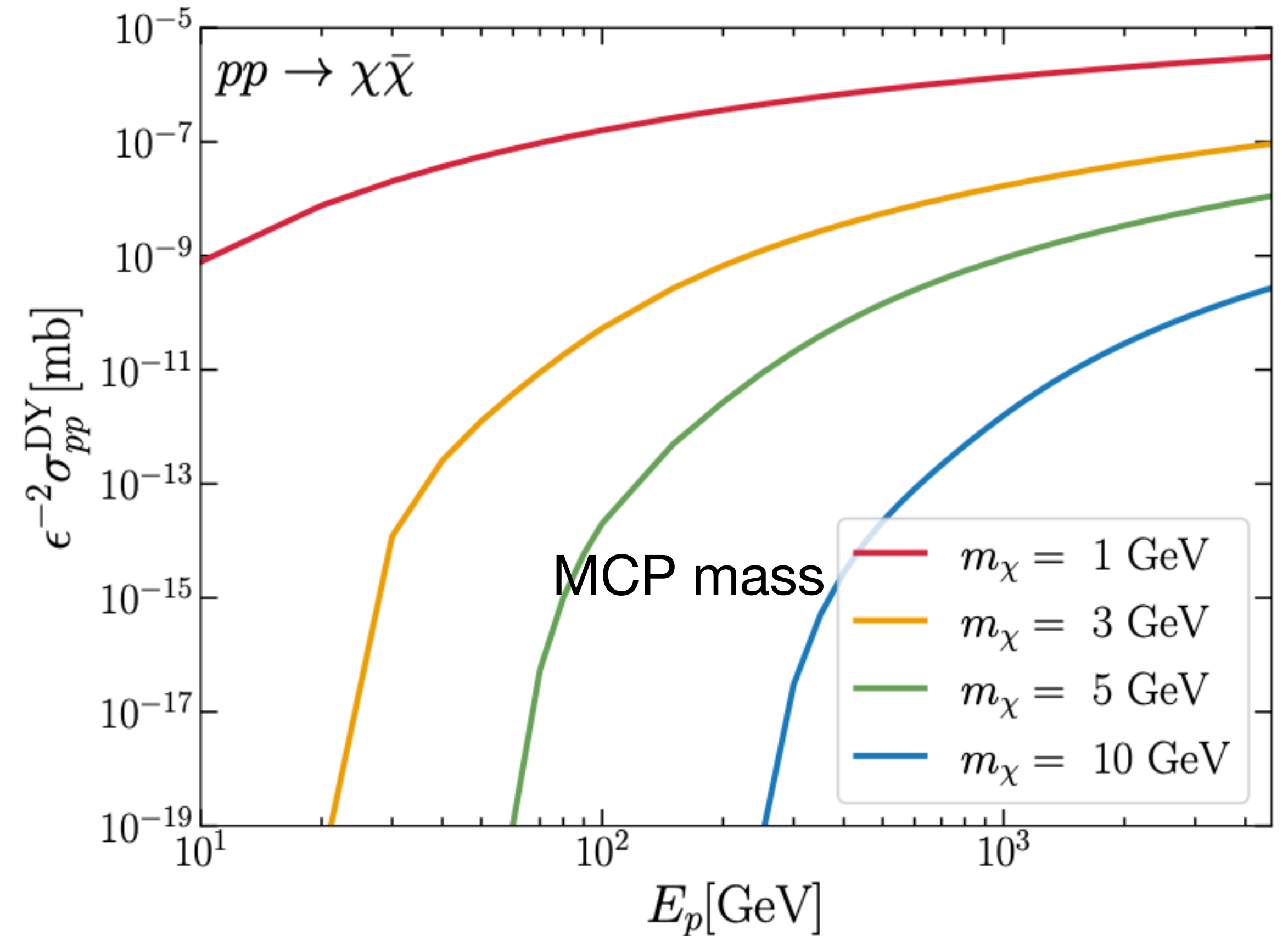
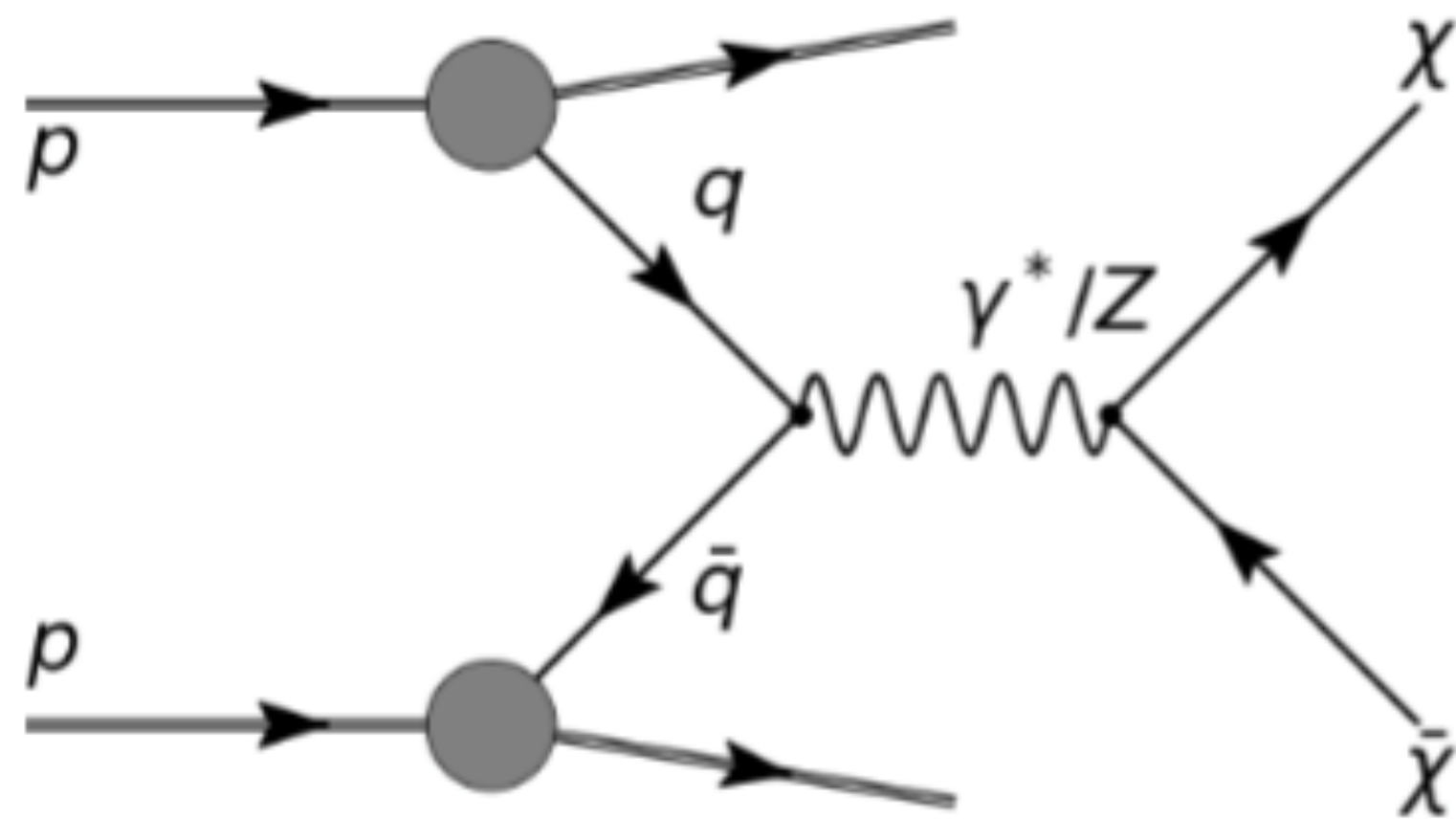
$$\Phi_{\chi}^{\text{PB}} = \int dE_p \Phi_p \frac{\epsilon^2 e^2}{6\pi^2} \int \frac{dk^2}{k^2} \sqrt{1 - \frac{4m_{\chi}^2}{k^2}} \left(1 + \frac{2m_{\chi}^2}{k^2} \right) \times \int dE_k \frac{1}{\sigma_{pN}} \frac{d\sigma^{\text{PB}}}{dE_k} \frac{\Theta(E_{\chi} - E_{\min}) \Theta(E_{\max} - E_{\chi})}{E_{\max} - E_{\min}}$$

Du et al arXiv: 2211.11469

Du et al arXiv: 2308.05607

Millicharge Particles from Drell-Yan Process

Madgraph simulations

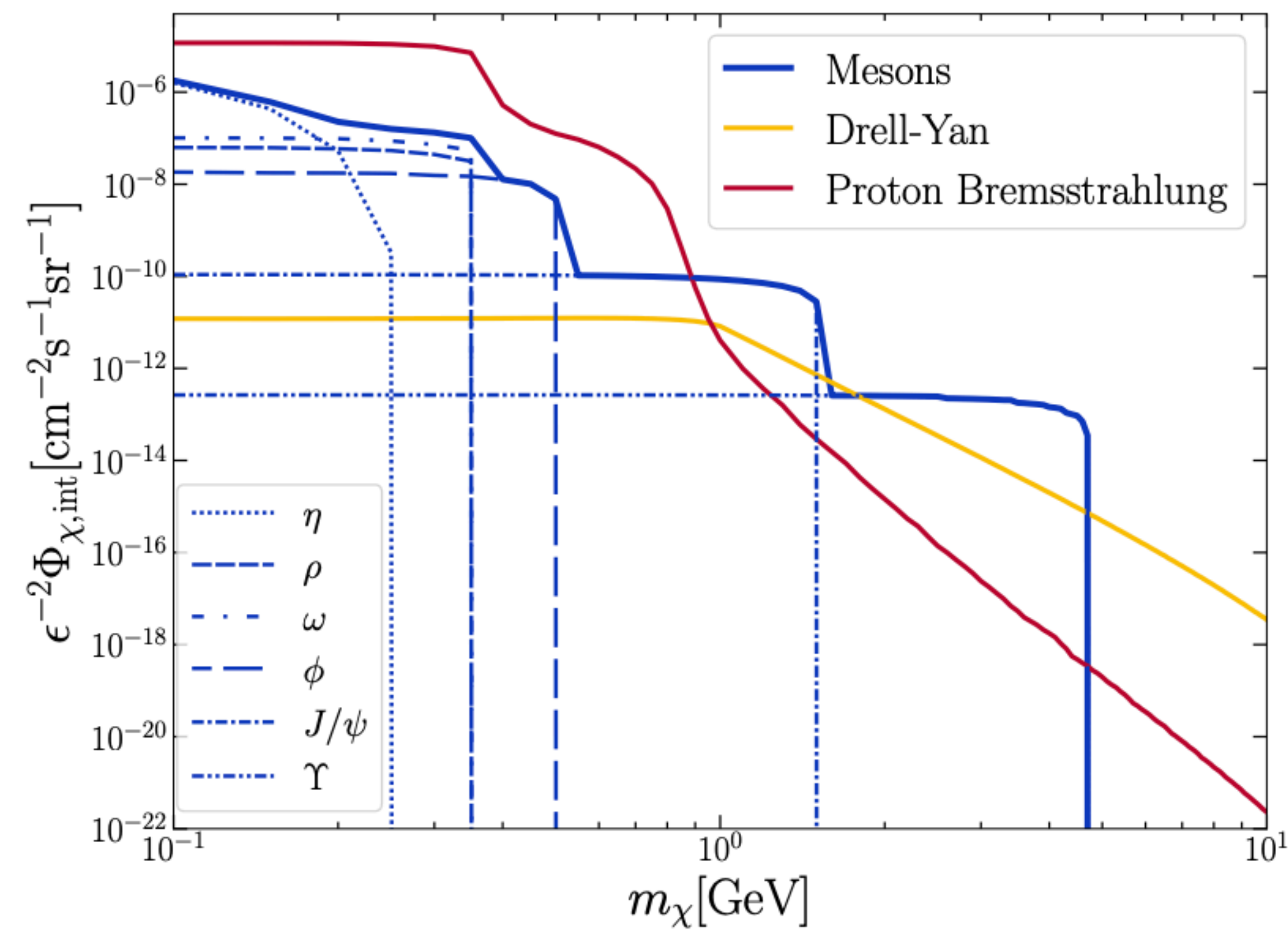
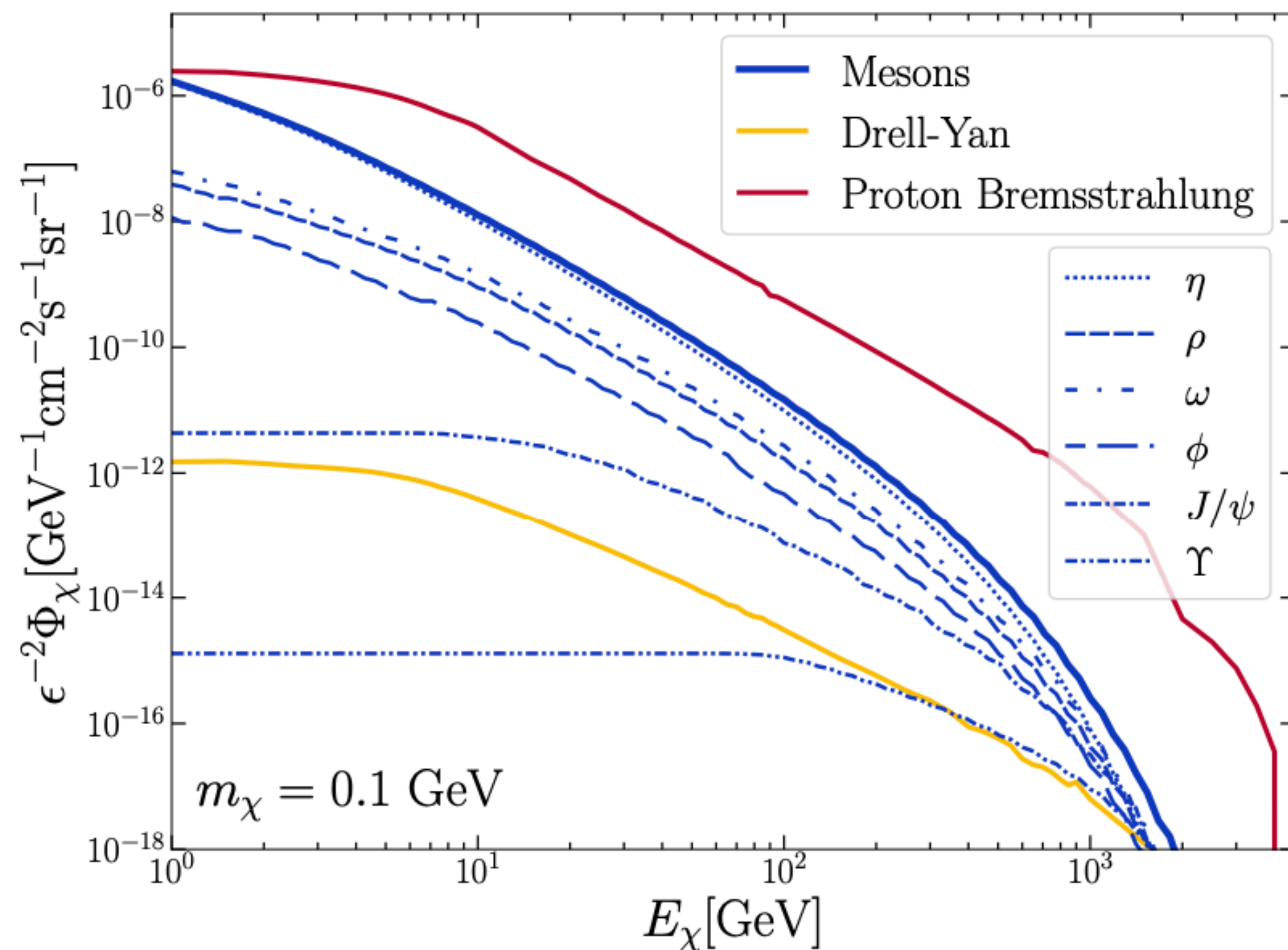


$$\hat{\sigma} (q(p_1) \bar{q}(p_2) \rightarrow l^+ l^-) = \frac{4\pi\alpha^2}{3\hat{s}} \frac{1}{N_c} Q_q^2$$

