

Exploring BSM Physics and Neutrino Interactions with MicroBooNE

Sergey Martynenko (Brookhaven National Laboratory)
On behalf of MicroBooNE collaboration



MicroBooNE Experiment

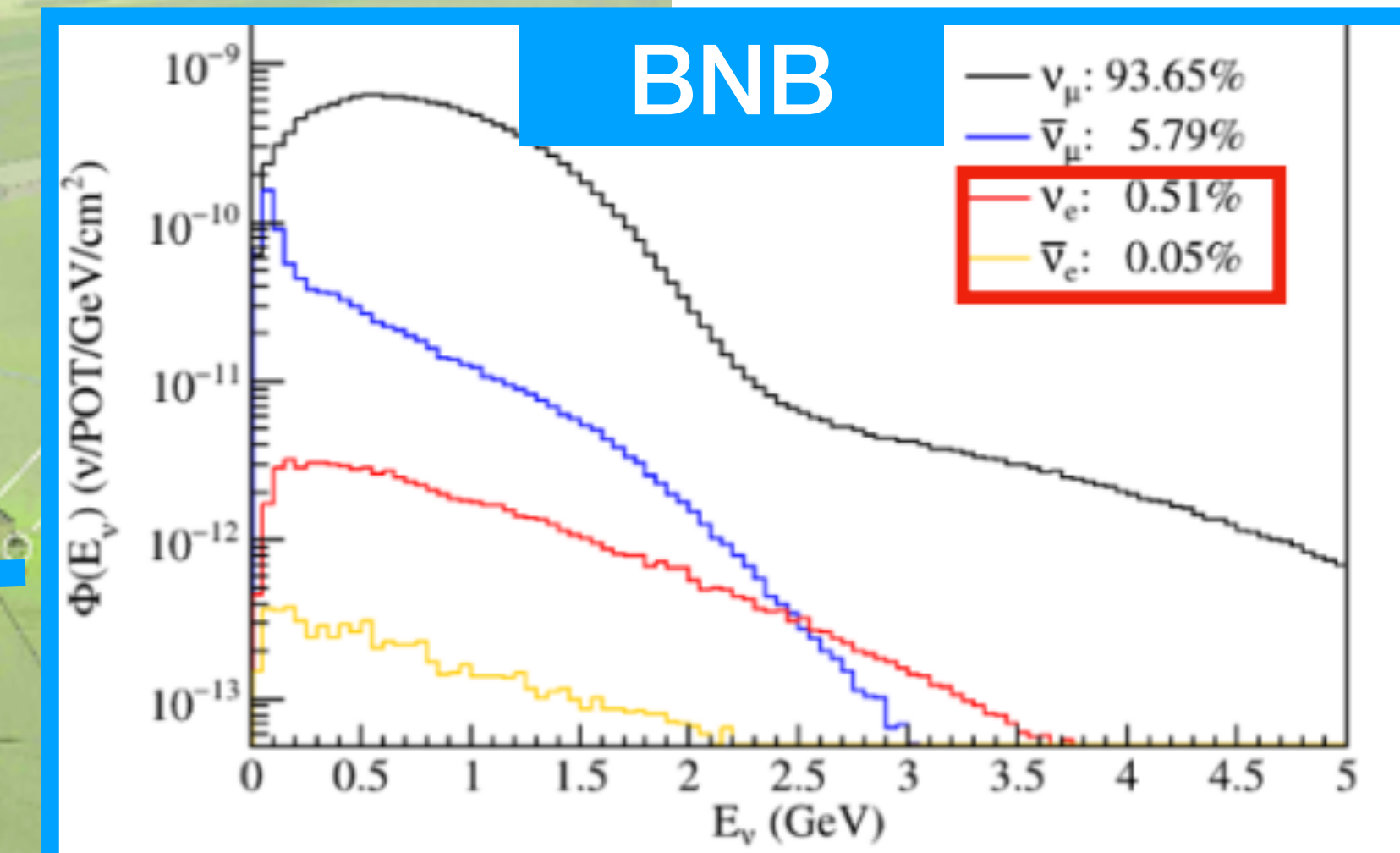
