Cold-Nuclear-Matter Effects on Heavy-Quark Production at Forward and Backward Rapidity in d + Au Collisions at root s(NN) = GeV

Andrew Adare  
*University of Colorado, Boulder*

Alan Dion  
*Iowa State University*

John C. Hill  
*Iowa State University*, jhill@iastate.edu

Todd Kempel  
*Iowa State University*, todd.kempel@gmail.com

John G. Lajoie  
*Iowa State University*, lajoie@iastate.edu

*See next page for additional authors*

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Cold-Nuclear-Matter Effects on Heavy-Quark Production at Forward and Backward Rapidity in d + Au Collisions at root s(NN) = GeV

Abstract
The PHENIX experiment has measured open heavy-flavor production via semileptonic decay over the transverse momentum range 1 < p(T) < 6 GeV/c at forward and backward rapidity (1.4 < |y| < 2.0) in d + Au and p + p collisions at root s(NN) = 200 GeV. In central d + Au collisions, relative to the yield in p + p collisions scaled by the number of binary nucleon-nucleon collisions, a suppression is observed at forward rapidity (in the d-going direction) and an enhancement at backward rapidity (in the Au-going direction). Predictions using nuclear-modified-parton-distribution functions, even with additional nuclear-p(T) broadening, cannot simultaneously reproduce the data at both rapidity ranges, which implies that these models are incomplete and suggests the possible importance of final-state interactions in the asymmetric d + Au collision system. These results can be used to probe cold-nuclear-matter effects, which may significantly affect heavy-quark production, in addition to helping constrain the magnitude of charmonia-breakup effects in nuclear matter.

Disciplines
Elementary Particles and Fields and String Theory | Physics

Comments

Authors
Andrew Adare, Alan Dion, John C. Hill, Todd Kempel, John G. Lajoie, Alexandre Lebedev, Craig Ogilvie, H. Pei, Marzia Rosati, C. L. Silva, Feng Wei, et al., and PHENIX Collaboration

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(PHENIX Collaboration)

1Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas 79699, USA
2Department of Physics, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57197, USA
3Department of Physics, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi 221005, India
4Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Bombay 400 085, India
5Baruch College, City University of New York, New York, New York 10010, USA
6Collider-Accelerator Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York 11973-5000, USA
7Physics Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York 11973-5000, USA
8University of California-Riverside, Riverside, California 92521, USA
9Charles University, Ovocný trh 5, Praha 1, 116 36, Prague, Czech Republic
10Chonbuk National University, Jeonju, 561-756, Korea
11Science and Technology on Nuclear Data Laboratory, China Institute of Atomic Energy, Beijing 102413, People’s Republic of China
12Center for Nuclear Study, Graduate School of Science, University of Tokyo, 7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo, Tokyo 113-0033, Japan
13University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA
14Columbia University, New York, New York 10027 and Nevis Laboratories, Irvington, New York 10533, USA
15Czech Technical University, Zikova 4,166 36 Prague 6, Czech Republic
16Dapnia, CEA Saclay, F-91191, Gif-sur-Yvette, France
17ELTE, Eötvös Loránd University, H-1117 Budapest, Pázmány P. s. 1/A, Hungary
18Ewha Womans University, Seoul 120-750, Korea
19Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Florida 32901, USA
20Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32306, USA
21Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303, USA
22Hanyang University, Seoul 133-792, Korea
23Hiroshima University, Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima 739-8526, Japan
24IHEP Protvino, State Research Center of Russian Federation, Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino 142281, Russia
25University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois 61801, USA
26Institute for Nuclear Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, prospekt 60-letiya Oktyabrya 7a, Moscow 117312, Russia
27Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Na Slovance 2, 182 21 Prague 8, Czech Republic
28Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, USA
29Advanced Science Research Center, Japan Atomic Energy Agency, 2-4 Shirakata Shirane, Tokai-mura, Naka-gun, Ibaraki-ken 319-1195, Japan
30Helsinki Institute of Physics and University of Jyväskylä, P.O.Box 35, FI-40014 Jyväskylä, Finland
31KEK, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305-0801, Japan
32Korea University, Seoul 136-701, Korea
33Russian Research Center “Kurchatov Institute”, Moscow 123098, Russia
34Kyoto University, Kyoto 606-8502, Japan
35Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, Ecole Polytechnique, CNRS-IN2P3, Route de Saclay, F-91128 Palaiseau, France
36Physics Department, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore 54792, Pakistan
37Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA
38Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545, USA
39LPC, Université Blaise Pascal, CNRS-IN2P3, Clermont-Fd, 63177 Aubiere Cedex, France
40Department of Physics, Lund University, Box 118, SE-221 00 Lund, Sweden
41University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA
42Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003-9337, USA
43Department of Physics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1040, USA
44Institut fur Kernphysik, University of Muenster, D-48149 Muenster, Germany
45Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18104-3586, USA
46Myongji University, Yongin, Kyonggido 449-728, Korea
47Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science, Nagasaki-shi, Nagasaki 851-0193, Japan
48University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, USA
49New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003, USA
50Department of Physics and Astronomy, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA
51Department of Physics and Astronomy, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701, USA
52Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA
53Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201, USA
54Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, Illinois 60510, USA
55Department of Physics, University of York, York, YO10 5DD, UK
56Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3, Canada
57University of York, Faculty of Science, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD, UK
58University of York, York, UK
59University of York, York, UK
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103University of York, York, UK
Heavy quarks are essential probes of the evolution of the medium created in heavy-ion collisions, because they are produced in the early stages of nuclear collisions. Heavy-quark production has been studied via semileptonic-decay electrons and muons, as well as fully reconstructed $D$ mesons, at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) and the Large Hadron Collider (LHC). In $p + p$ collisions, heavy-quark production tests perturbative quantum chromodynamics and provides a baseline for the results from heavy-ion collisions [3–5]. In central Au + Au collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV, strong suppression of high-transverse-momentum ($p_T$) electrons from semileptonic decay of open heavy-flavor hadrons has been observed at midrapidity [6,7]. At forward rapidity, a similar level of suppression has been measured for the production of heavy-flavor muons in central $Cu + Cu$ collisions [8]. Although suppression of high-$p_T$ particles was predicted as an effect of partonic energy loss in the dense medium created in heavy-ion collisions [9–11], the observed suppression is difficult to explain solely with hot-nuclear-matter effects [8,12]. To interpret such measurements, it is essential to probe the underlying cold-nuclear-matter (CNM) effects, which may also be present.

Control experiments with $d + Au$ collisions allow us to probe those CNM effects, including modifications of the parton distribution functions (PDF) and nuclear-$p_T$ broadening, with minimal impact from the hot nuclear medium. Because heavy quarks are produced primarily by gluon fusion at RHIC, modification of the gluon density in the nucleus can be observed in the charm and bottom production rates [13,14]. Based on PYTHIA [15] calculations, the average parton momentum fraction $x$ in the Au nucleus leading to heavy-flavor muons with $1 < p_T^u < 6$ GeV/c at backward rapidity ($-2.0 < y < -1.4$, Au-going direction) and forward rapidity ($1.4 < y < 2.0$, $d$-going direction) is $\approx 8 \times 10^{-2}$ and $\approx 5 \times 10^{-3}$, respectively. Parton energy loss and multiple scattering in the nucleus can change the resulting heavy-flavor hadron momentum spectrum [16]. Previous results in $d + Au$ collisions at midrapidity show a significant enhancement of heavy-flavor electrons at moderate $p_T$ [17]. In this Letter, we present measurements of the $p_T$ spectra and the nuclear-modification factor ($R_{dA}$) of...
negatively charged muons from open heavy flavor at forward and backward rapidity in $d + Au$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV.