Wu, Hardy, **NS**, PRD/arXiv: 2406.01668

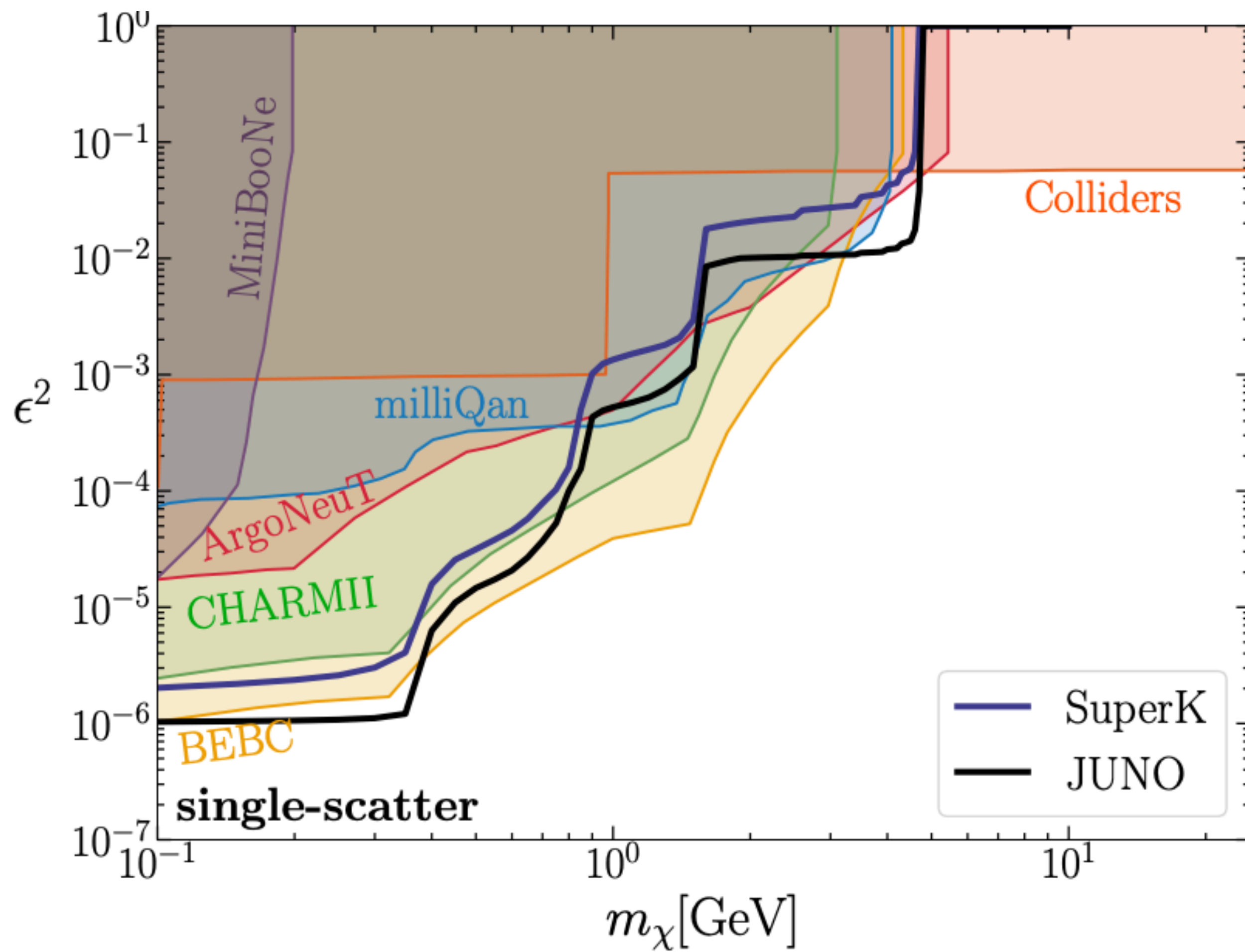
Millicharge Particle Flux

Meson decay+Proton Bremsstrahlung+Drell-Yan



Wu, Hardy, **NS**, PRD/arXiv: 2406.01668

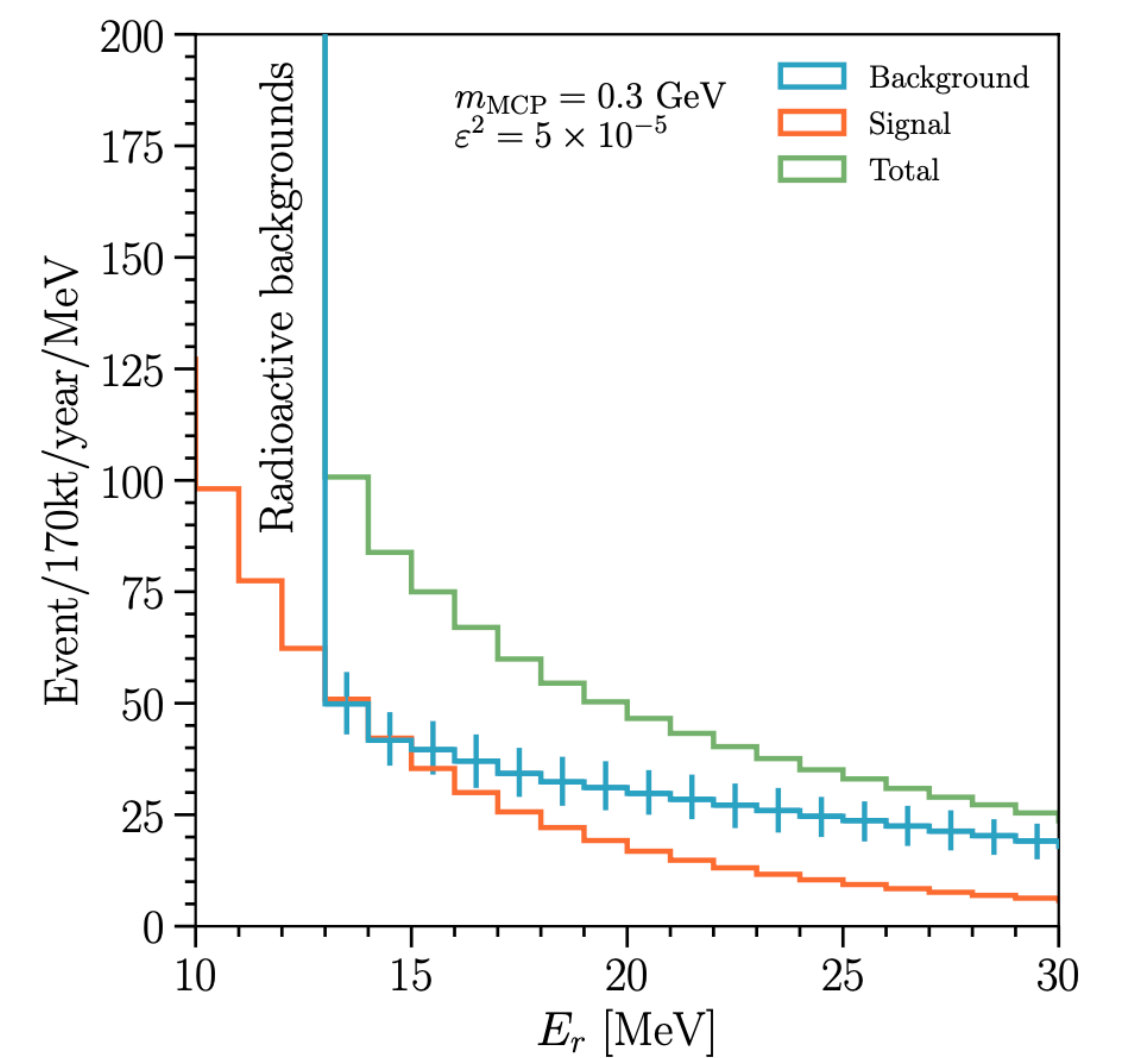
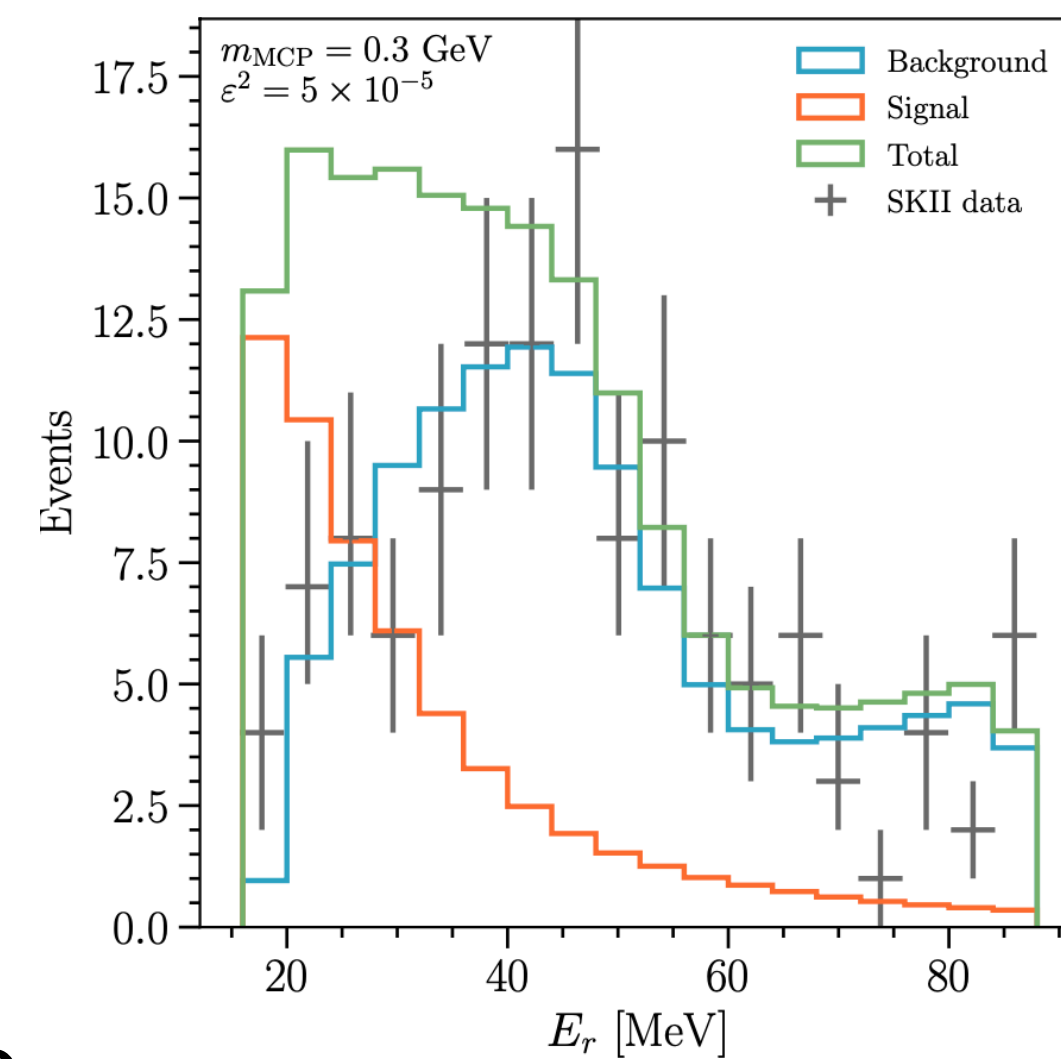
Single Scatter Constraint



$$\frac{d\sigma_{\chi e}}{dE_r} = \pi\epsilon^2\alpha^2 \frac{(E_r^2 + 2E_\chi^2)m_e - ((2E_\chi + m_e)m_e + m_\chi^2) E_r}{E_r^2 m_e^2 (E_\chi^2 - m_\chi^2)}$$

$$d\sigma_{\chi e}/dE_r \propto 1/E_r^2$$

$$\sigma_{\chi e} \simeq \frac{\pi\alpha_{EM}\epsilon^2}{m_e T_{\min}} = 2.6 \times 10^{-25} \epsilon^2 \text{ cm}^2 \frac{\text{MeV}}{T_{\min}}$$



Assuming JUNO 10 MeV threshold+170 kton·yr exposure

Wu, Hardy, **NS**, PRD/arXiv: 2406.01668

Arguelles et al JHEP/2104.13924

Multiple Scatter Constraint

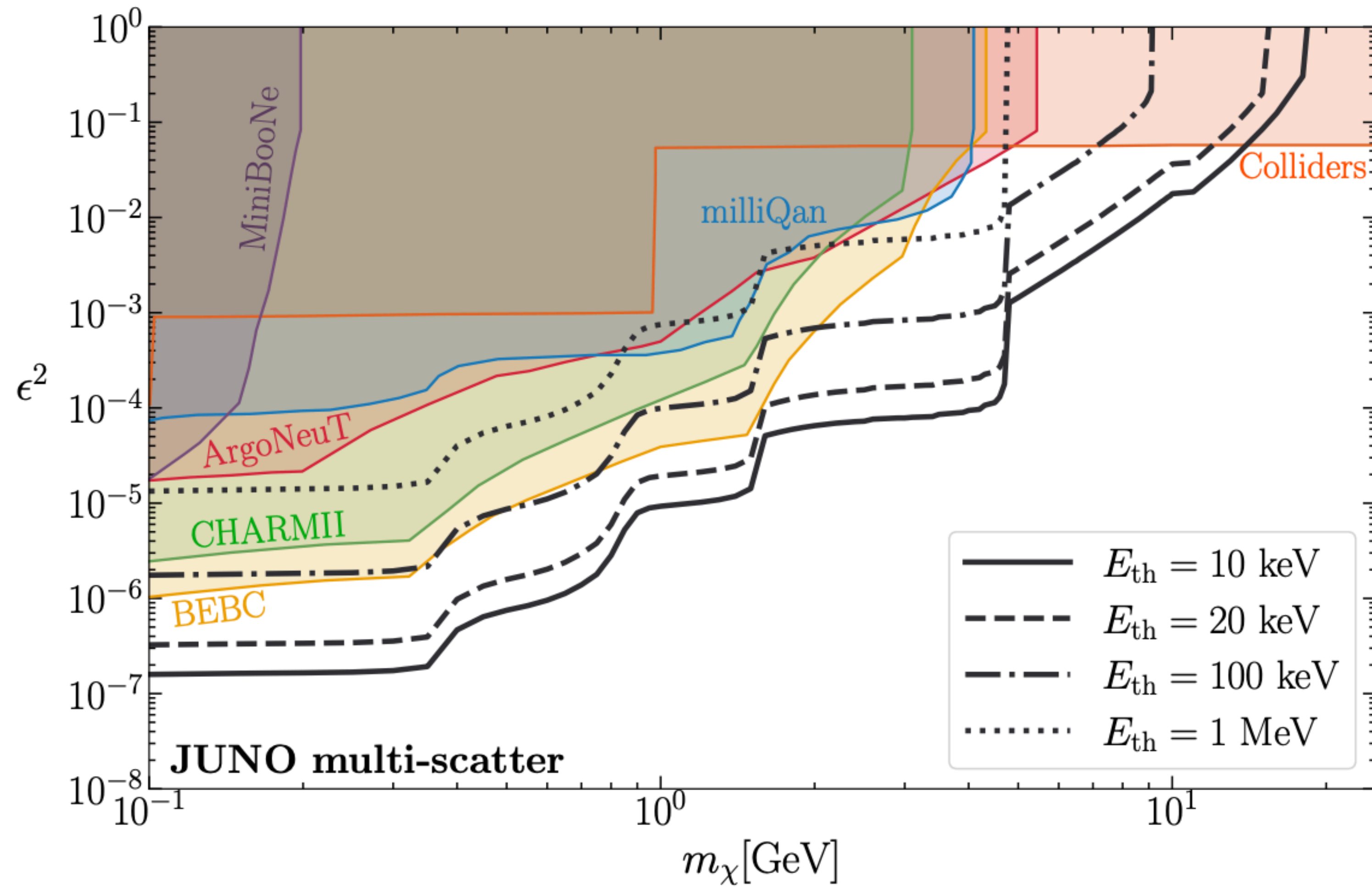
Single scatter probability $P_1 = 1 - \exp\left(-\frac{L_D}{\lambda(T_{\min})}\right)$

Multiple scatter probability $P_{n \geq 2}(T_{\min}) = 1 - \exp\left(-\frac{L_D}{\lambda}\right) \left(1 + \frac{L_D}{\lambda}\right)$

Number of observed events $N_{\text{multi}} = N_{\text{single}} P_{n \geq 2}(T_{\min, \text{multi}}) / P_1(T_{\min, \text{single}})$

$$N_{\text{single}}(m_\chi, \epsilon) = N_e T \int_{E_{i, \min}}^{E_{i, \max}} dE_r \epsilon_D(E_r) \times \int dE_\chi d\Omega \Phi_\chi^D(E_\chi, \Omega) \frac{d\sigma_{\chi e}}{dE_r}$$

Multiple Scatter Constraint

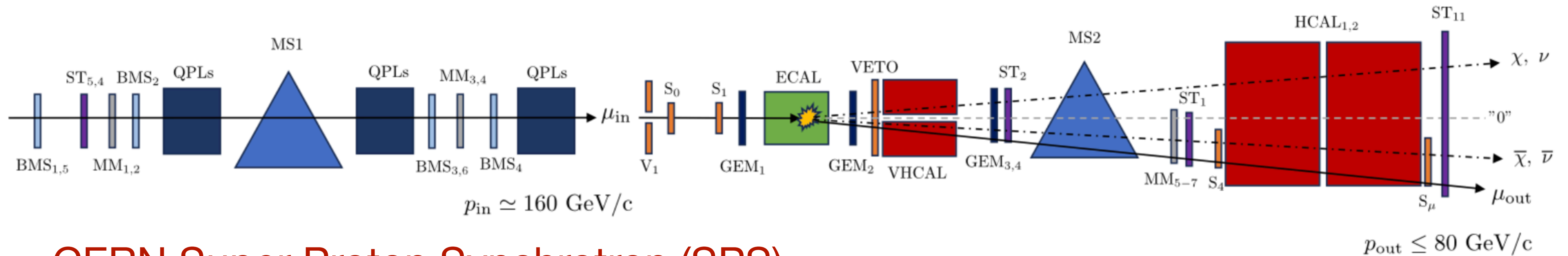


Assuming JUNO 170 kton·yr exposure

Wu, Hardy, **NS**, PRD/arXiv: 2406.01668

The NA64 μ Experiment

2022 pilot run



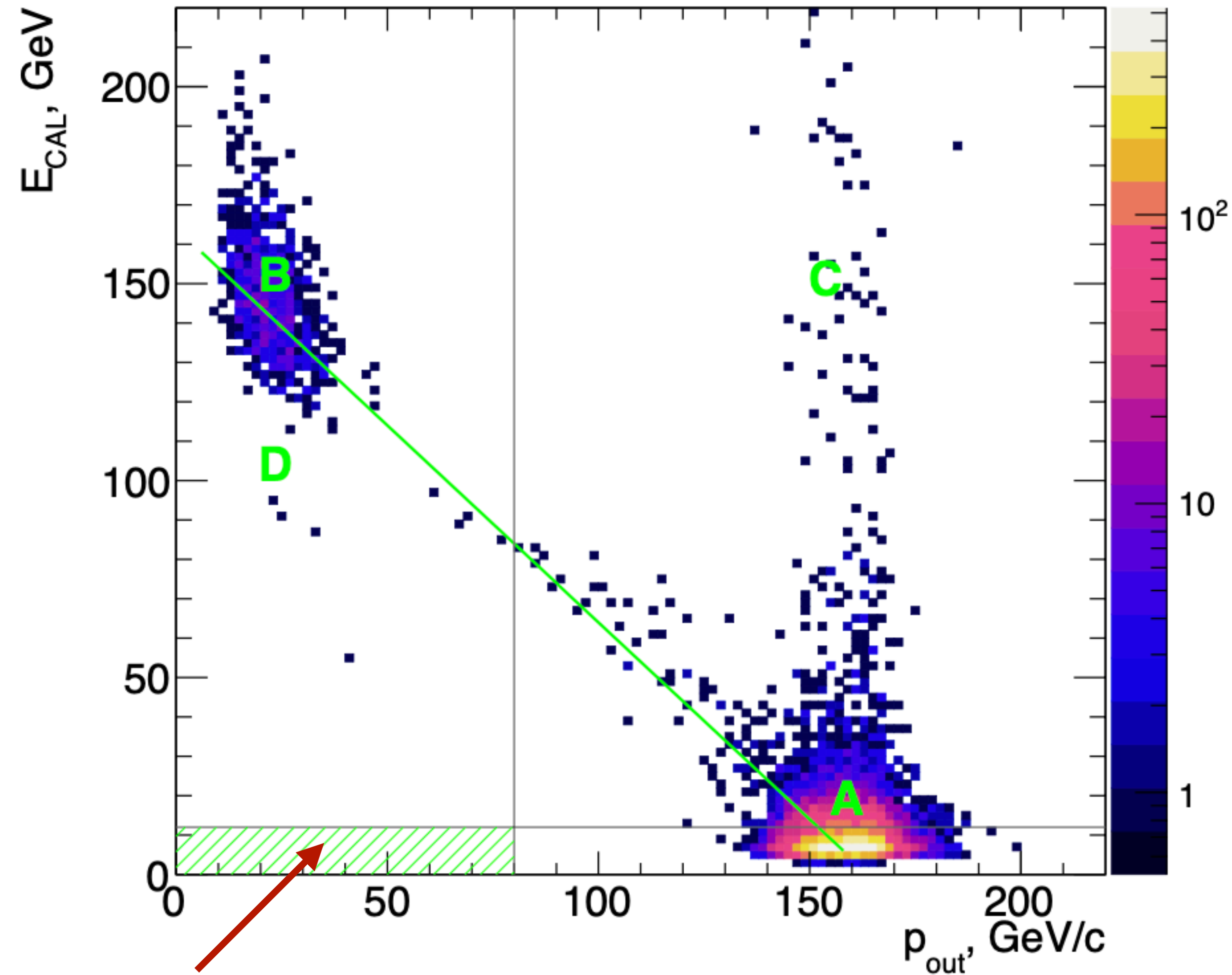
CERN Super Proton Synchrotron (SPS)