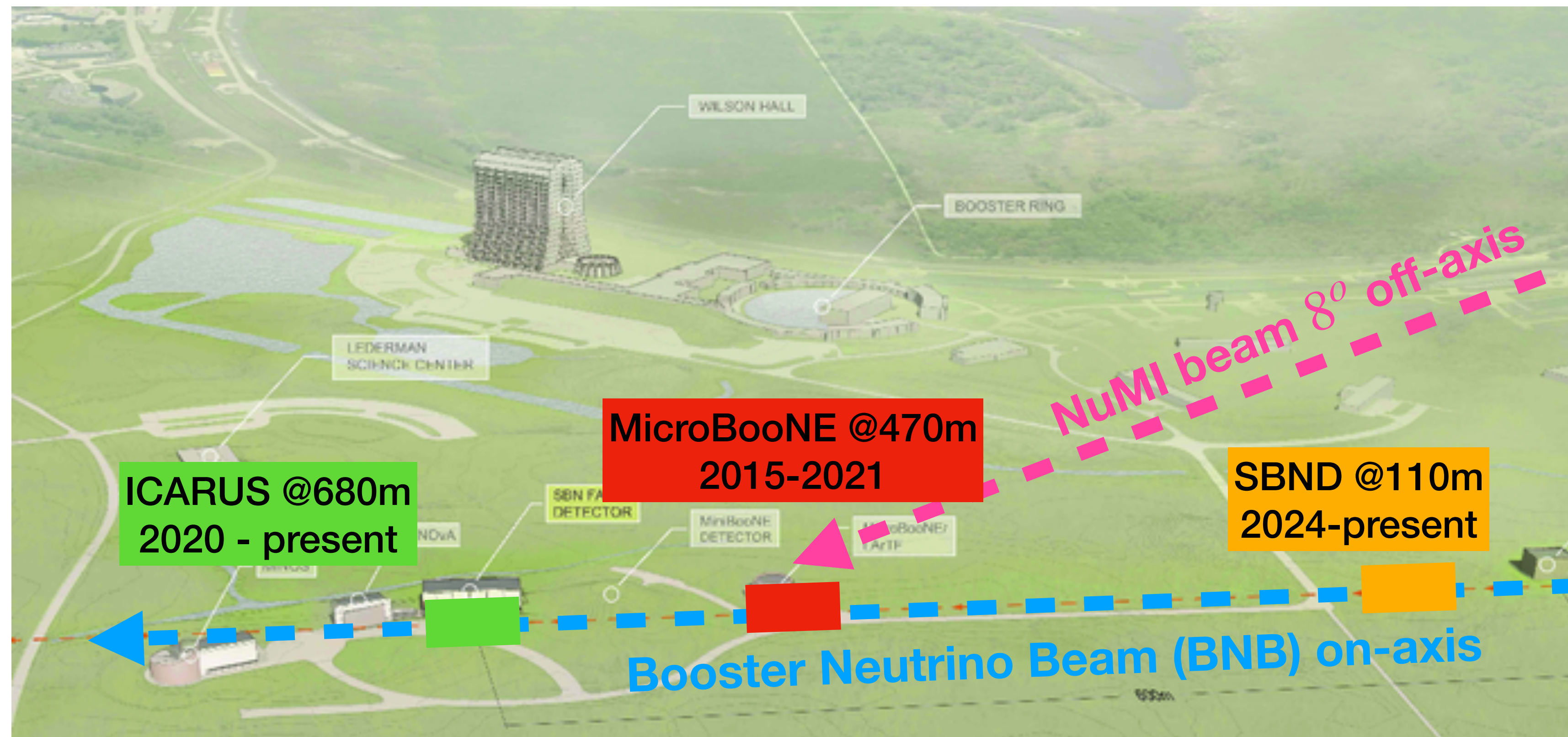
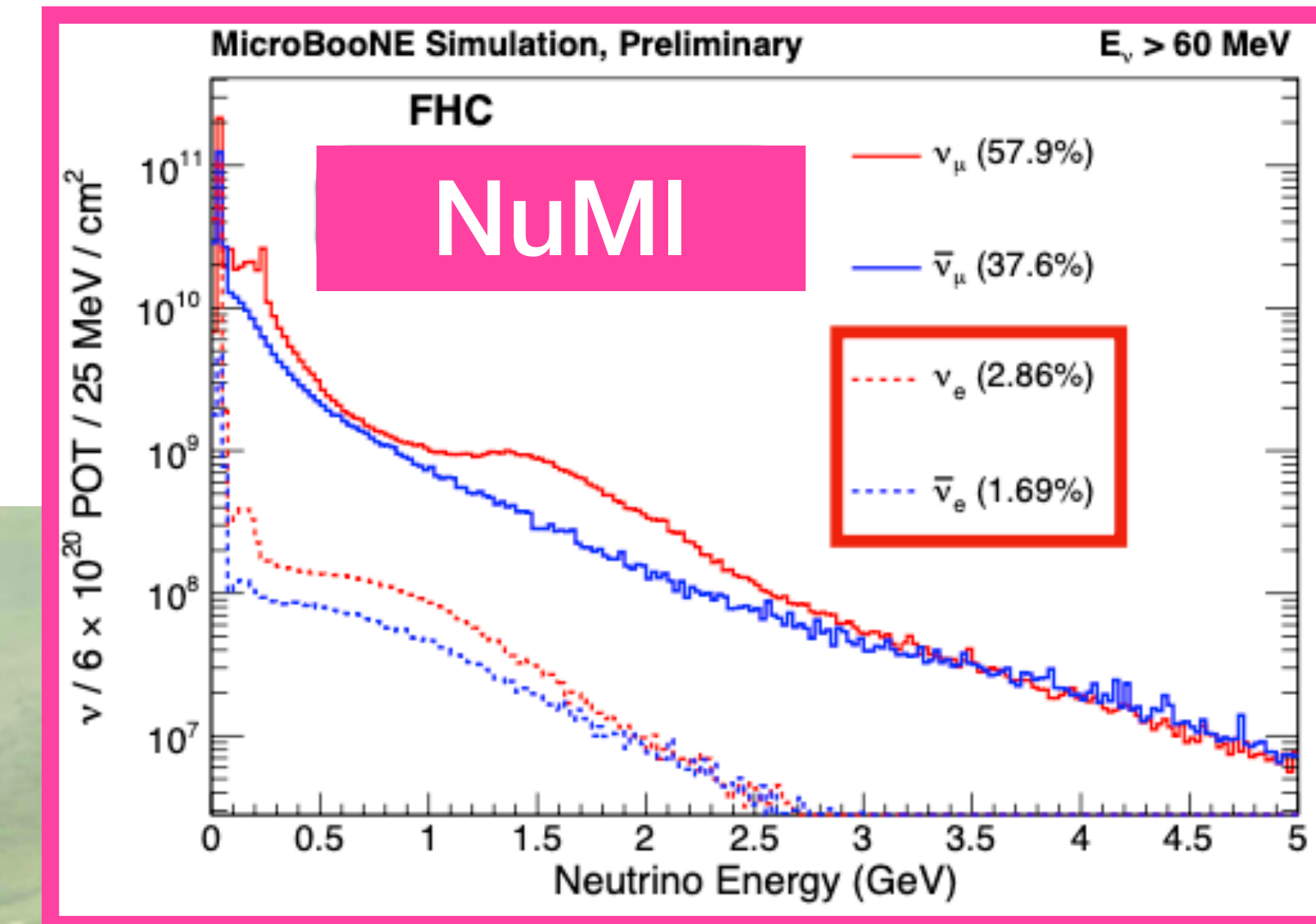
[PRD 104, 052002 \(2021\)](#)