The $d + Au$ and $p + p$ data presented here were recorded with the PHENIX detector during the 2008 and 2009 RHIC running periods, respectively. Minimum-bias collisions are selected by using the beam-beam counter (BBC) [18], and this selection covers $88 \pm 4\%$ ($55 \pm 5\%$) of the total $d + Au$ ($p + p$) inelastic cross section [19]. The integrated luminosity, sampled using single muon triggers [8] in coincidence with the minimum-bias trigger, used for this analysis of $d + Au$ ($p + p$) collisions is $50 \text{ nb}^{-1}$ ($10 \text{ pb}^{-1}$). The $d + Au$ collisions are categorized into four centrality classes: $0\%–20\%$, $20\%–40\%$, $40\%–60\%$, and $60\%–88\%$, where $0\%–20\%$ represents the $20\%$ highest multiplicity events, as determined by the amount of total charge deposited in the BBC on the Au-going side. For each centrality class, the average number of binary nucleon-nucleon collisions $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ is calculated from the BBC charge in a Glauber model [20]. The values of $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ for the $d + Au$ centrality classes specified above are $15.1 \pm 1.0$, $10.2 \pm 0.7$, $6.6 \pm 0.4$, and $3.2 \pm 0.2$, respectively. A correction for the underlying event correlation and the efficiency of the BBC trigger is applied, as in [21, 22].

Unbiased collisions ($0\%–100\%$, $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle = 7.6 \pm 0.4$) are also analyzed.

Two muon spectrometers [23] provide full azimuthal coverage in the pseudorapidity range $\sim 2.2 < \eta < \sim 1.2$ (backward rapidity) and $1.2 < \eta < 2.4$ (forward rapidity). Each muon arm, located behind copper (19 cm) and iron (60 cm) absorbers, comprises a muon tracker (MuTr) followed by a muon identifier (MuID). The MuTr comprises three stations of cathode strip chambers surrounded by a radial magnetic field, and the MuID comprises five interleaved layers of steel absorber and Iarocci tube planes. The MuTr provides the momentum measurement for charged tracks in the magnetic field. The momentum information for each charged track is then combined with its penetration depth reported by the MuID to provide effective discrimination between muons and hadrons (pion rejection rate: $\sim 10^{-3}$) [24].

Despite the large hadron rejection power of the muon arms and strict selection criteria, most of the tracks reaching the last MuID layer are not heavy-flavor muons. Simulation studies show that the majority of these background tracks for $p_T < 3$ GeV/$c$ originate from the decays of light-flavor mesons (mostly $\pi^\pm$ and $K^\pm$) into muons before reaching the absorber material. Another source of background, called “punch-through hadrons,” are the hadrons produced at the collision vertex, which penetrate all MuID layers. Other, less significant sources of background include muons from hadrons that decay inside the MuTr which are misreconstructed with erroneously high $p_T$, muons from heavy-flavor resonances ($J/\psi$, $\psi'$, and $\Upsilon$), and muons from light vector mesons ($\rho$, $\phi$, and $\omega$). The $J/\psi$ is the most significant of these lesser sources, contributing less than 5% at high $p_T$ [8, 25]. The backgrounds are subtracted as follows.

For each data set, we measure the double differential heavy-flavor muon invariant yield, defined as

$$
\frac{d^2N^p}{2\pi p_T dp_T dy} = \frac{1}{2\pi p_T \Delta p_T \Delta y} \frac{N_I - N_C - N_F - N_{J/\psi}}{(N_{\text{evt}}/\epsilon_{\text{BBC}}) A e^{-\Delta p_T \Delta y}}
$$

where $\Delta p_T$ and $\Delta y$ are the bin widths in $p_T$ and $y$, $N_I$ is the number of inclusive muon candidates, $N_C$ is the number of decay and punch-through hadron background tracks determined using a hadron cocktail method (described below), $N_F$ is the estimated number of fake tracks that pass the selection criteria, $N_{J/\psi}$ is the number of muons from $J/\psi$ decays, $N_{\text{evt}}$ is the number of sampled events, $A e$ is the detector acceptance and efficiency correction, and $\epsilon_{\text{BBC}}$ is the BBC bias-correction factor for the trigger efficiency and centrality determination of events containing a heavy-flavor muon. Only negative muons are used because the signal-to-background ratio is better than for positive muons [8]. The typical signal-to-background ratio, $N^p/(N_C + N_F + N_{J/\psi})$, increases from 0.3 at $p_T = 1$ GeV/$c$ to 0.6 at $p_T = 6$ GeV/$c$. The hadron-cocktail method estimates the overall background owing to light-hadron sources using a GEANT simulation based on measured $p_T$ spectra. Details on the background-estimation procedure and associated systematic uncertainty are described in [3, 8, 25].