160 GeV muon beam

1.98×10^{10} muon on target

NA64 collaboration, PRL/2401.01708

Events at NA64 μ

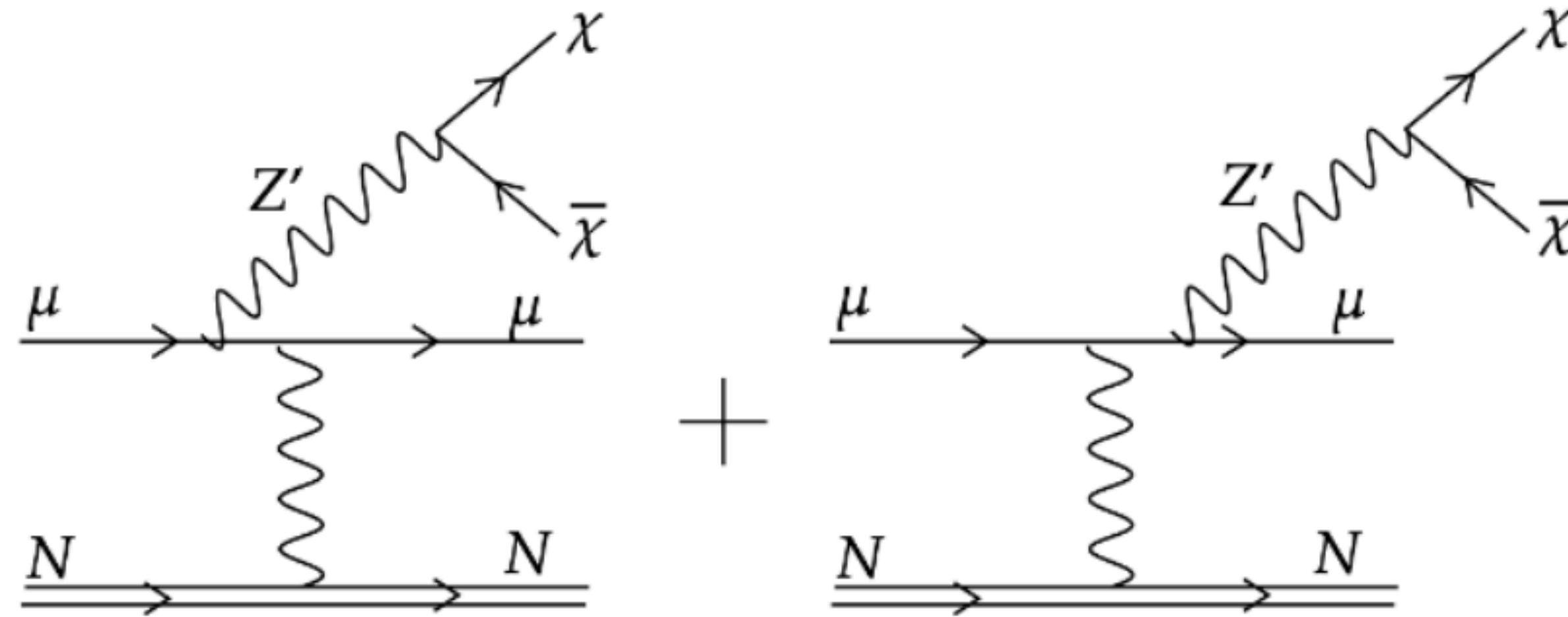


New physics

- Region A: soft muon scattering with small energy deposition
- Region B: hard scattering and large energy deposition in the target
- Region C: soft scattering and large energy deposition in the last calorimeter
- Region D: Hard scattering in the target with hadrons left out

Muonphilic Dark Sector

$$L \supset -\frac{1}{4} Z'_{\alpha\beta} Z'^{\alpha\beta} + g_{Z'} (\bar{\mu} \gamma_\alpha \mu + \bar{\nu}_{\mu L} \gamma_\alpha \nu_{\mu L} - \bar{\tau} \gamma_\alpha \tau - \bar{\nu}_{\tau L} \gamma_\alpha \nu_{\tau L}) Z'^\alpha + \bar{\chi} (i\not{\partial} + g_\chi \not{Z}' - m_\chi) \chi$$



Massless $L_\mu - L_\tau$ mediator with a dark sector

Production Rate

$$N_{\text{signal}} = N_{\text{MOT}} n_{\text{Pb}} L_{\text{tar}} \int d\sigma(\mu N \rightarrow \mu N X) \epsilon P_{\text{inv}}$$

Muon on target
 1.98×10^{10}

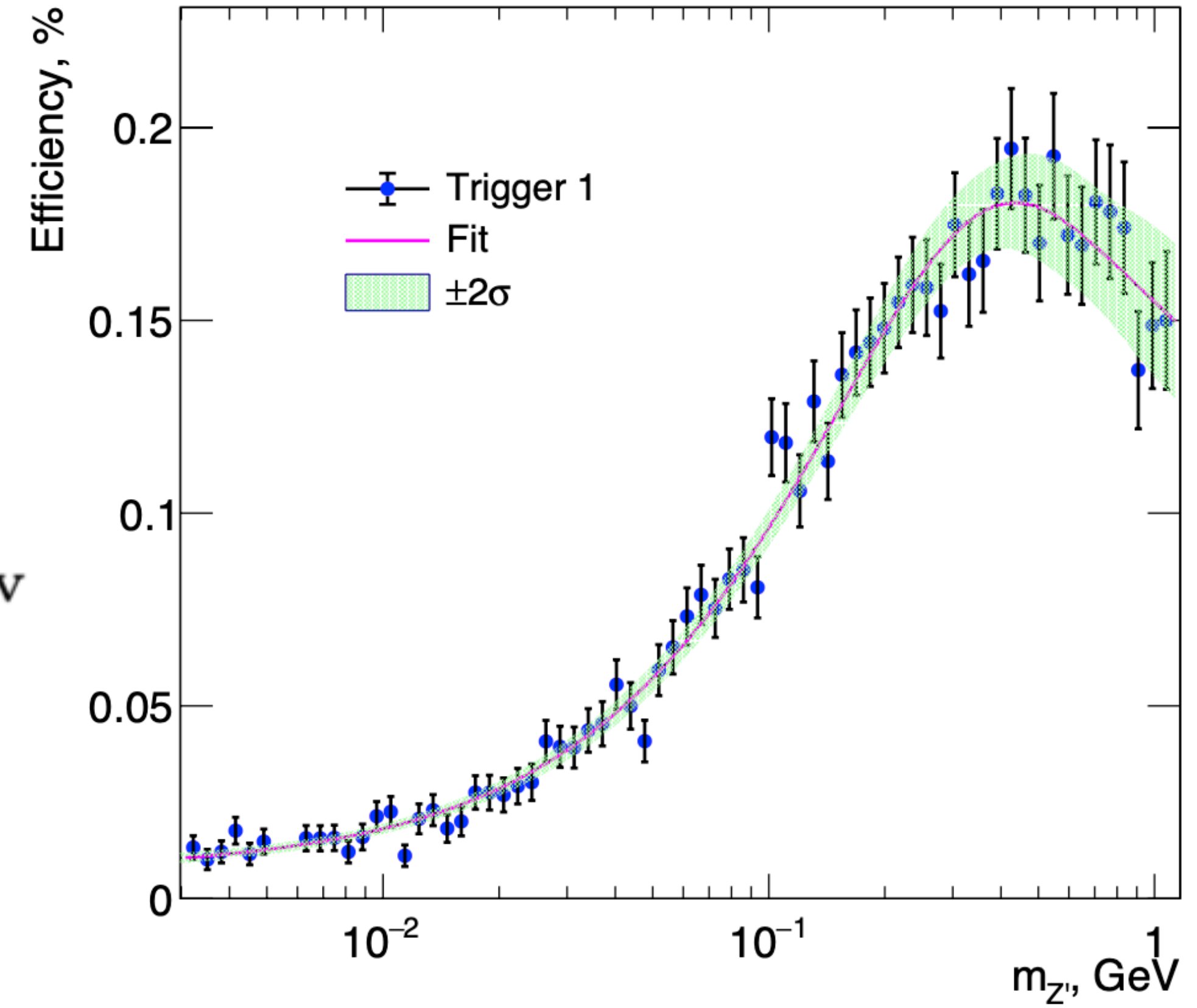
Pb target density

Target length

Scattering cross section

Decay probability

Efficiency



NA64 collaboration, 2409.10128

Cross Section

$$N_{\text{signal}} = N_{\text{MOT}} n_{\text{Pb}} L_{\text{tar}} \int d\sigma(\mu N \rightarrow \mu N X) \epsilon P_{\text{inv}}$$

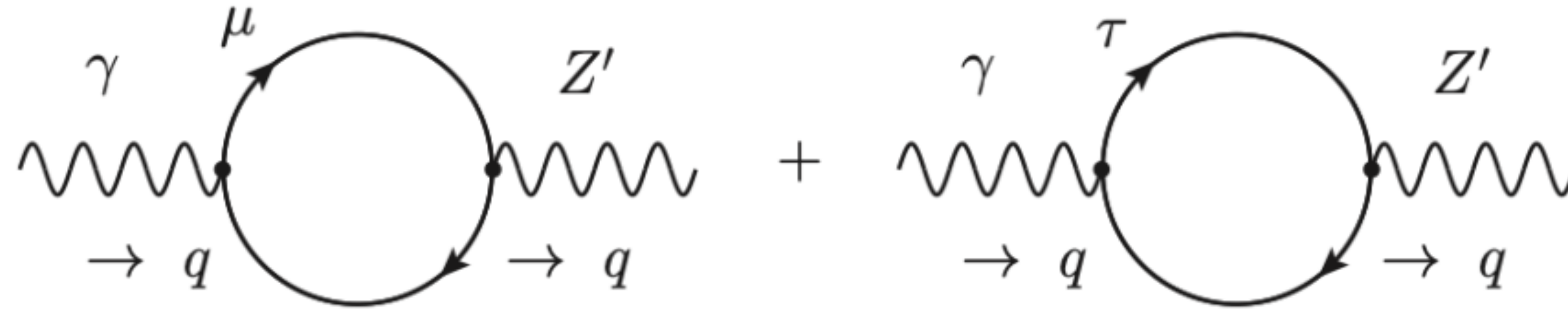
$$d\sigma(\mu N \rightarrow \mu N \chi \bar{\chi}) = d\sigma(\mu N \rightarrow \mu N Z')$$

$$\times \frac{g_{\chi}^2}{12\pi^2} \frac{dQ^2}{Q^2} \sqrt{1 - \frac{4m_{\chi}^2}{Q^2}} \left(1 + \frac{2m_{\chi}^2}{Q^2}\right)$$

$$\mathcal{A}_{Z'-\chi} = e^2 g_{Z'}^2 \left[2 \frac{x^2 - 2x + 2}{1-x} + 4 \frac{Q^2 + 2m_{\mu}^2}{\tilde{u}} \right. \\ \left. + 4 \frac{2m_{\mu}^4 x^2 + Q^4(1-x) + m_{\mu}^2 Q^2(x^2 - 2x + 2)}{\tilde{u}^2} \right]$$

Muophilic Millicharge?

$$L \supset -\frac{1}{4} Z'_{\alpha\beta} Z'^{\alpha\beta} + g_{Z'} (\bar{\mu} \gamma_\alpha \mu + \bar{\nu}_{\mu L} \gamma_\alpha \nu_{\mu L} - \bar{\tau} \gamma_\alpha \tau - \bar{\nu}_{\tau L} \gamma_\alpha \nu_{\tau L}) Z'^\alpha + \bar{\chi} (i\not{\partial} + g_\chi \not{Z}' - m_\chi) \chi$$

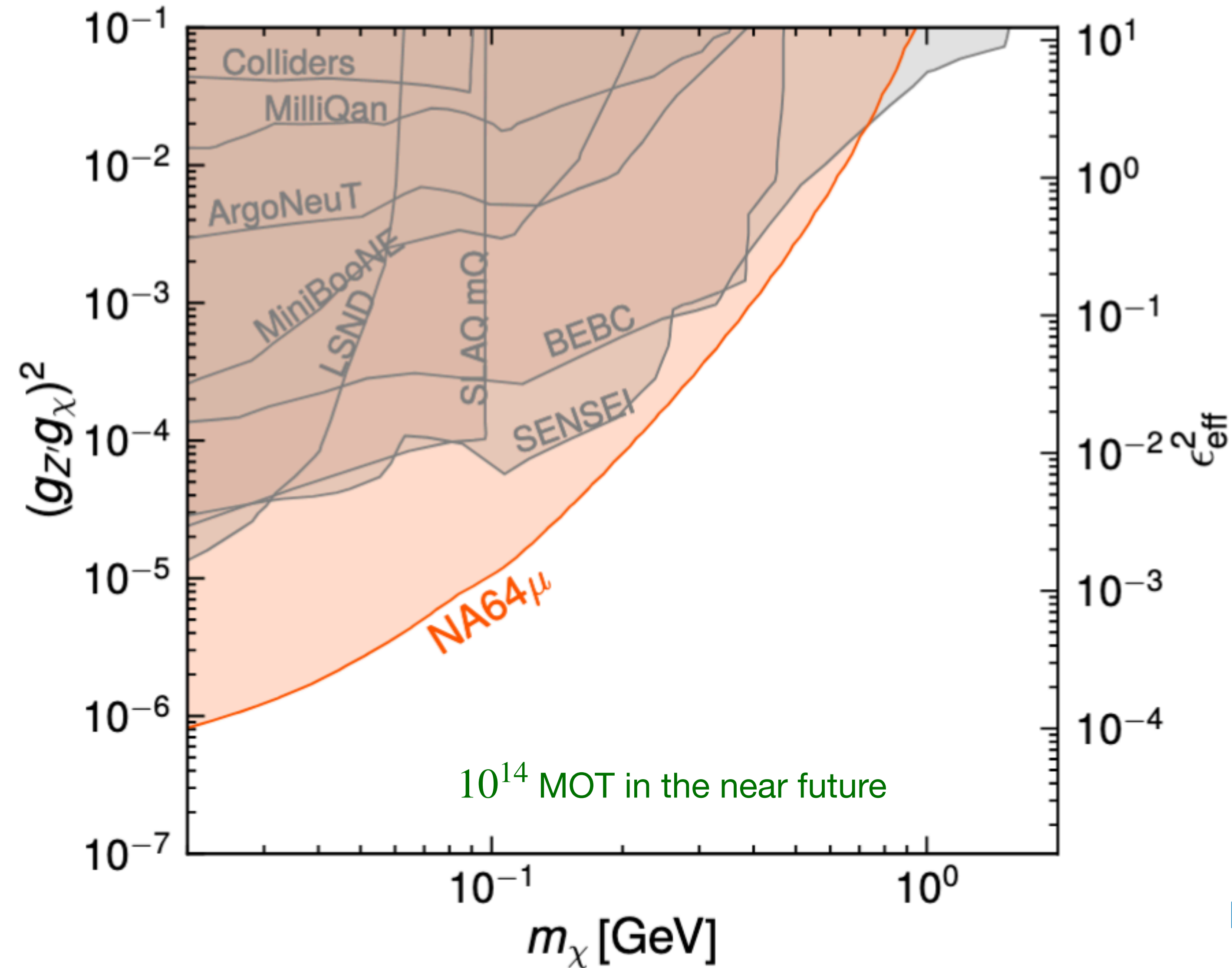


$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{kin}} \supset \frac{\Pi(q^2)}{2} Z'_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu}$$

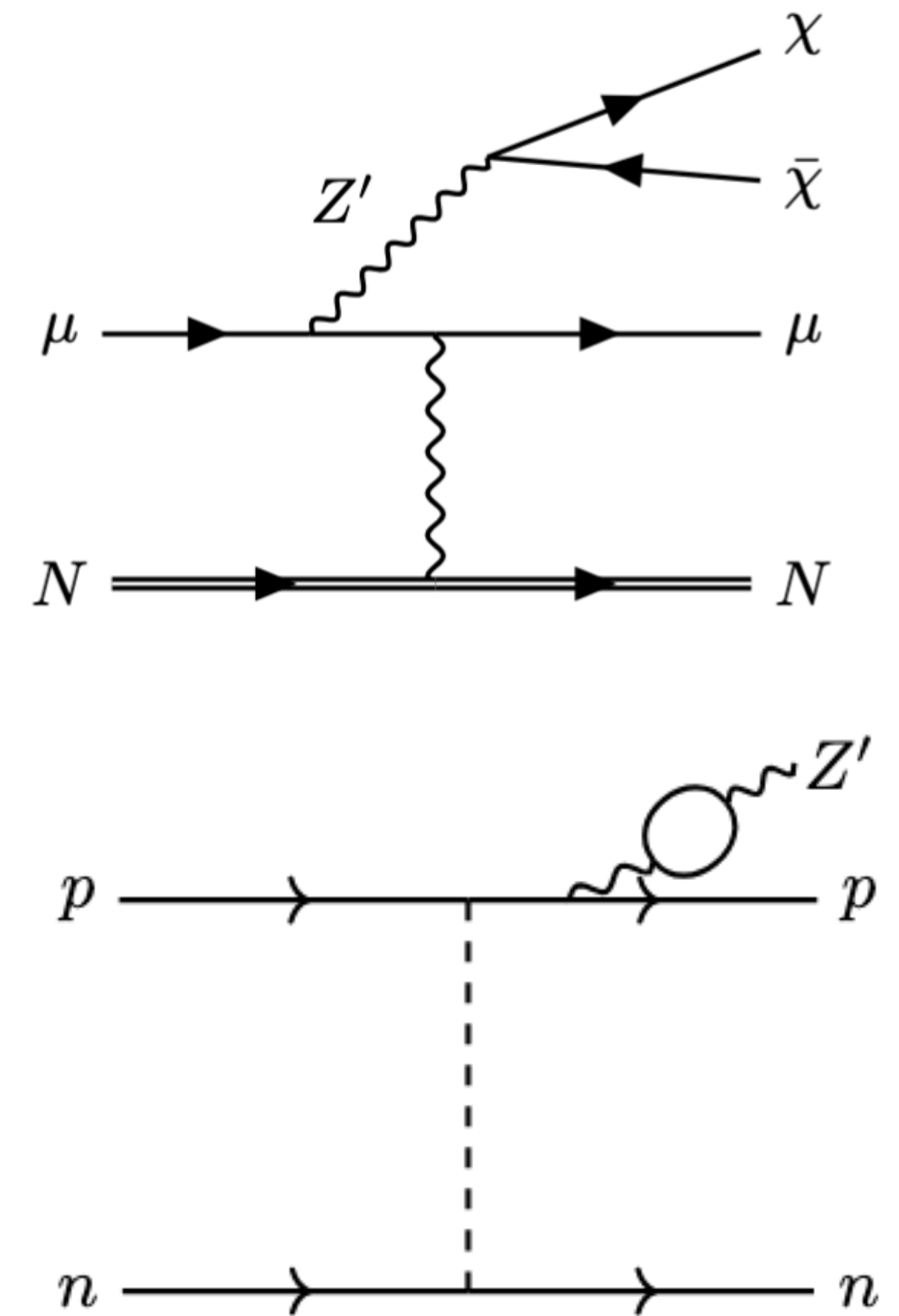
$$\Pi(q^2) = \frac{eg_{Z'}}{2\pi^2} \int_0^1 dx (1-x) \ln \frac{m_\tau^2 - x(1-x)q^2}{m_\mu^2 - x(1-x)q^2}$$

$$\epsilon_{\text{eff}} = \frac{g_{Z'} g_\chi}{2\pi^2} \int_0^1 dx (1-x) \ln \frac{m_\tau^2 - x(1-x)q^2}{m_\mu^2 - x(1-x)q^2}.$$