[PRD 105, 112005 \(2022\)](#)

- Part of the Fermilab Short-Baseline Neutrino (SBN: SBND, MicroBooNE, and ICARUS) Program

- $O(500K)$ interaction in 5 year running period with two beams :

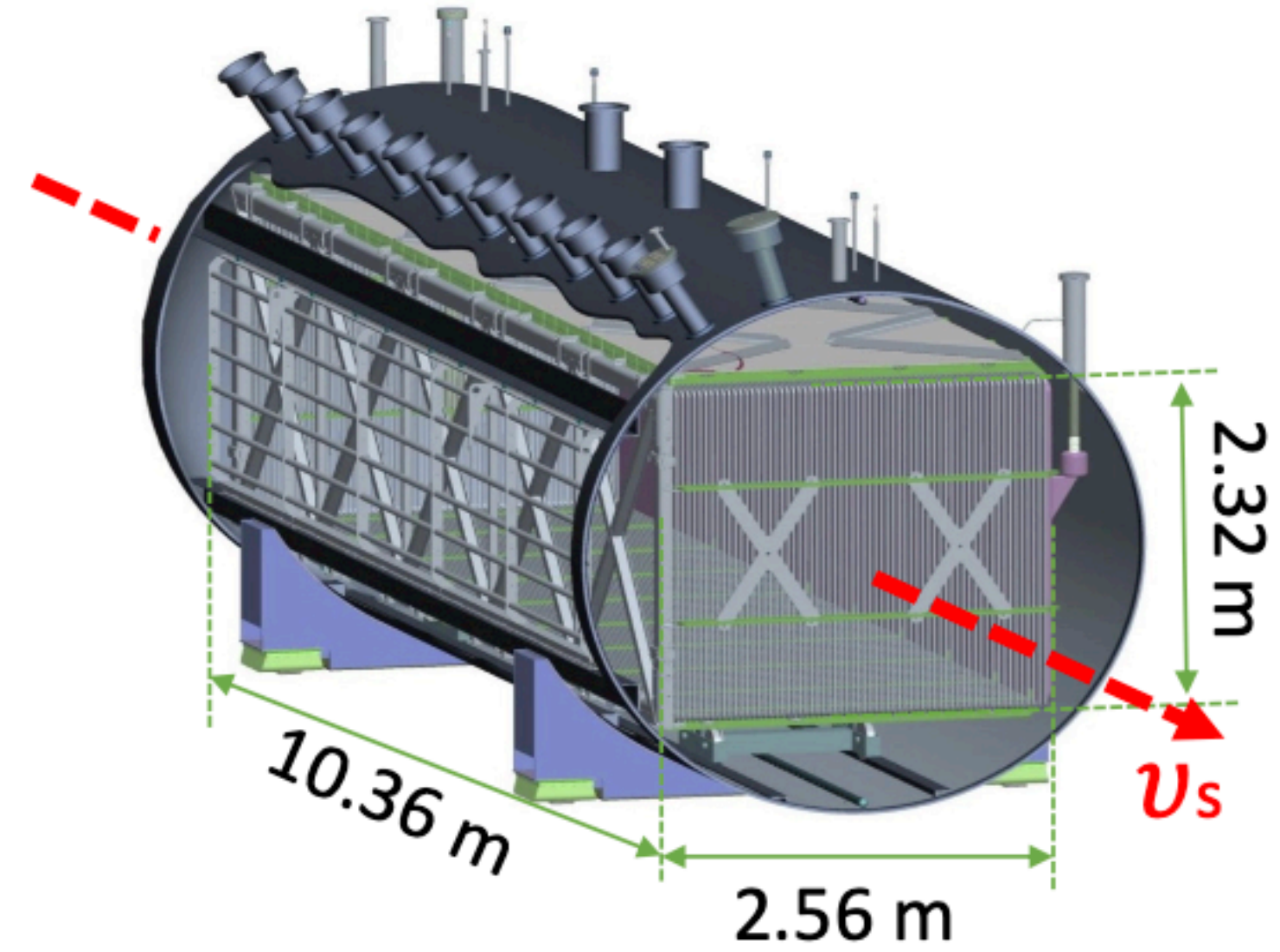
- Booster Neutrino Beam (BNB): On-axis, 470m baseline , 99.5 % $\nu_\mu(\bar{\nu}_\mu)/0.5\%$ $\nu_e(\bar{\nu}_e)$
- Neutrinos at the Main Injector (NuMI): 8° off-axis, 680m baseline, 95.5 % $\nu_\mu(\bar{\nu}_\mu)/4.5\%$ $\nu_e(\bar{\nu}_e)$