Figure 1 shows the invariant yield of heavy-flavor muons as a function of $p_T$ in $d + Au$ collisions at backward and forward rapidity along with the invariant yield in $p + p$ collisions. The vertical bars represent statistical uncertainties, while boxes are systematic uncertainties in the acceptance and efficiency correction, background estimate, and trigger bias correction for each centrality class. The main source of the systematic uncertainty is the background estimate including initial hadron production ($\sim 10\%$) and interactions of hadrons with the absorber material ($\sim 10\%$). All components of the systematic uncertainty are added in quadrature. Solid lines show a modified Kaplan function

$$
A(1 + [p_T/8.3(\text{GeV}/c)]^2)^{-3.9}
$$

[26], fit to the $p_T$ spectrum in $p + p$ collisions, and then scaled by $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ for each $d + Au$ centrality class. The $p + p$ results are consistent with previous PHENIX measurements [8].

To quantify nuclear effects in $d + Au$ collisions, we calculate the ratio of heavy-flavor muon yields in $d + Au$ to $p + p$ collisions scaled by the average number of binary collisions for a given centrality bin,

$$
R_{dA} = \frac{dN^p_{dA}/dp_T}{(N_{\text{coll}})dN^p_{pp}/dp_T}.
$$

Figure 2 shows $R_{dA}$ as a function of $p_T$ for heavy-flavor muons in different $d + Au$ centrality classes. Vertical bars

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Invariant yield of negatively charged heavy-flavor muons as a function of $p_T$ in $p + p$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV (black squares) and in $d + Au$ collisions for different centralities at (a) backward rapidity (Au-going) and (b) forward rapidity (d-going). The solid lines represent a fit to the $p + p$ invariant yield, scaled by the number of binary collisions $\langle N_{coll} \rangle$ for each centrality class.

The black boxes on the right side indicate the global scaling uncertainty. The red dashed (blue solid) lines in each panel are calculations at forward (backward) rapidity based on the EPS09s nPDF set [14]. Dot-dashed curves in (b) are the same calculations plus an additional nuclear-$p_T$ broadening. The theoretical calculation shown in (c) is for forward rapidity [16].
agreement and the suppression at forward rapidity in central $d + Au$ collisions suggest that CNM effects are important for the interpretation of the suppression of heavy-flavor muon production at forward rapidity at RHIC [8] and the Large Hadron Collider [28].

We use the EPS09s leading-order (LO) nuclear PDF (nPDF) set [14] to calculate $R_{dA}$ for muons from $D$ mesons at backward (solid lines) and forward (dashed lines) rapidity based solely on initial parton density modifications. As described in [29], the input parameters for the EPS09s calculation [14], which incorporates a spatial dependence within the nucleus based on the previous nPDF EPS09 model [13], are the parton momentum fraction $x$, momentum transfer ($Q^2$) of charm production generated by PYTHIA [15], and transverse radial positions of binary collisions in the nucleus for each centrality class. The uncertainty bands are calculated as described in [13].

In central collisions, shown in Fig. 2(b), the EPS09s-nPDF-based calculation does not reproduce the data at backward rapidity (Au-going direction), particularly in the moderate $p_T$ region. At forward rapidity ($d$-going direction), $R_{dA}$ calculated with the EPS09s nPDF is consistent with the data over the entire $p_T$ range within the uncertainties of the data and calculation. The same EPS09s-nPDF-based calculations with a nuclear-multiple-scattering broadening ($k_{1T}^2 = 2.25$ GeV$^2$/c$^2$) at matched backward rapidity data, overshoot the data at forward rapidity. There is no consistent combination of nuclear-$p_T$ broadening and modified nPDF that can describe the entire rapidity dependence of the data. A model incorporating scattering and recombination with soft and hard final-state gluons [30] explains the enhancement of hadrons at the higher-parton-density backward rapidity and no enhancement at the lower-parton-density forward rapidity [30], noting the larger particle production resulting from higher parton density [31,32].