Constraints on Muonphilic Dark Sector

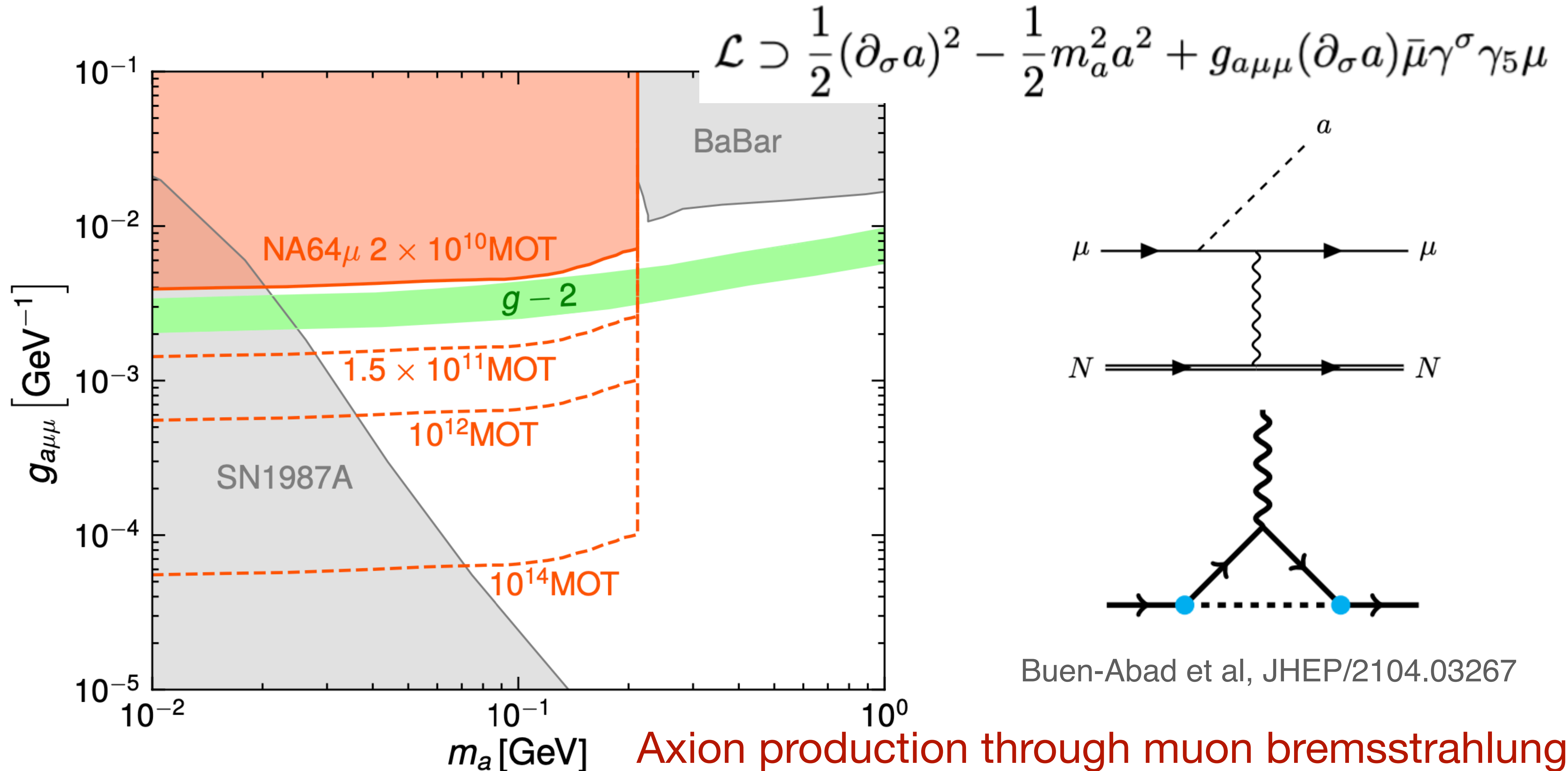


Croon et al, JHEP/2006.13942

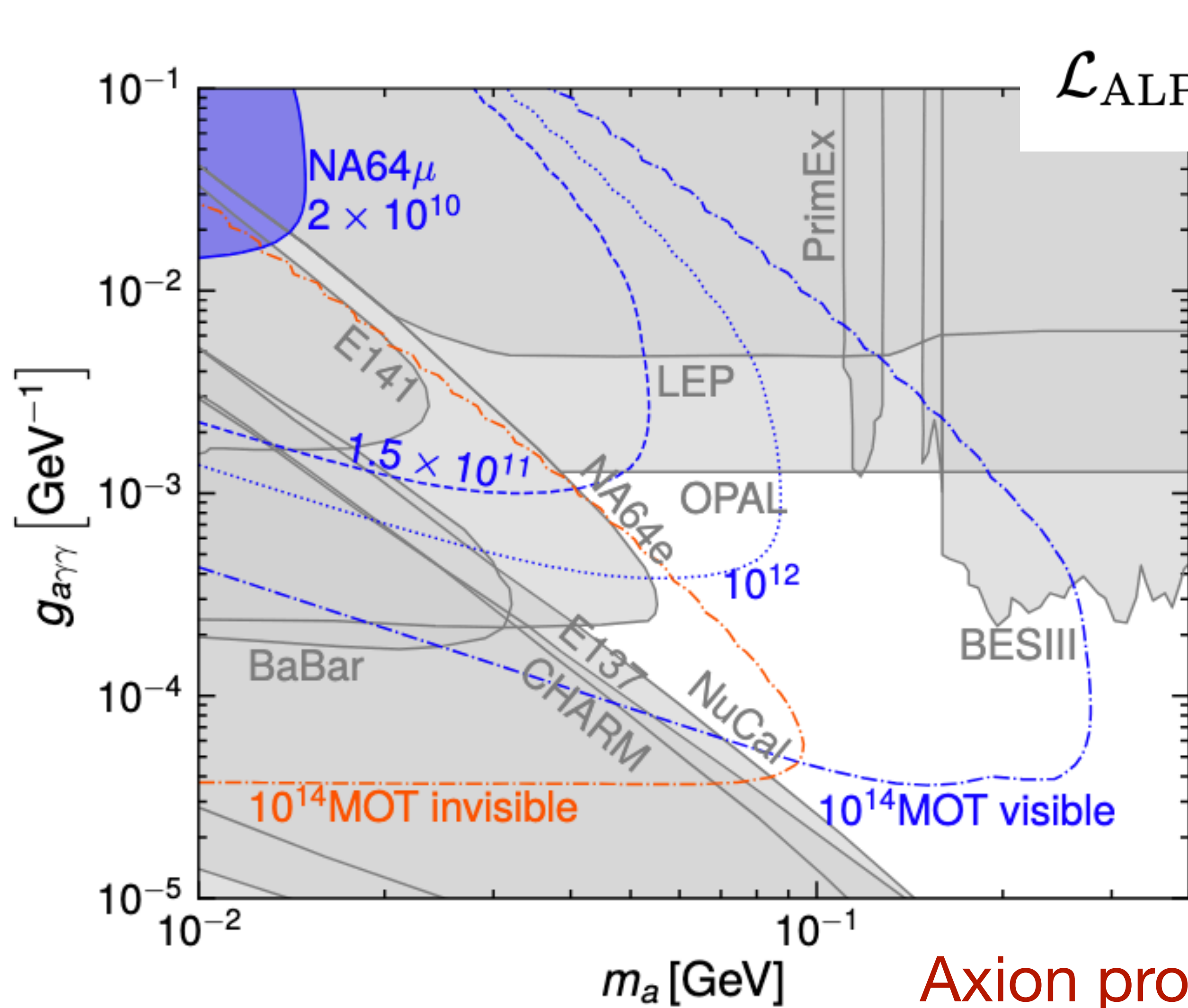


Li, Liu, NS, PRD/arXiv: 2501.06294

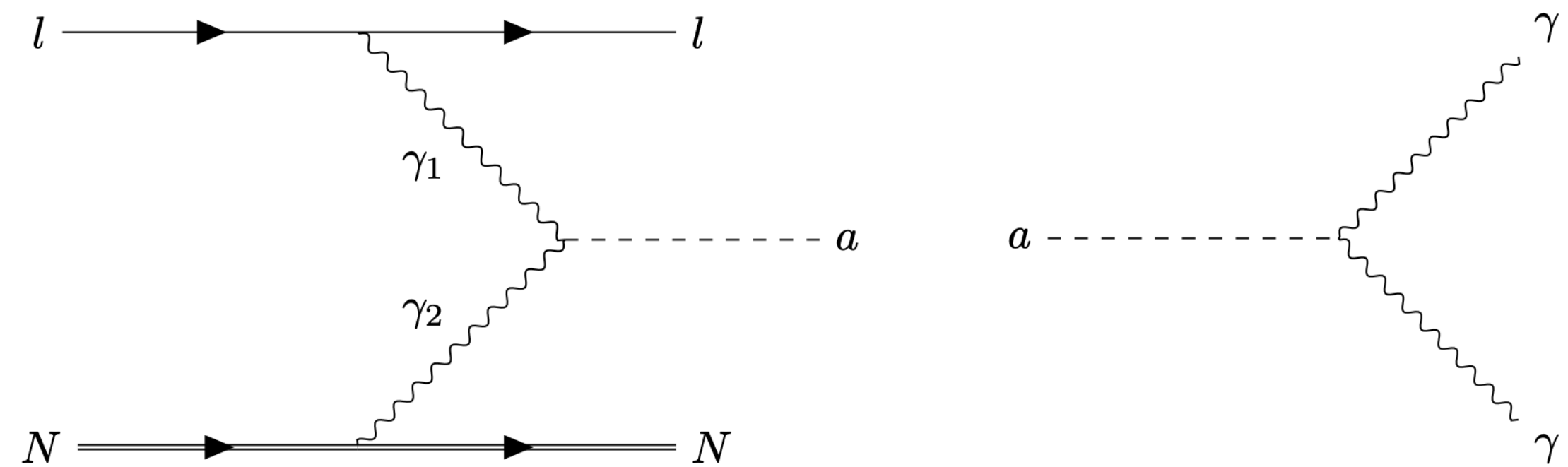
Constraints on Axion-Muon Interaction



Constraints on Axion-Photon Interaction



$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{ALP}} \supset \frac{1}{2} \partial_\mu a \partial^\mu a - \frac{1}{2} m_a^2 a^2 - \frac{1}{4} g_{a\gamma\gamma} a F_{\mu\nu} \tilde{F}^{\mu\nu}$$



Axion production through photon-photon fusion

Li, Liu, **NS**, PRD/arXiv: 2501.06294

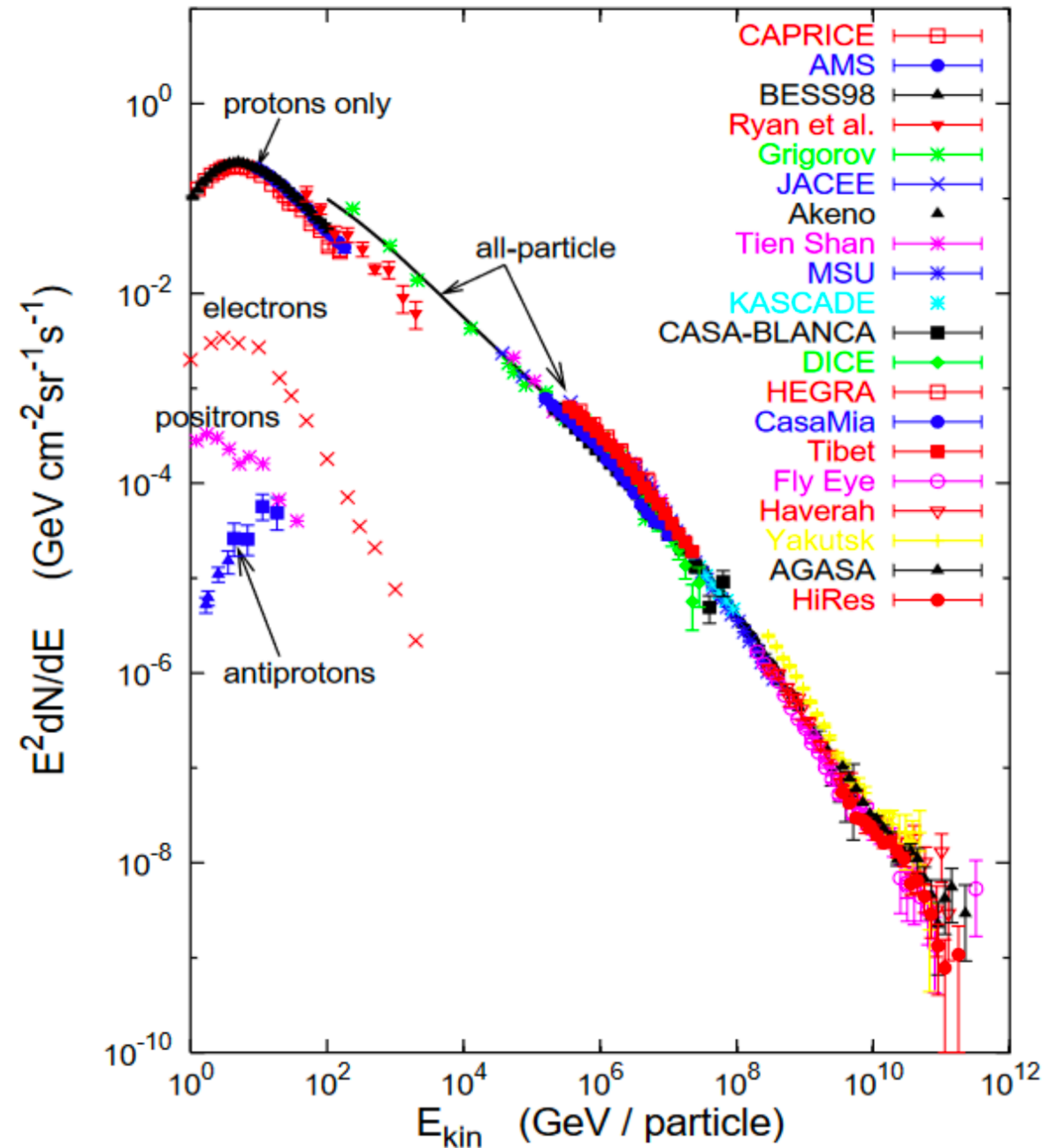
Summary

- Search for millicharged particles from atmospheric beam dump at JUNO and SuperK
- Multiple scattering could be more sensitive than single scattering
- Axion and flavor-specific dark sector could be searched with muon beam dump

谢谢

Atmospheric beam dump and new physics

- Heavy neutral leptons
- Hadrophilic dark matter
- Axion-like particles
- Long-lived neutralinos
- Monopoles
- Dark photon
- Millicharged particles
- ...



Millicharge particles from light meson decay

$$\Phi_{\chi}(\gamma_{\chi}) = 2 \sum_{\mathbf{m}} \text{BR}(\mathbf{m} \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi}) \int d\gamma_{\mathbf{m}} \Phi_{\mathbf{m}}(\gamma_{\mathbf{m}}) P(\gamma_{\chi}|\gamma_{\mathbf{m}})$$

Vector mesons $\rho, \omega, \phi, J/\psi$ decay to MCP pairs

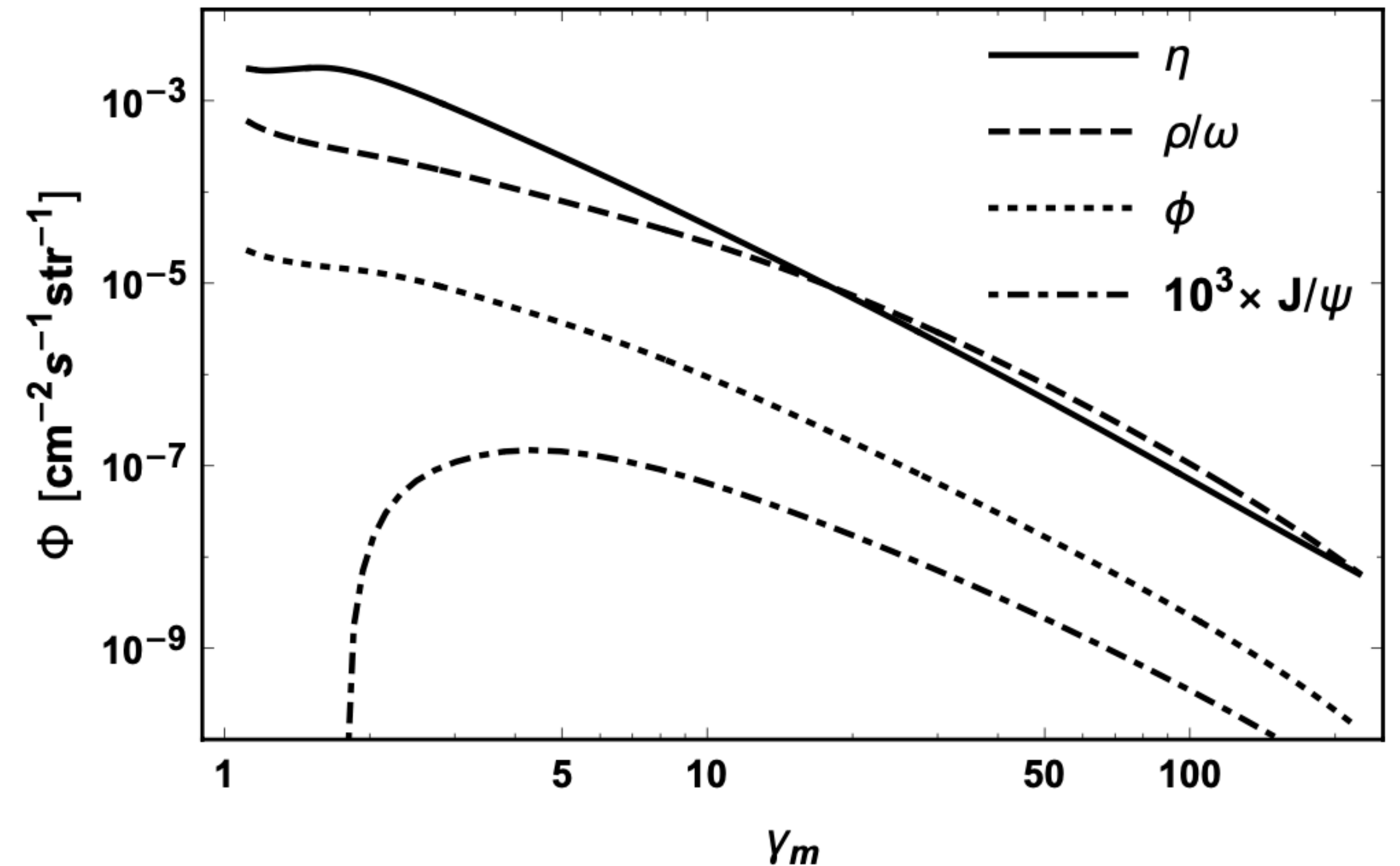
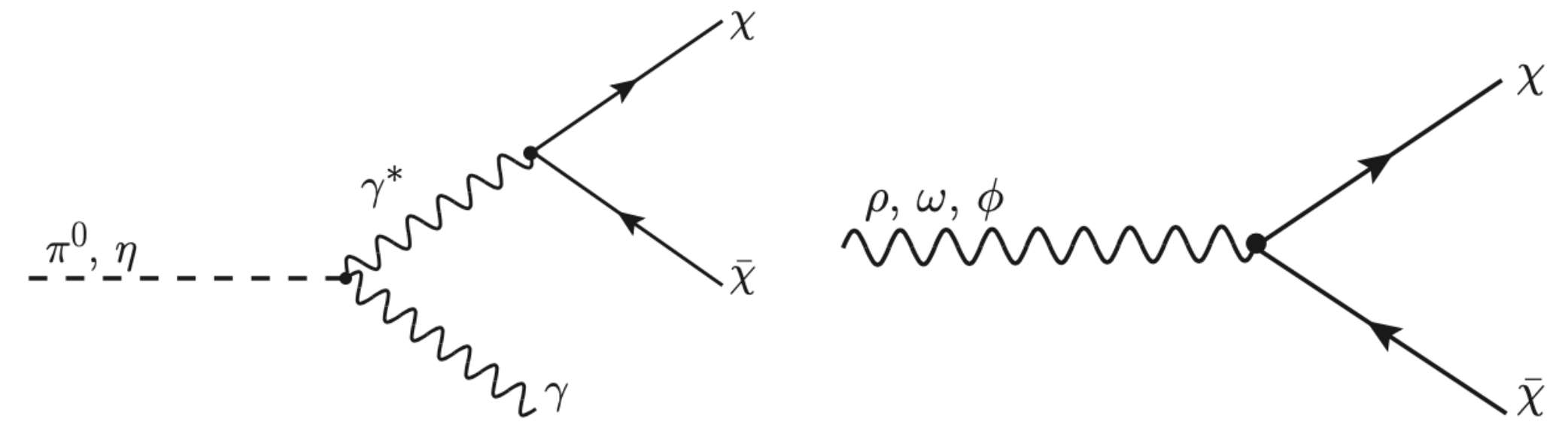
$$\frac{\text{BR}(\mathbf{m} \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi})}{\text{BR}(\mathbf{m} \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-)} = \epsilon^2 \sqrt{\frac{m_{\mathbf{m}}^2 - 4m_{\chi}^2}{m_{\mathbf{m}}^2 - 4m_{\mu}^2}}$$

$$P(E_{\chi}|E_{\mathbf{m}}) = \frac{1}{\Gamma_{\mathbf{m}}} \frac{d\Gamma_{\mathbf{m}}}{dE_{\chi}} = \frac{1}{E_{\chi}^+ - E_{\chi}^-}$$