MicroBooNE Detector

MicroBooNE Detector is a Liquid Argon Time Projection Chamber (LArTPC) with:

- 85 tonne active volume
- 3 planes of wires (vertical, $+60^\circ$, -60°), 3 mm spacing
- 32 PMTs to detect scintillation photons



JINST 12 (2017) 02, P020

LArTPC concept

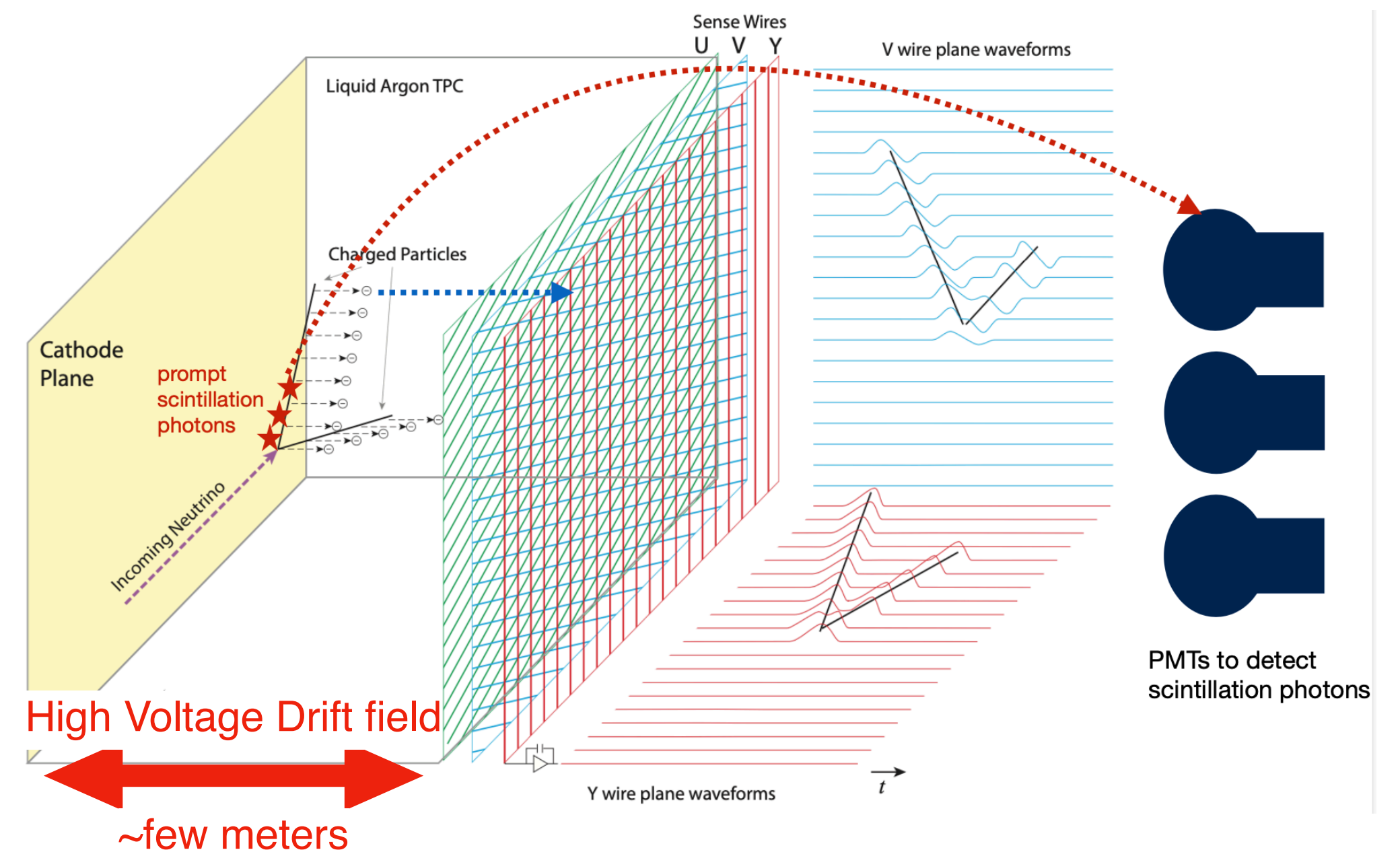
Charged particle generated in the detector