It would be interesting to see if this model, once extended to charm hadrons, accommodates the entire rapidity of the data presented here.

Figure 3 shows the heavy-flavor muon and electron [17] $R_{dA}$ as a function of $\langle N_{coll} \rangle$ for (a) $1 < p_T < 3$ GeV/c and (b) $3 < p_T < 5$ GeV/c. Bars (boxes) around the data points represent the statistical (total) uncertainties determined as the quadratic sum of statistical (total) uncertainties on $R_{dA}$ for each centrality class. The global uncertainty reflects the BBC efficiency for $p + p$ collisions. For more central $d + Au$ collisions, the $R_{dA}$ at midrapidity and backward rapidity show a similar enhancement ($R_{dA} > 1$) in both $p_T$ ranges. The low-and high-$p_T$ bins show comparable suppression patterns as a function of centrality. The EPS09s-nPDF-based calculations are qualitatively consistent with the data.

Quarkonia and open heavy-flavor hadrons are sensitive to the same effects on heavy-quark production. However, quarkonium states are additionally influenced by breakup in nuclear matter. Therefore, open heavy-flavor production can provide a baseline for interpreting the nuclear breakup of quarkonia. Previous measurements suggest that nuclear breakup has a significant effect on quarkonium production in $p$-nucleus and nucleus-nucleus collisions [21,29,33–37].

Figure 4 shows a comparison of $R_{dA}$ between heavy-flavor muons and $J/\psi$ [21] for central collisions. A similar behavior across the entire $p_T$ range is observed at forward rapidity, within the total uncertainties, whereas a distinct difference is seen at backward rapidity, particularly for $p_T < 2.5$ GeV/c, where charm contributions dominate over those from the bottom [38]. The larger difference of the $R_{dA}$ between $J/\psi$ and open charm at backward rapidity compared to forward rapidity could be related to the longer time this $c\bar{c}$ state requires to traverse the nuclear matter or the larger density of comoving particles after the initial collision at backward rapidity [39]. This comparison suggests that an additional CNM effect, nuclear breakup, significantly affects $J/\psi$ production both at backward rapidity and, as seen earlier [17,21], at midrapidity. This measurement provides a key additional constraint on theoretical models attempting to describe quarkonia yields in nuclear collisions.
rapidity in heavy-flavor muons produced at forward and backward as well as the possibility of final-state interaction in the importance of CNM effects beyond nPDF modification, combination of additional nuclear-calculations with the EPS09s nPDF sets nor with the

FIG. 4 (color online). The nuclear modification factor $R_{dA}$ for $J/\psi$ [21] and heavy-flavor muons for the 0%–20% centrality class. The global systematic uncertainty on each distribution is shown as a percentage in the legend.

We have presented a measurement of negatively charged heavy-flavor muons produced at forward and backward rapidity in $d + Au$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$ GeV, for several centrality classes. We observe no significant modification in the most peripheral $d + Au$ collisions. However, in central $d + Au$ collisions, suppression (enhancement) of heavy-flavor muons is observed at forward (backward) rapidity. The large difference between forward and backward rapidity, which cannot be reproduced by PYTHIA calculations with the EPS09s nPDF sets nor with the combination of additional nuclear-$p_T$ broadening, suggests the importance of CNM effects beyond nPDF modification, as well as the possibility of final-state interaction in $d + Au$ collisions. A model including some of these effects successfully reproduces an enhanced hadron production in a higher-parton-density system. A comparison between the measured nuclear modification factors for $J/\psi$ and open heavy-flavor production provides a strong indication that nuclear breakup significantly affects quarkonium production.

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1 Deceased.
2 PHENIX Co-Spokesperson. jamie.nagle@colorado.edu
3 PHENIX Co-Spokesperson. morrison@bnl.gov

mstp(32) = 4 (Q^2 = \hat{s}), mstp(33) = 1, parp(91) = 0 and 1.5 (\langle k_T \rangle).