η decay to MCP pairs+photon

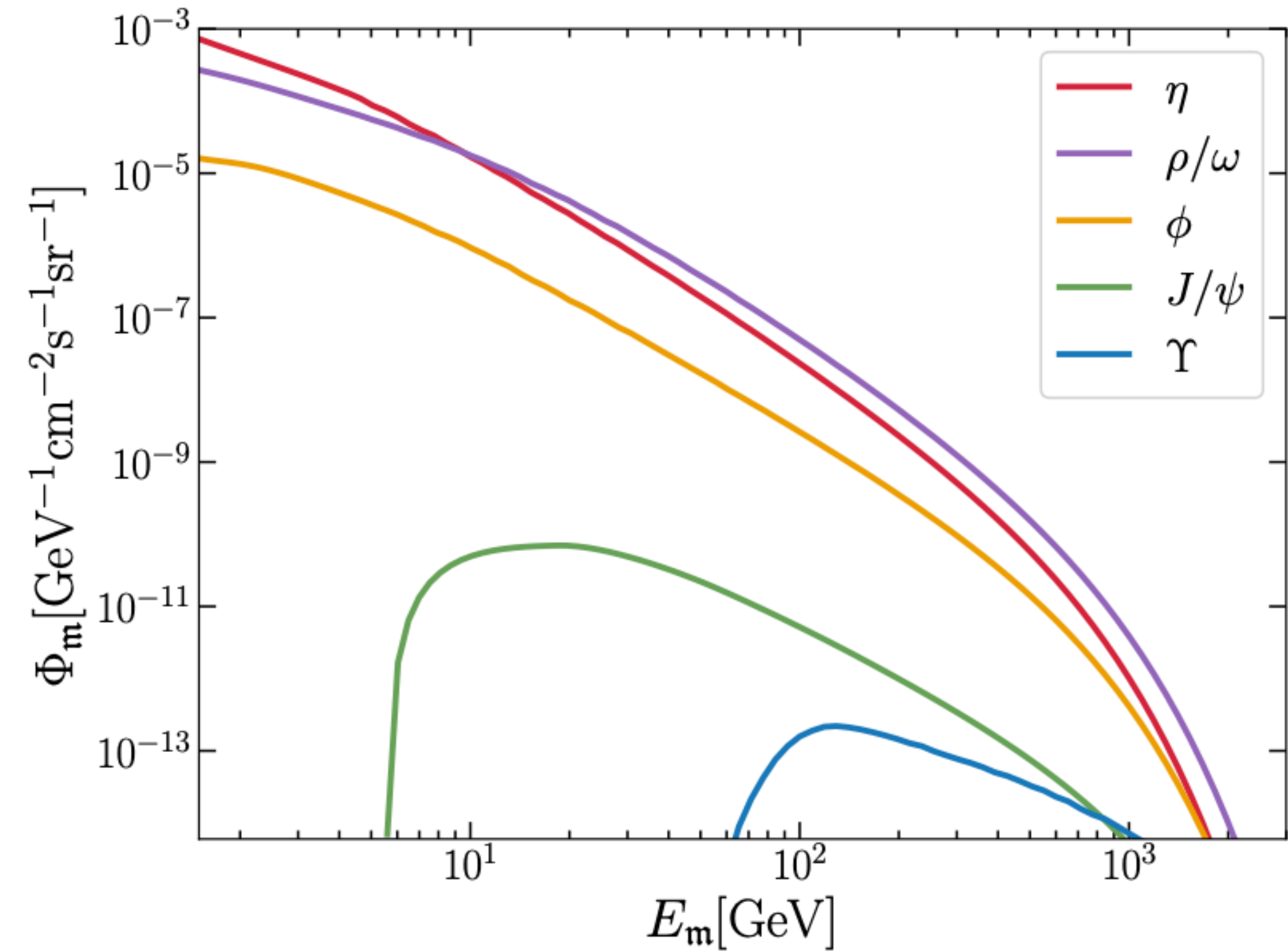
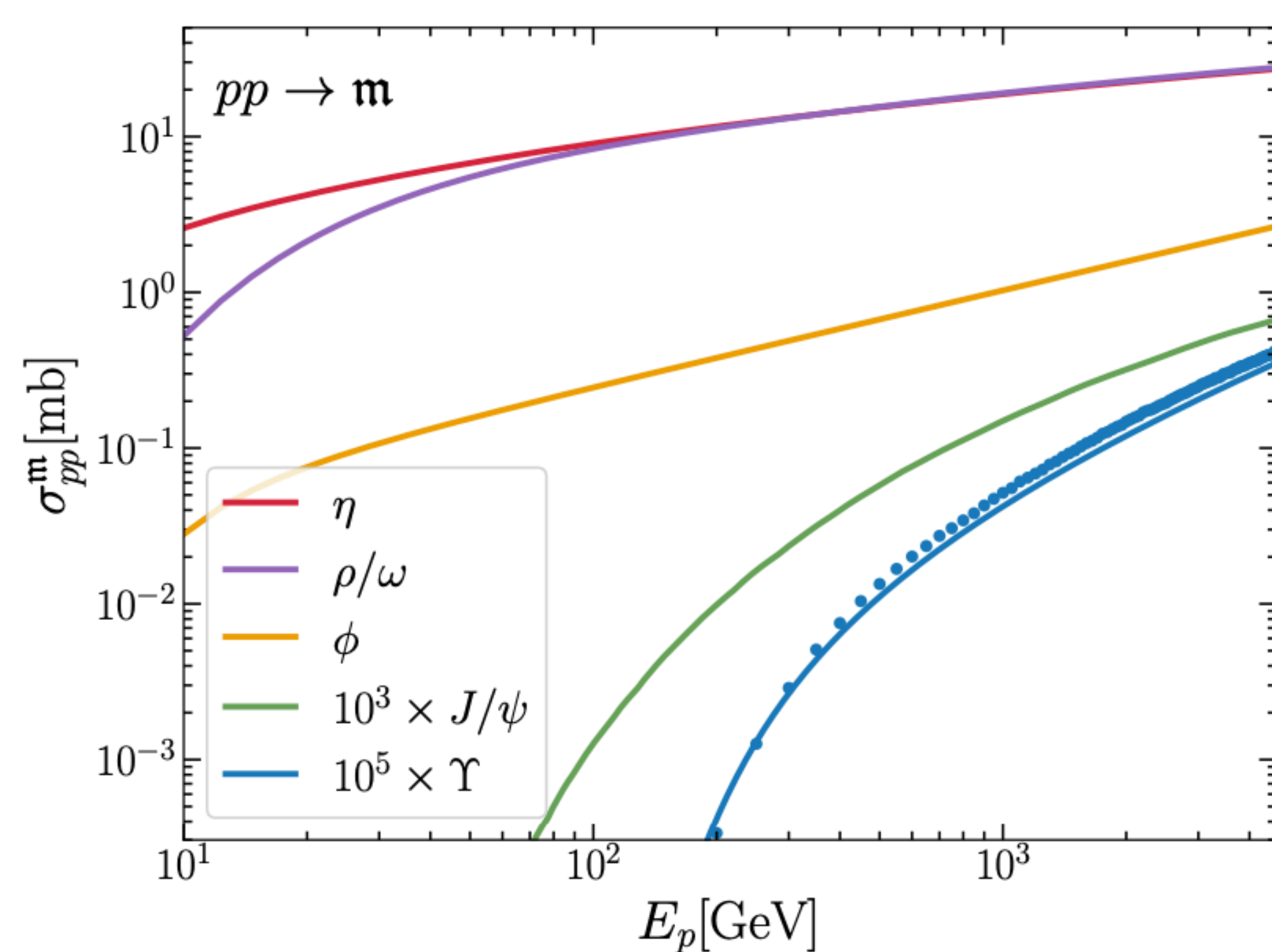
$$\text{BR}(\eta \rightarrow \gamma\chi\chi) = 2\epsilon^2\alpha\text{BR}(\eta \rightarrow \gamma\gamma)I^{(3)}\left(\frac{m_{\chi}^2}{m_{\eta}^2}\right)$$

$$\frac{1}{\Gamma_{\eta}} \frac{d\Gamma_{\eta}}{dz} = \frac{m_{\eta} - z}{72z^3 F_1(m_{\chi})} F_2(z, m_{\chi})$$



Millicharge Particles from Upsilon Meson Decay

Pythia8 simulations



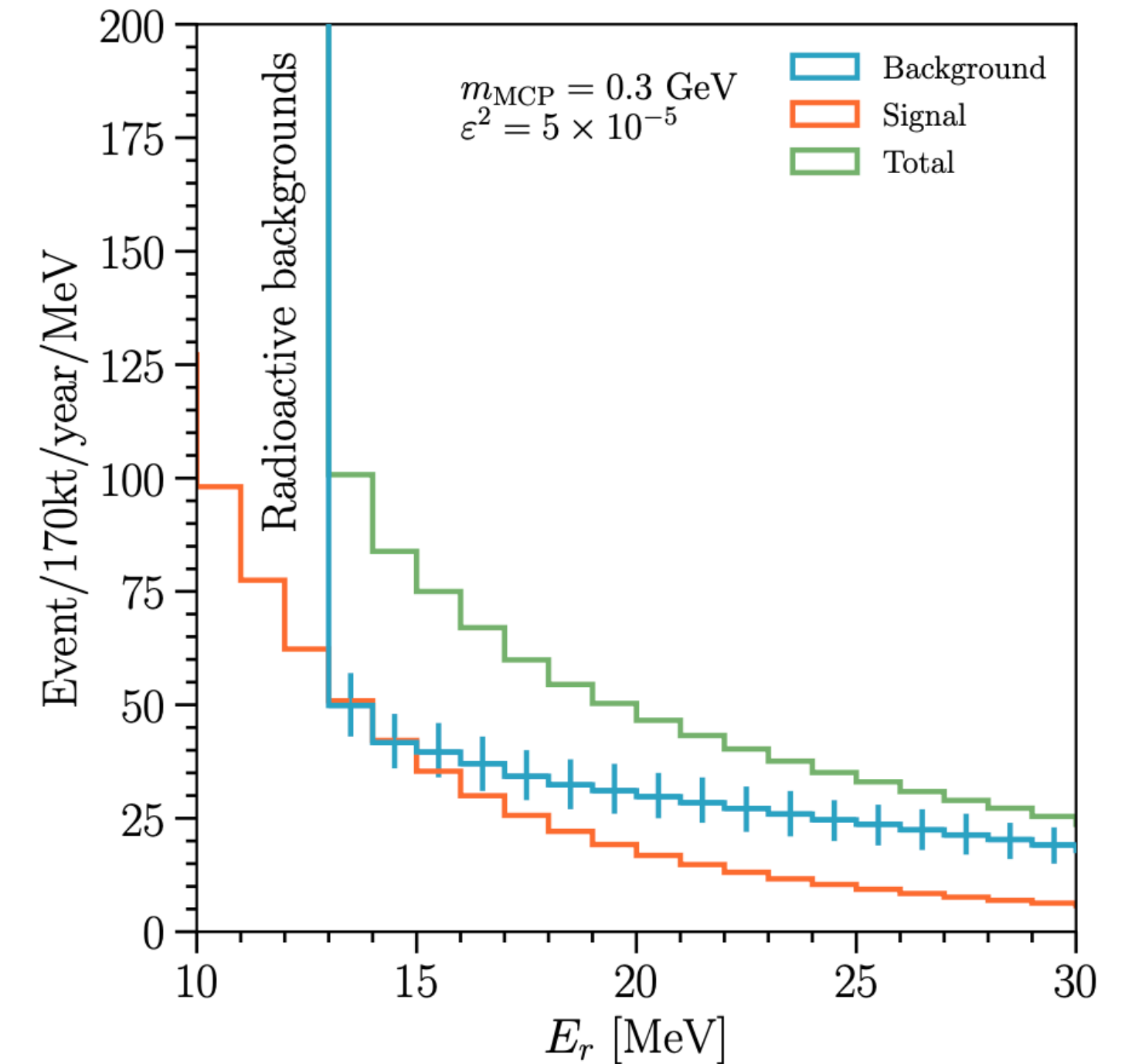
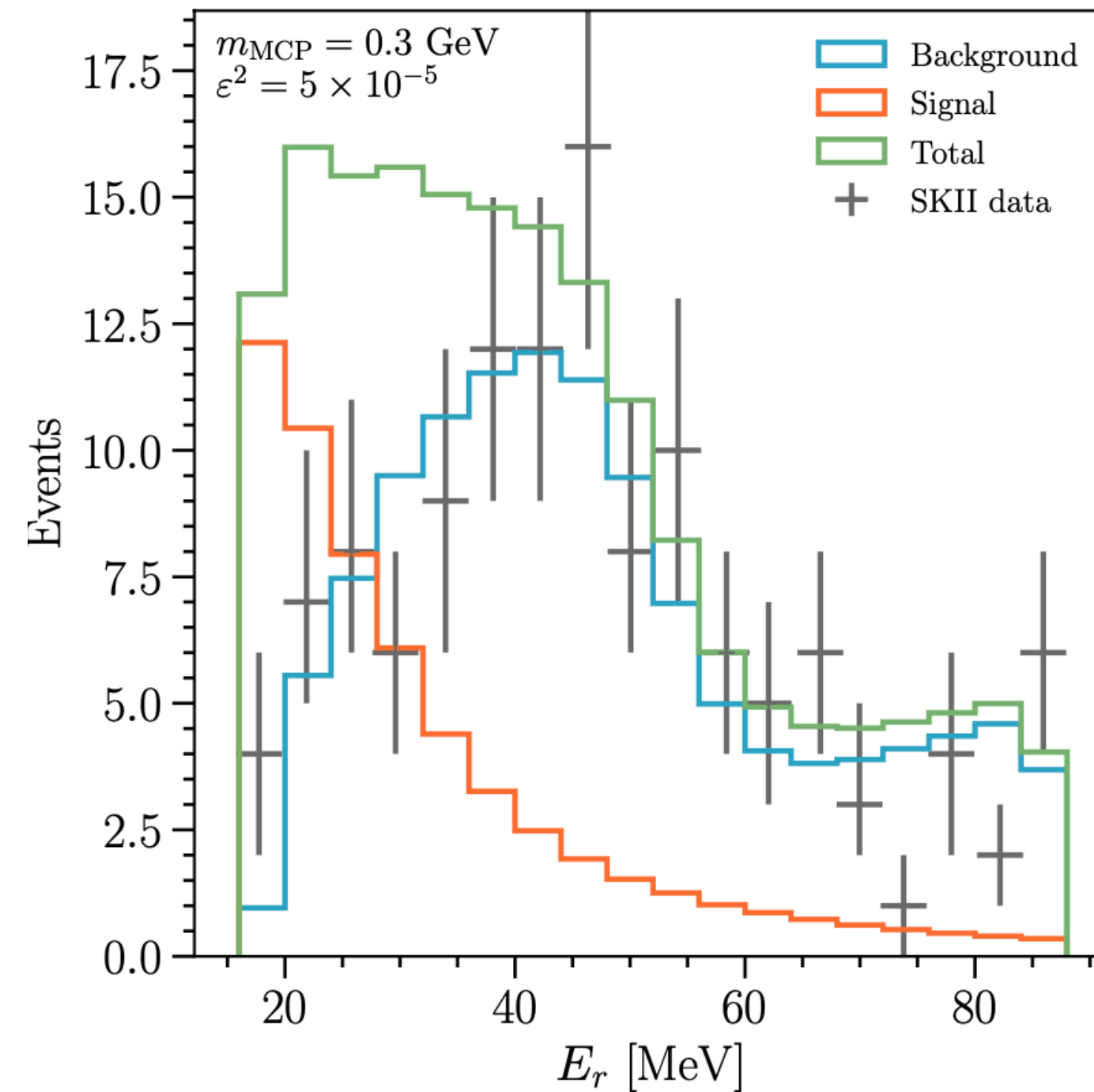
Wu, Hardy, **NS**, PRD/arXiv: 2406.01668

Single scatter

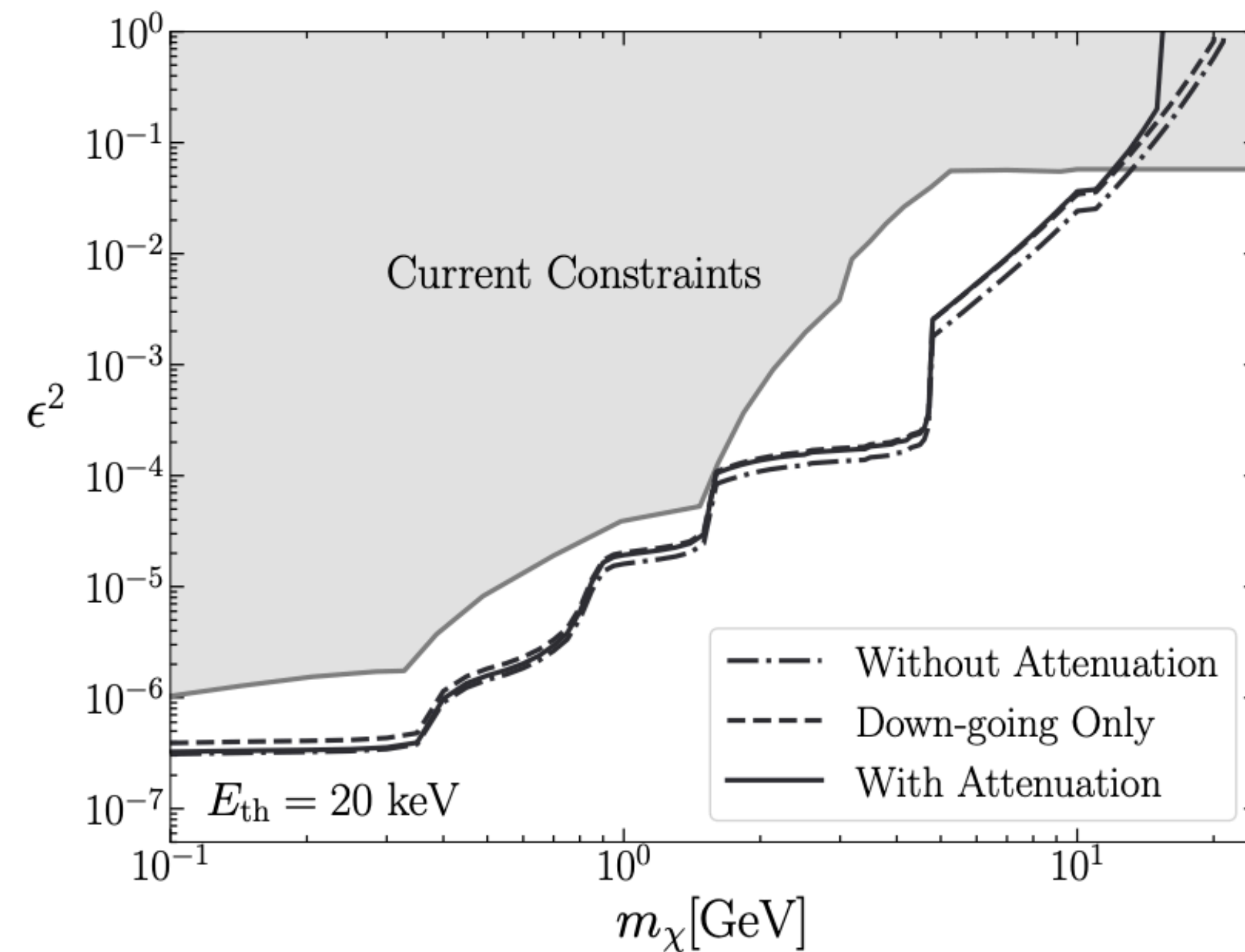
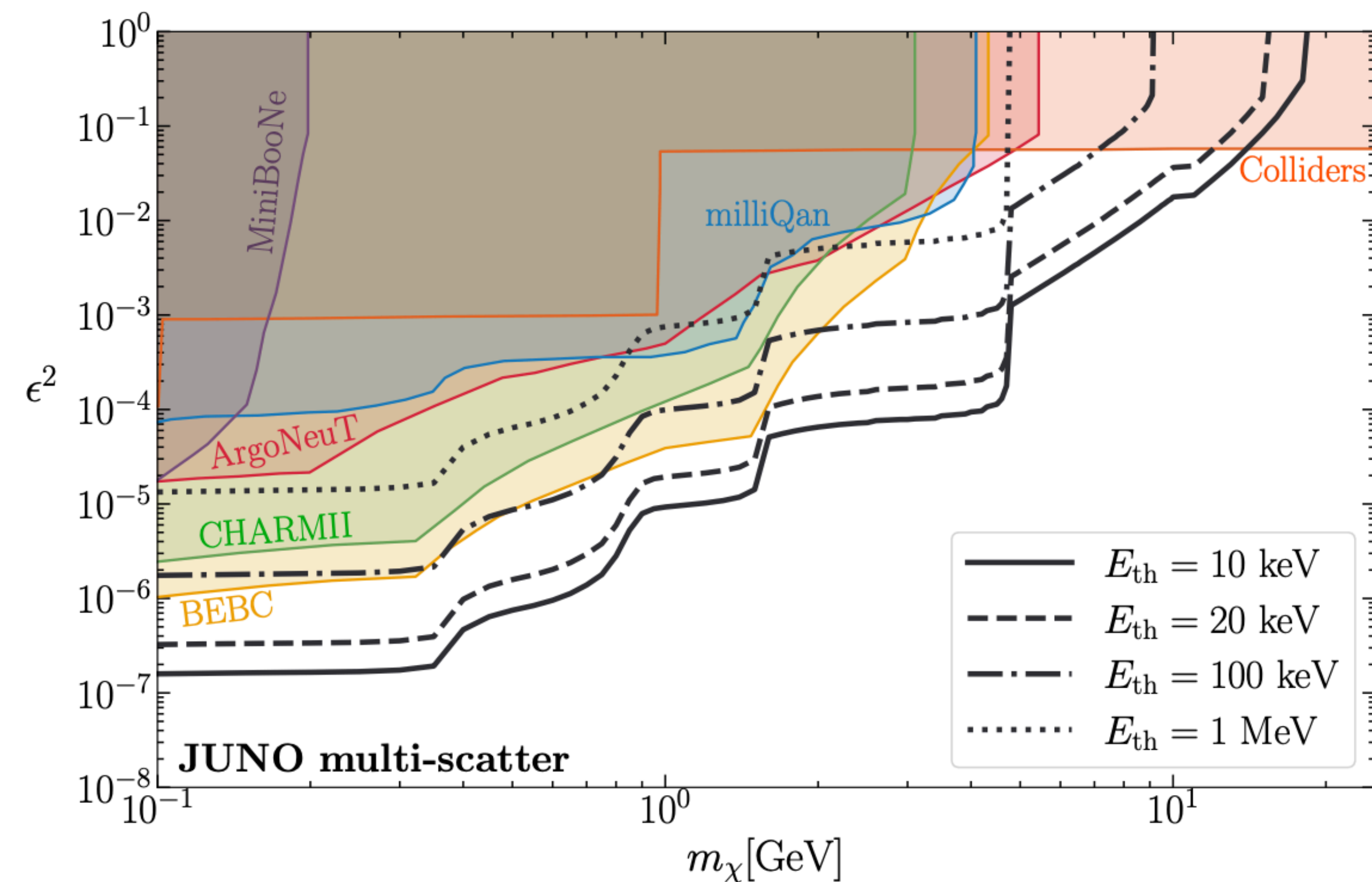
Elastic scattering
$$\frac{d\sigma_{\chi e}}{dE_r} = \pi\epsilon^2\alpha^2 \frac{(E_r^2 + 2E_\chi^2)m_e - ((2E_\chi + m_e)m_e + m_\chi^2) E_r}{E_r^2 m_e^2 (E_\chi^2 - m_\chi^2)}$$