Scintillation light
emitted by excited Ar,
detected by PMTs



Ionization electrons
drift to anode plane
[2 induction wire
planes and 1
collection]



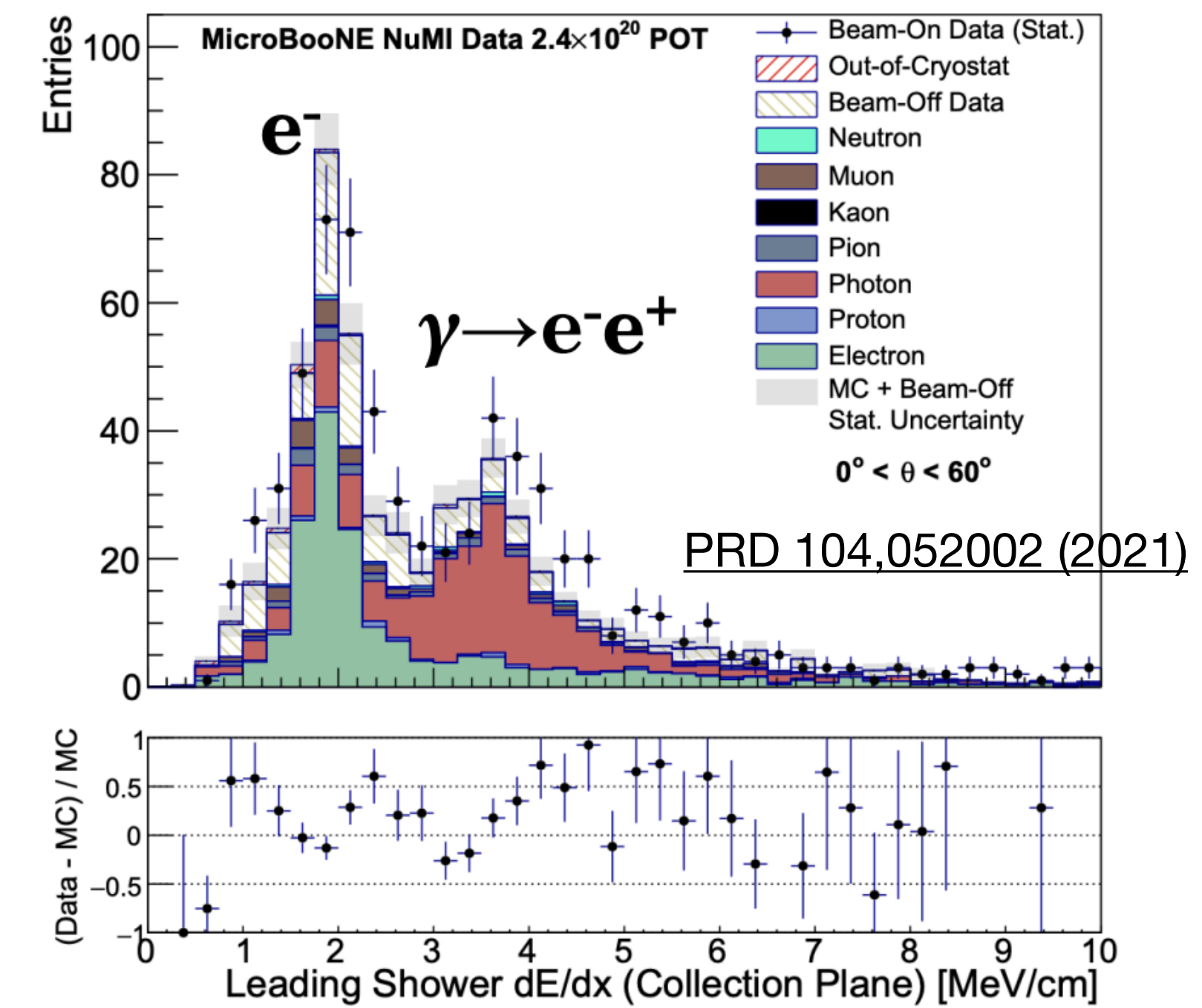