$$d\sigma_{\chi e}/dE_r \propto 1/E_r^2 \quad \sigma_{\chi e} \simeq \frac{\pi\alpha_{EM}\epsilon^2}{m_e T_{\min}} = 2.6 \times 10^{-25} \epsilon^2 \text{ cm}^2 \frac{\text{MeV}}{T_{\min}}$$

$$N_i(m_\chi, \epsilon) = N_e T \int_{E_{i,\min}}^{E_{i,\max}} dE_r \epsilon_D(E_r) \times \int dE_\chi d\Omega \Phi_\chi^D(E_\chi, \Omega) \frac{d\sigma_{\chi e}}{dE_r}$$



Multiple scatter constraint

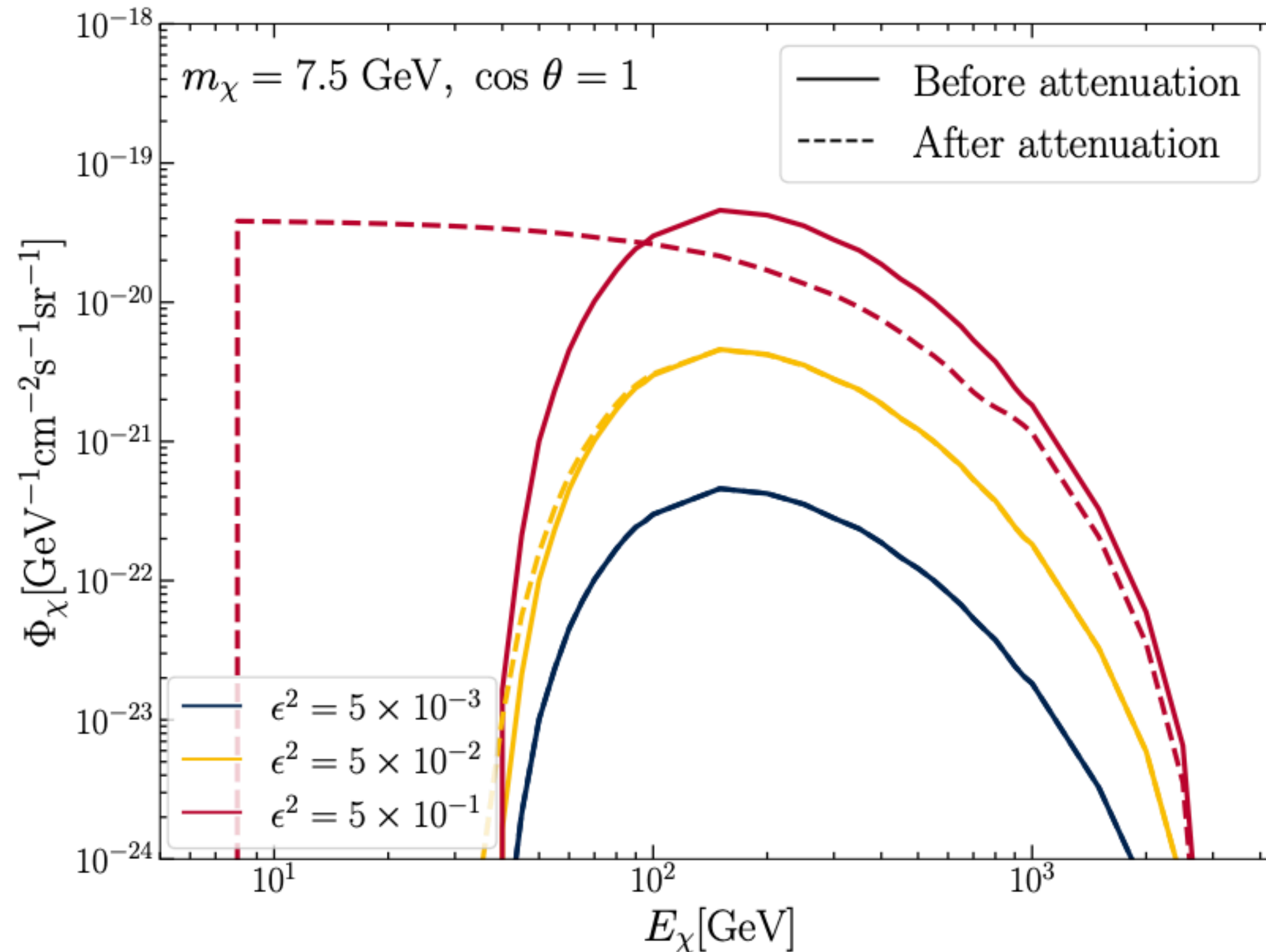


Assuming JUNO 170 kton·yr exposure

Wu, Hardy, **NS**, arXiv: 2406.01668

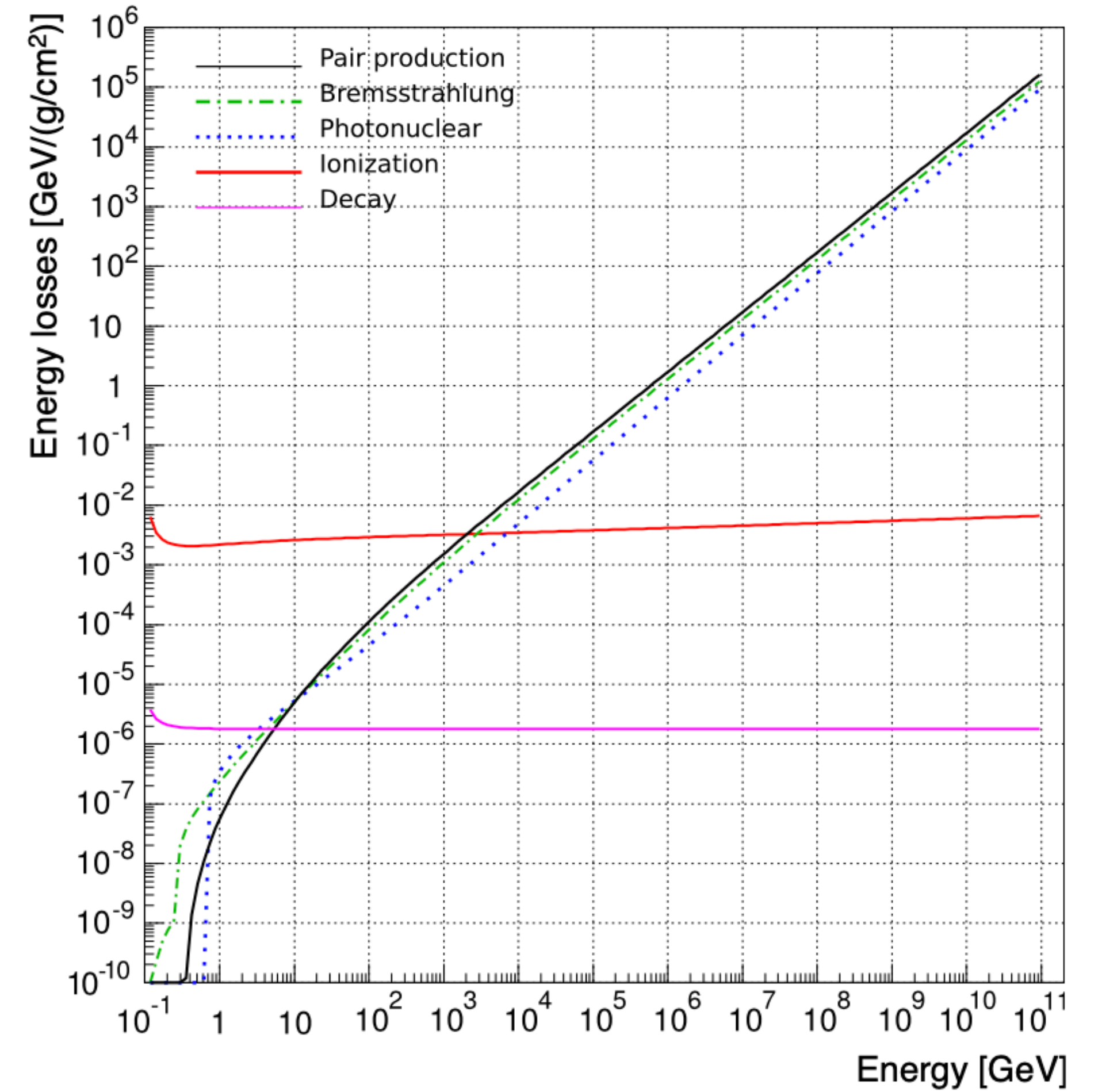
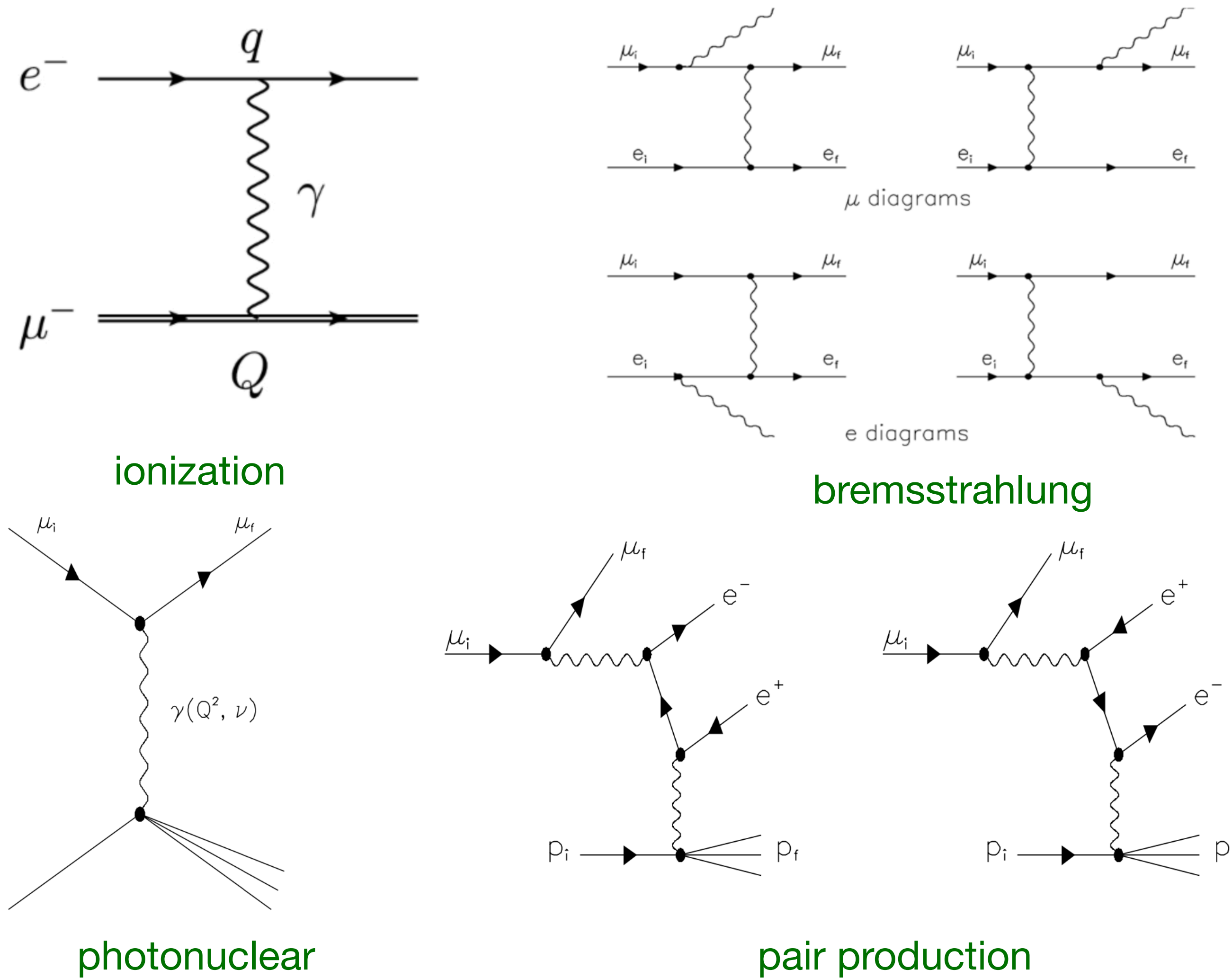
Earth Attenuation

$$-\frac{dE}{dX} = \varepsilon^2 \left(a_{\text{ion.}} + b_{\text{el.-brem.}} \varepsilon^2 E + b_{\text{inel.-brem.}} E + b_{\text{pair}} E + b_{\text{photo-had.}} E \right) \approx \varepsilon^2 (a + bE)$$



For $\varepsilon^2 \gtrsim 10^{-2}$, the down-going flux becomes significantly attenuated

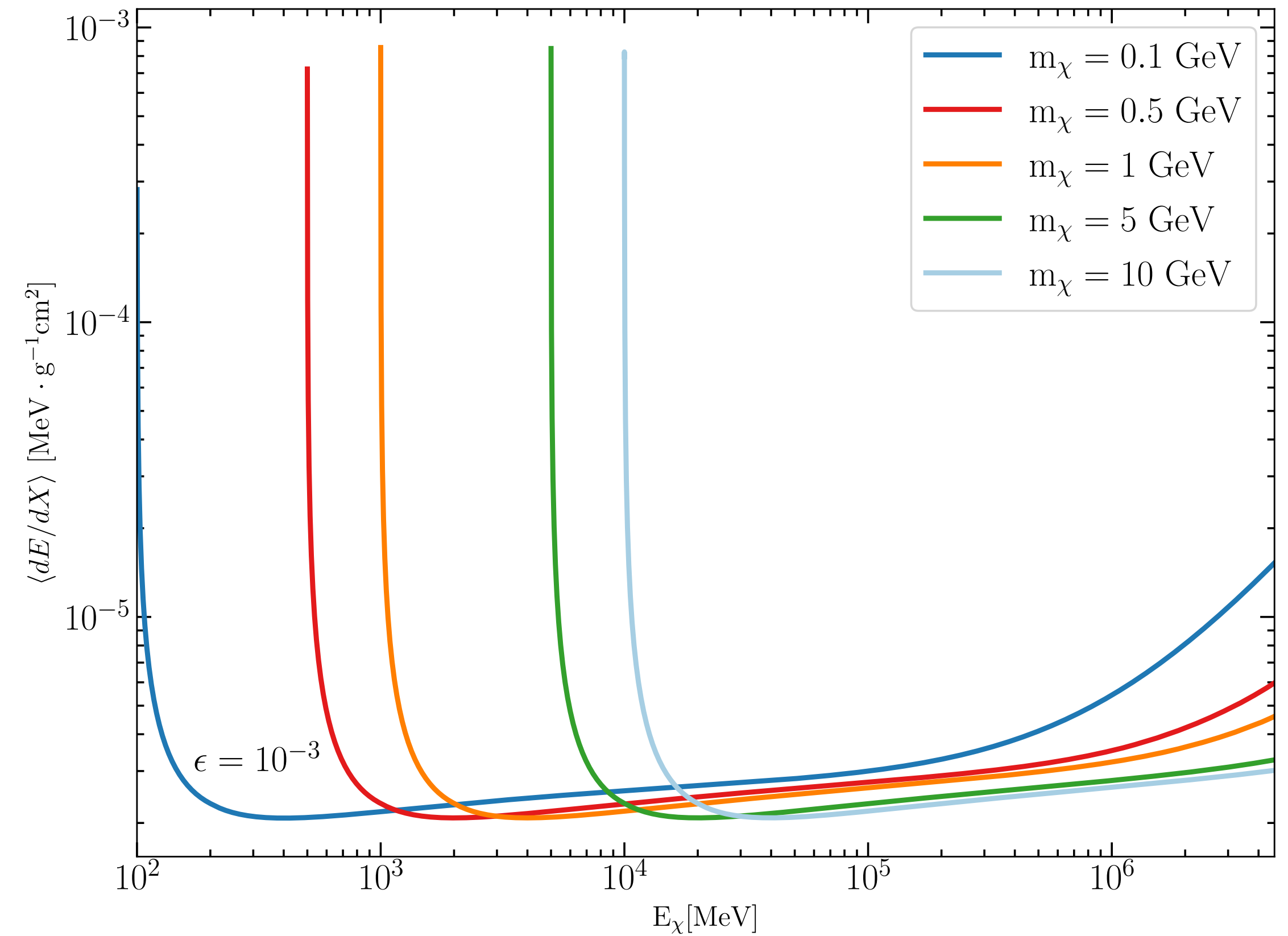
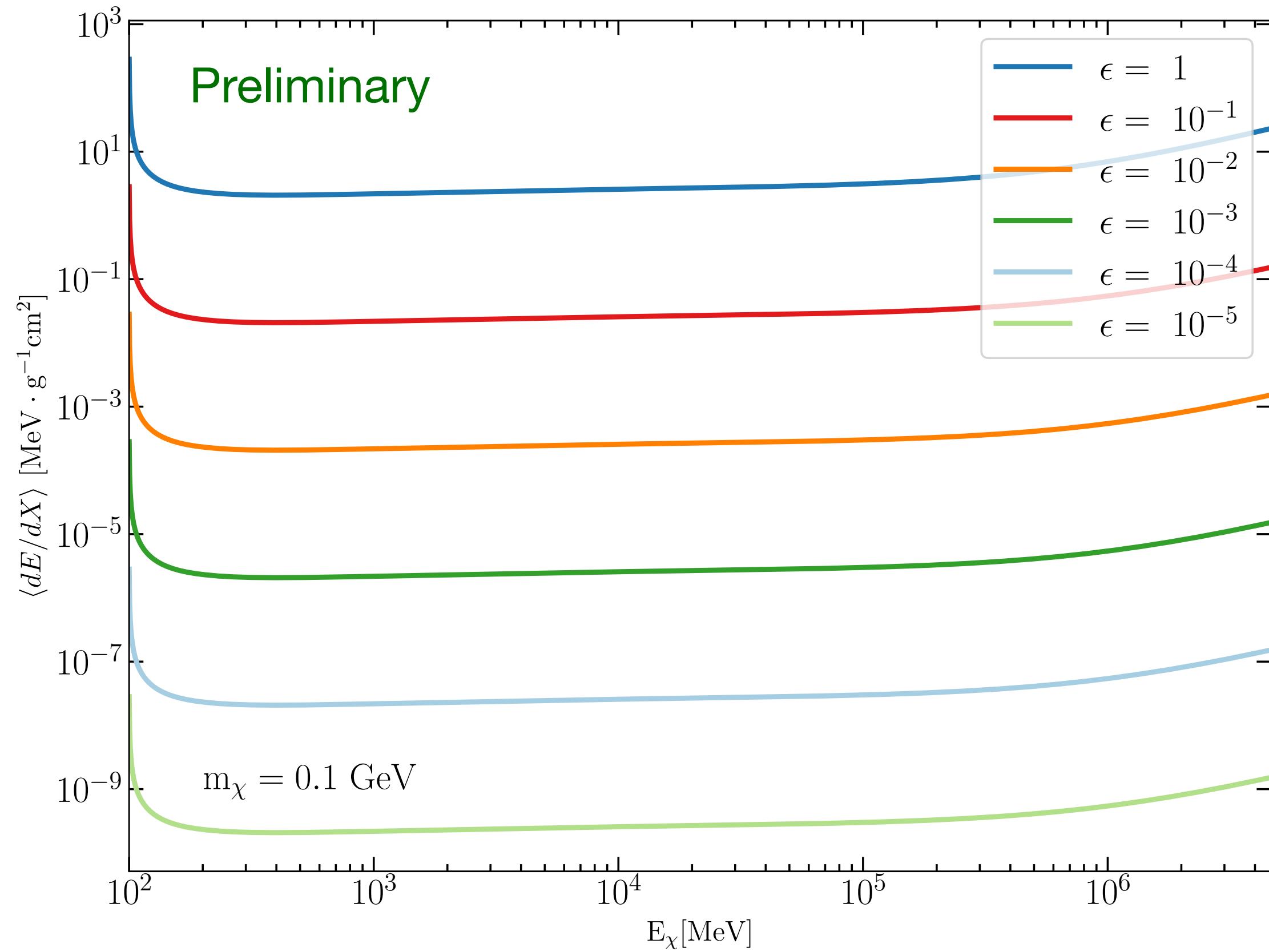
Muon Energy Loss



Koehne et al PROPOSAL

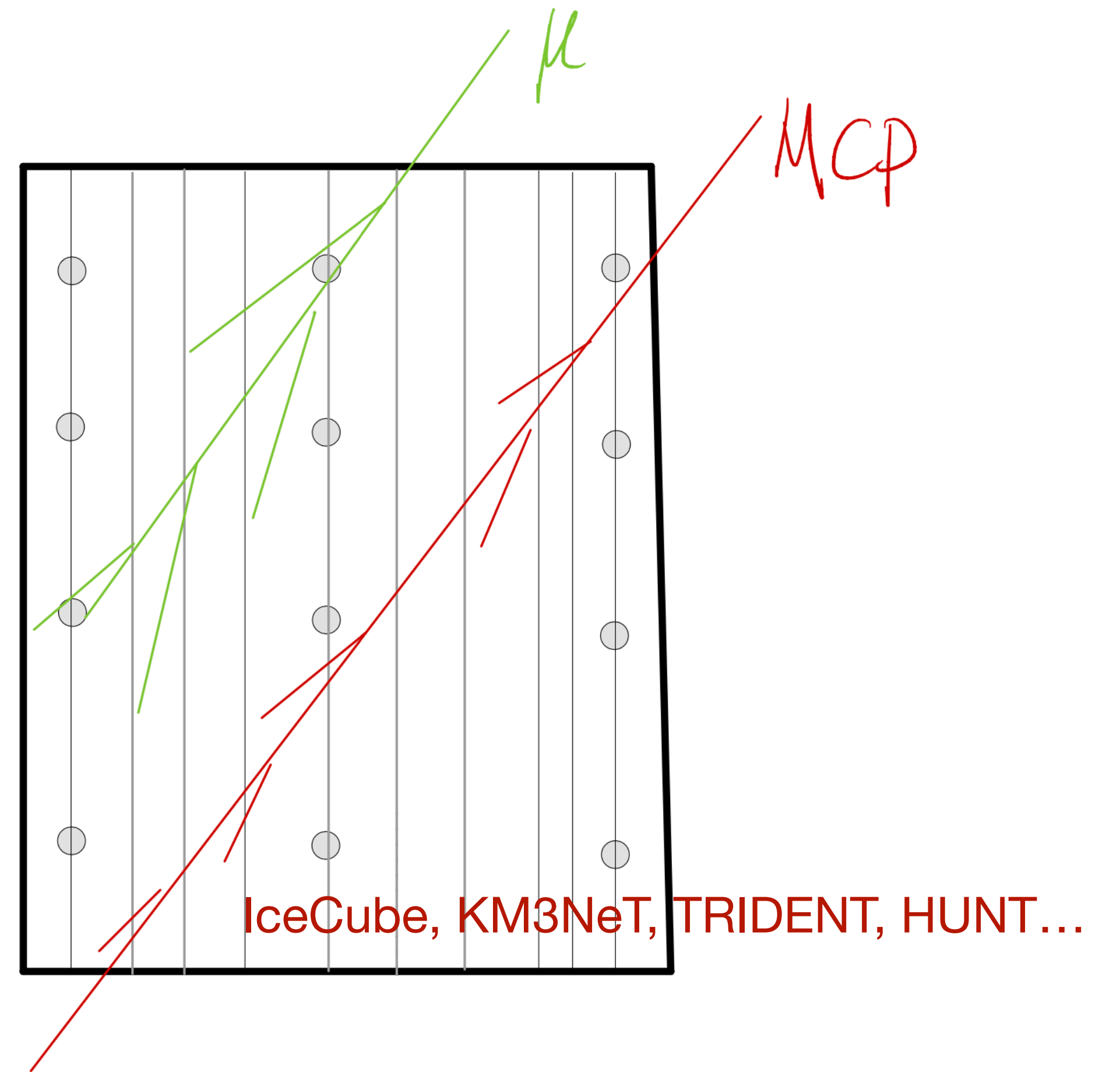
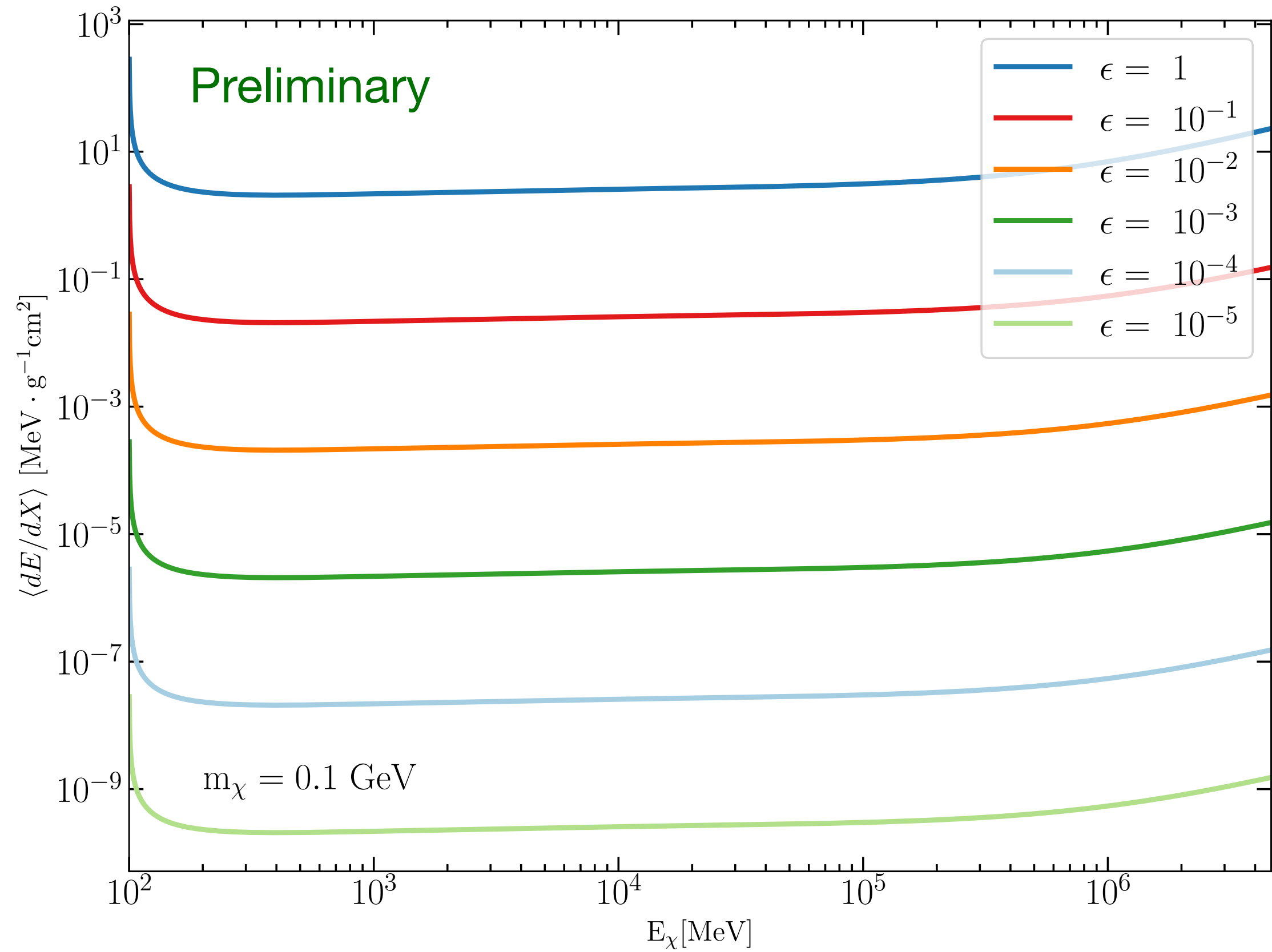
MCP Energy Loss

$$-\frac{dE}{dX} = \varepsilon^2 \left(a_{\text{ion.}} + b_{\text{el.-brem.}} \varepsilon^2 E + b_{\text{inel.-brem.}} E + b_{\text{pair}} E + b_{\text{photo-had.}} E \right) \approx \varepsilon^2 (a + bE)$$

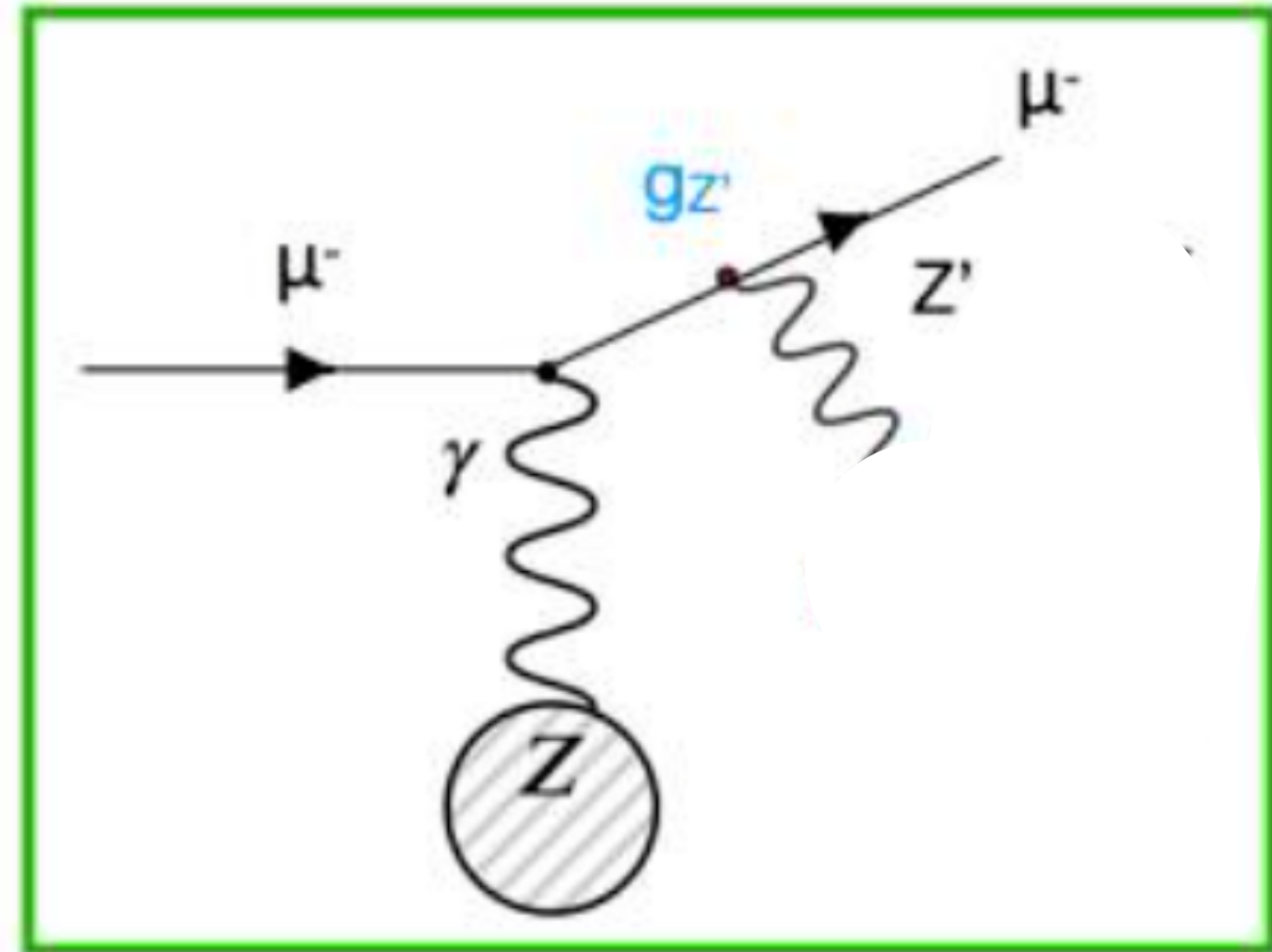


MCP at Neutrino Telescopes

$$-\frac{dE}{dX} = \varepsilon^2 (a_{\text{ion.}} + b_{\text{el.-brem.}} \varepsilon^2 E + b_{\text{inel.-brem.}} E + b_{\text{pair}} E + b_{\text{photo-had.}} E) \approx \varepsilon^2 (a + bE)$$



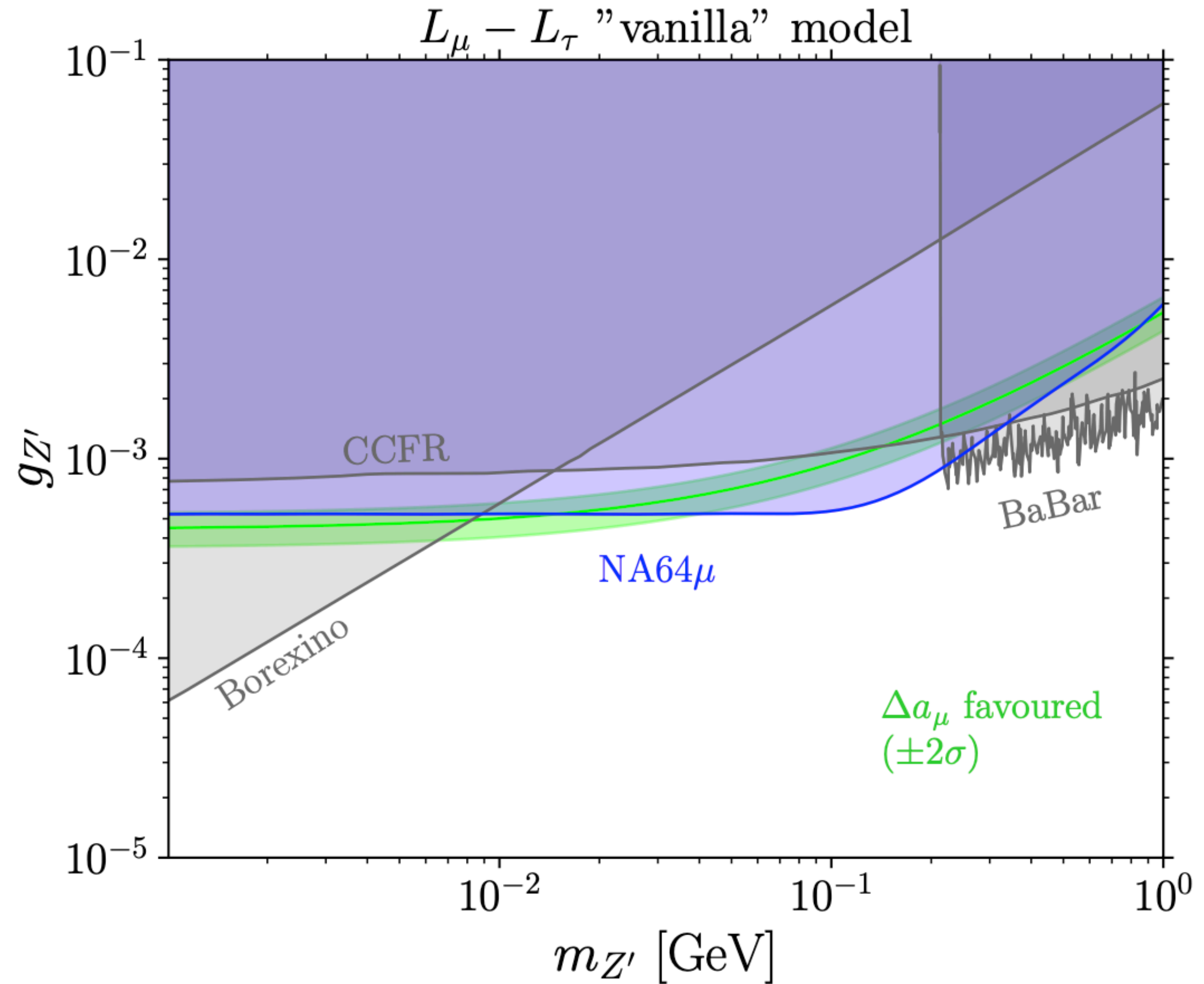
New Physics Search at NA64 μ



$$Z' \rightarrow \nu\bar{\nu}$$

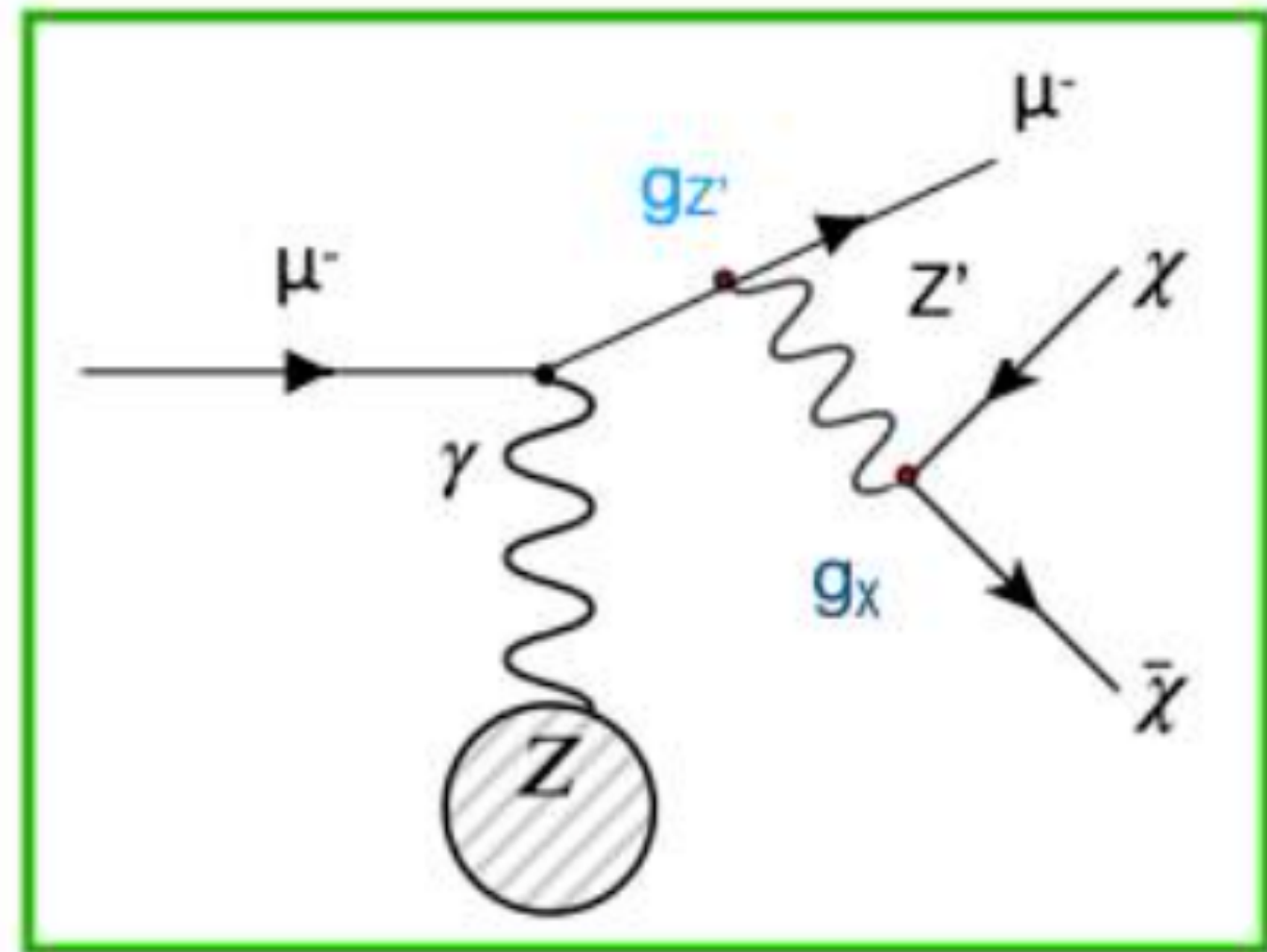
$$Z' \rightarrow \mu\bar{\mu}$$

Search for missing energy



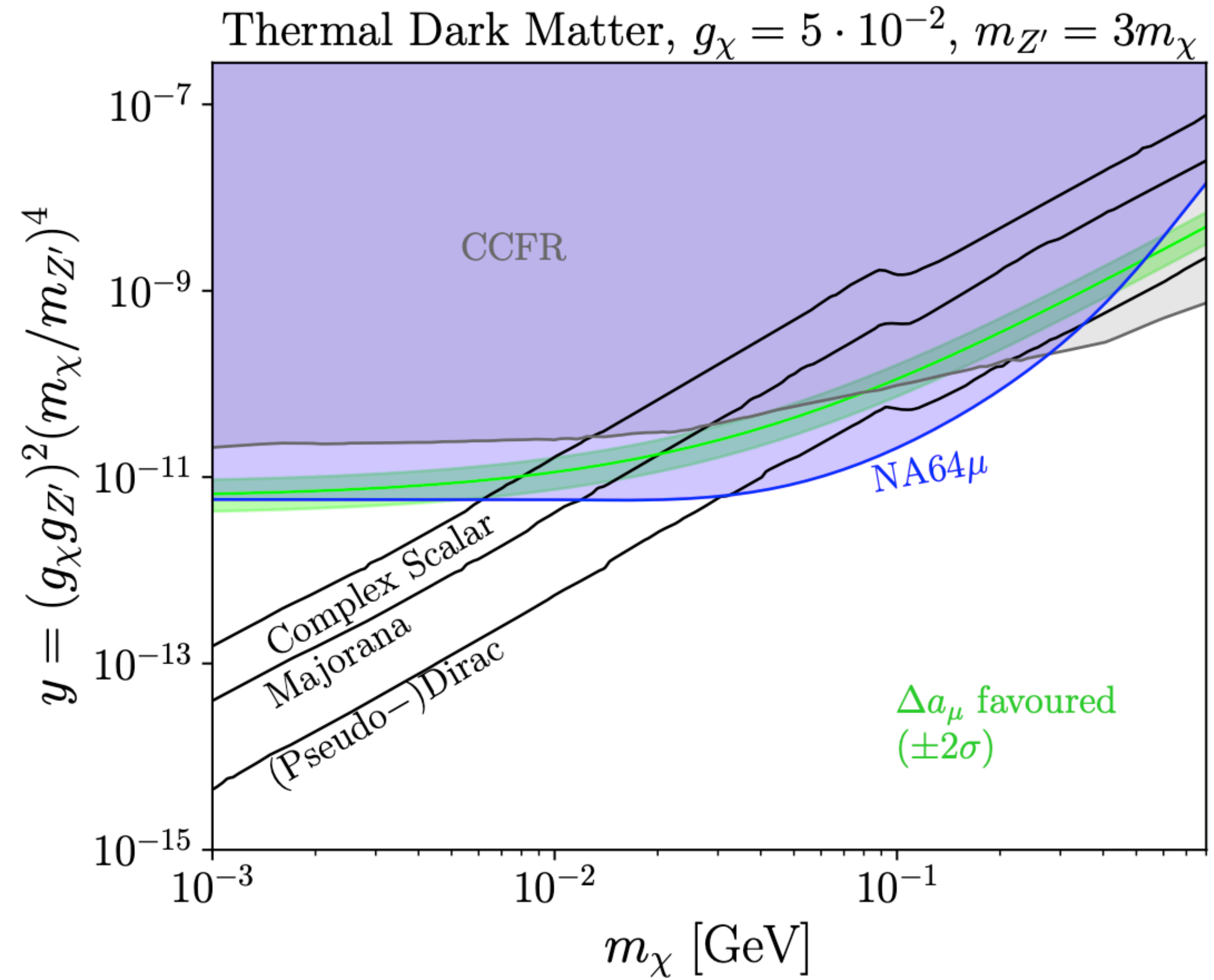
NA64 collaboration, PRL/2401.01708

New Physics Search at NA64 μ



$$Z' \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi}$$

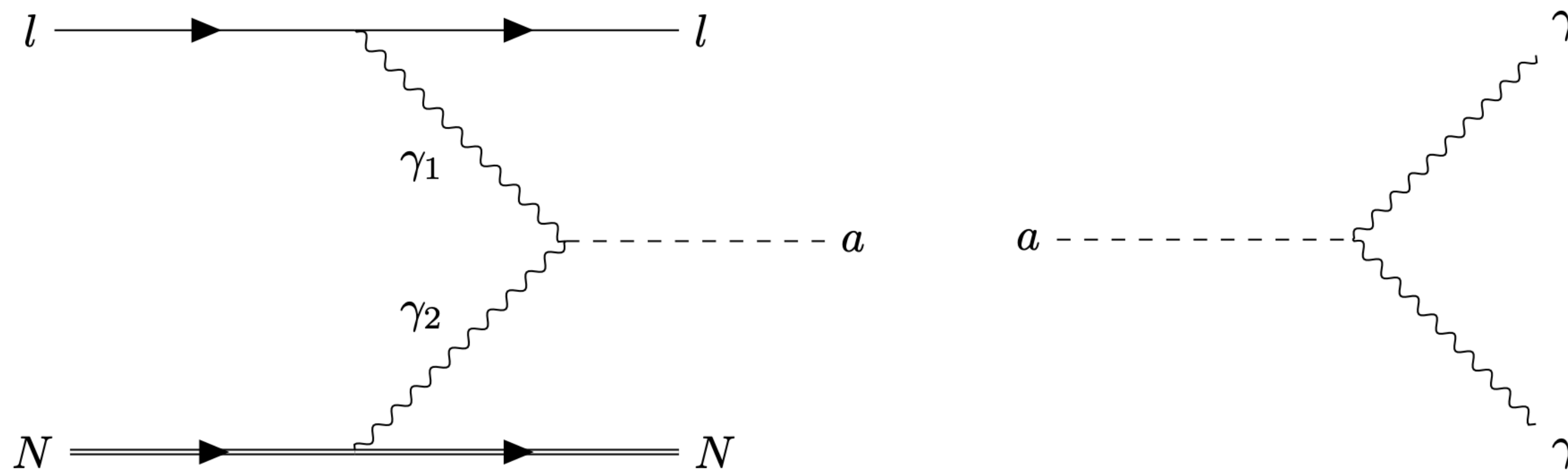
Search for missing energy



NA64 collaboration, PRL/2401.01708

Axion-Photon Interaction

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{ALP}} \supset \frac{1}{2} \partial_\mu a \partial^\mu a - \frac{1}{2} m_a^2 a^2 - \frac{1}{4} g_{a\gamma\gamma} a F_{\mu\nu} \tilde{F}^{\mu\nu}$$



Axion production through photon-photon fusion

Cross Section

$$N_{\text{signal}} = N_{\text{MOT}} n_{\text{Pb}} L_{\text{tar}} \int d\sigma(\mu N \rightarrow \mu N X) \epsilon P_{\text{inv}}$$

Weizsacker-William approximation

$$\frac{d\sigma}{dx} = \frac{\alpha}{8\pi^2} \sqrt{E_a^2 - m_a^2} E_\mu (1-x) \int d\cos\theta \frac{\chi}{\tilde{u}^2} \mathcal{A}$$

effective photon flux

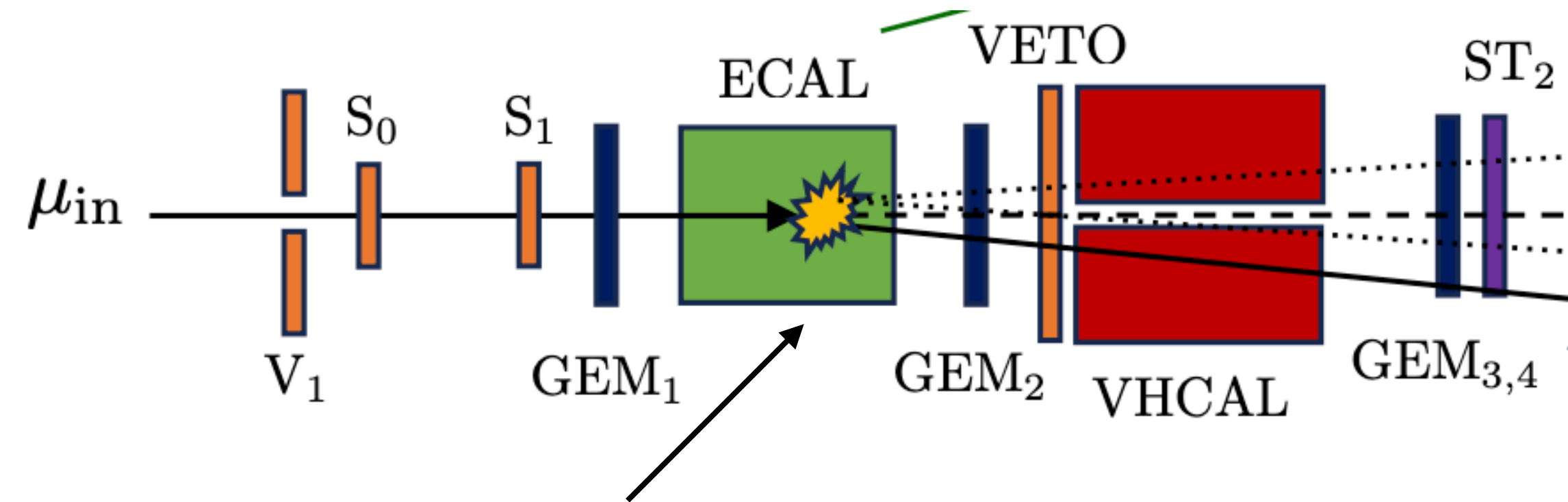
$$\chi = \int_{t_{\text{min}}}^{t_{\text{max}}} dt \frac{t - t_{\text{min}}}{t^2} F^2(t)$$

Nucleus elastic form factor

$$F(t) \simeq Z \left(\frac{b^2 t}{1 + b^2 t} \right) \left(\frac{1}{1 + t/d} \right)$$

$$\mathcal{A}_{a-\gamma} = -e^2 g_{a\gamma\gamma}^2 \tilde{u}^2 \frac{\tilde{u}x(2-x) + 2m_\mu^2 x^2 + m_a^2(1-x)(2-x)}{(m_a^2(1-x) + x\tilde{u})^2}$$

Decay Probability



The target ECAL consists of 150 layers of Pb

$$P_{\text{invisible}} = \left(e^{-L_{\text{ECAL}}/l_a} - e^{-L_V/l_a} \right) + \left(e^{-(L_V + L_{\text{VHCAL}})/l_a} - e^{-L_H/l_a} \right) + e^{-(L_H + 2L_{\text{HCAL}})/l_a}$$

$$\bar{P}_{\text{inv}} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=0}^N P_i$$

Average over the decay probability from axion production in each ECAL layer

Cross Section

$$N_{\text{signal}} = N_{\text{MOT}} n_{\text{Pb}} L_{\text{tar}} \int d\sigma(\mu N \rightarrow \mu N X) \epsilon P_{\text{inv}}$$

Weizsacker-William approximation

$$\frac{d\sigma}{dx} = \frac{\alpha}{8\pi^2} \sqrt{E_a^2 - m_a^2} E_\mu (1-x) \int d\cos\theta \frac{\chi}{\tilde{u}^2} \mathcal{A}$$

effective photon flux

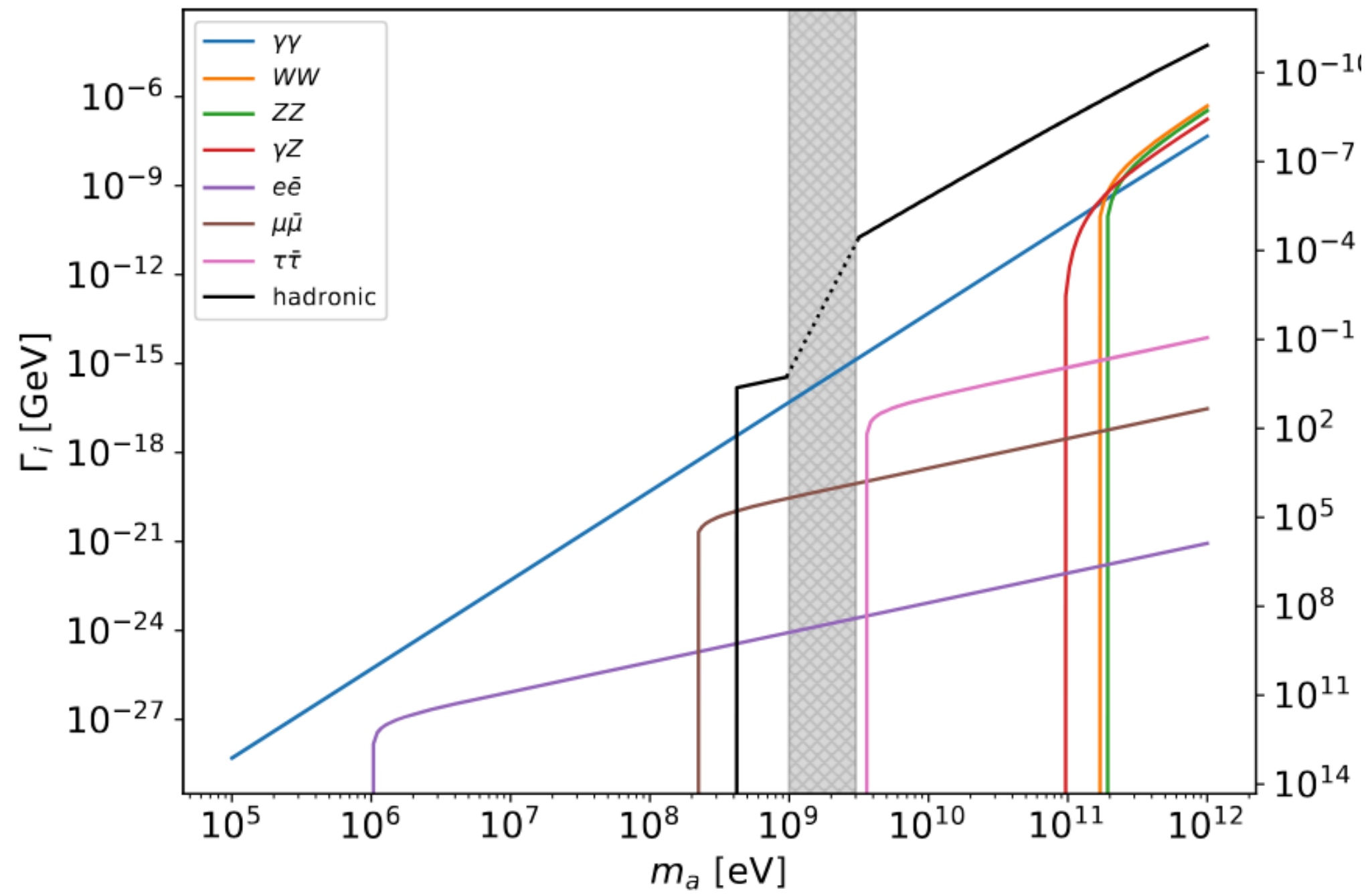
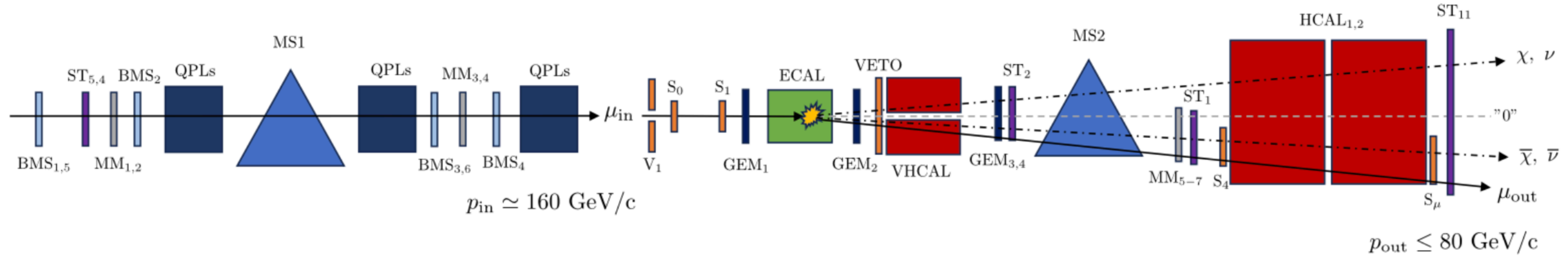
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$$A_{a-\mu} = e^2 g_{a\mu\mu}^2 4m_\mu^2 \left[\frac{x^2}{1-x} + 2m_a^2 \frac{\tilde{u}x + m_a^2(1-x) + m_\mu^2 x^2}{\tilde{u}^2} \right]$$

Visible vs Invisible



Alonso-Álvarez et al, EPJC/1811.05466