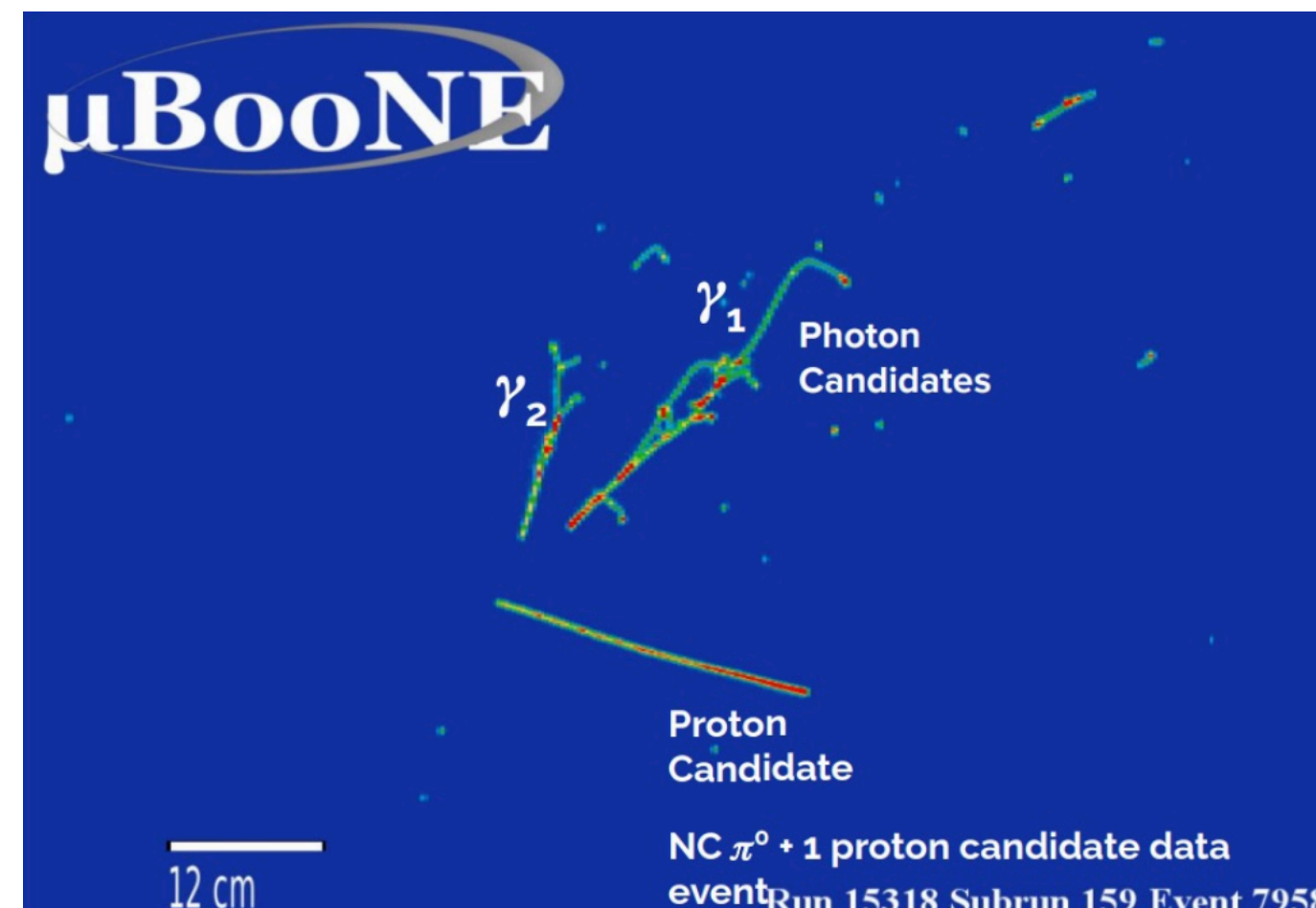
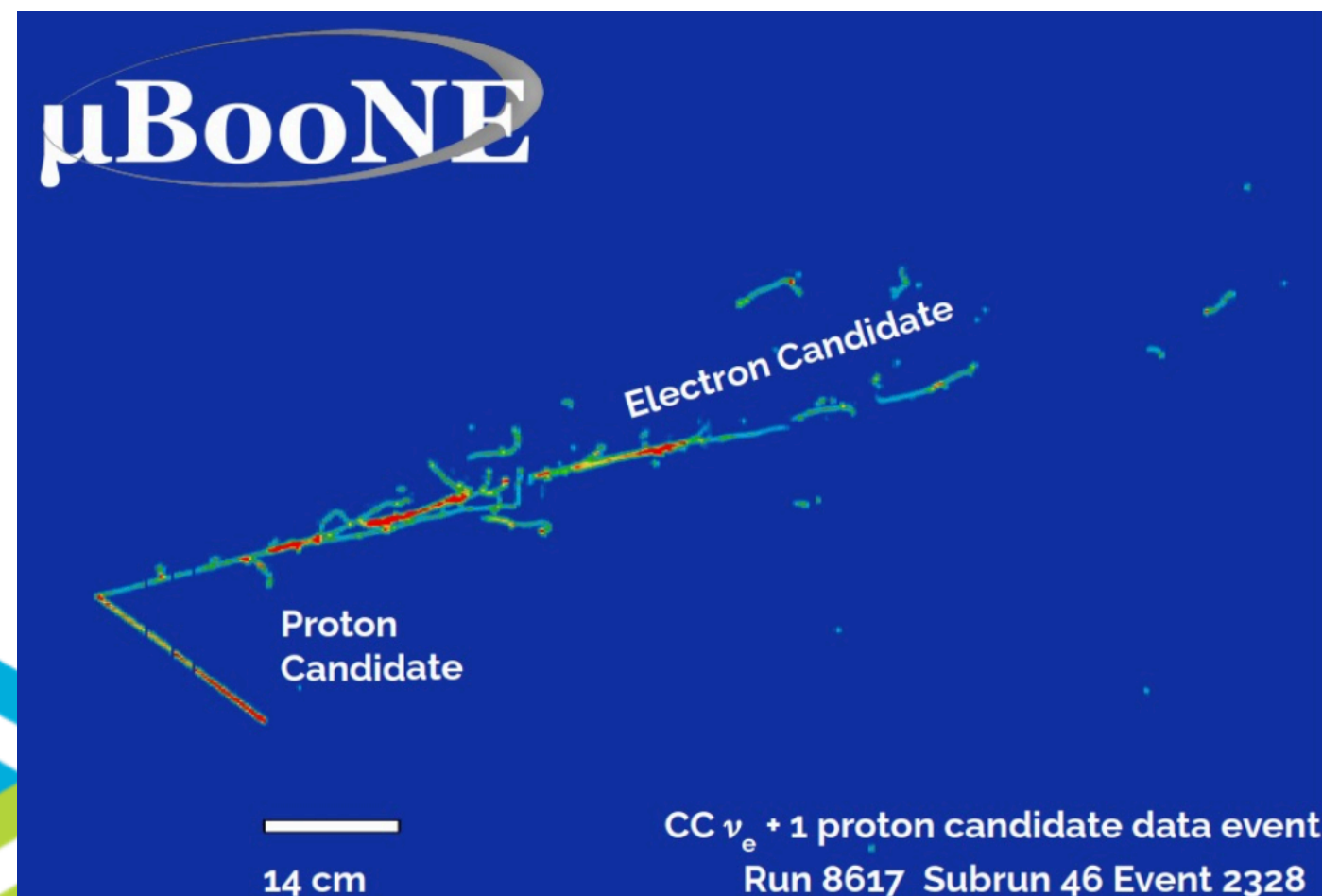
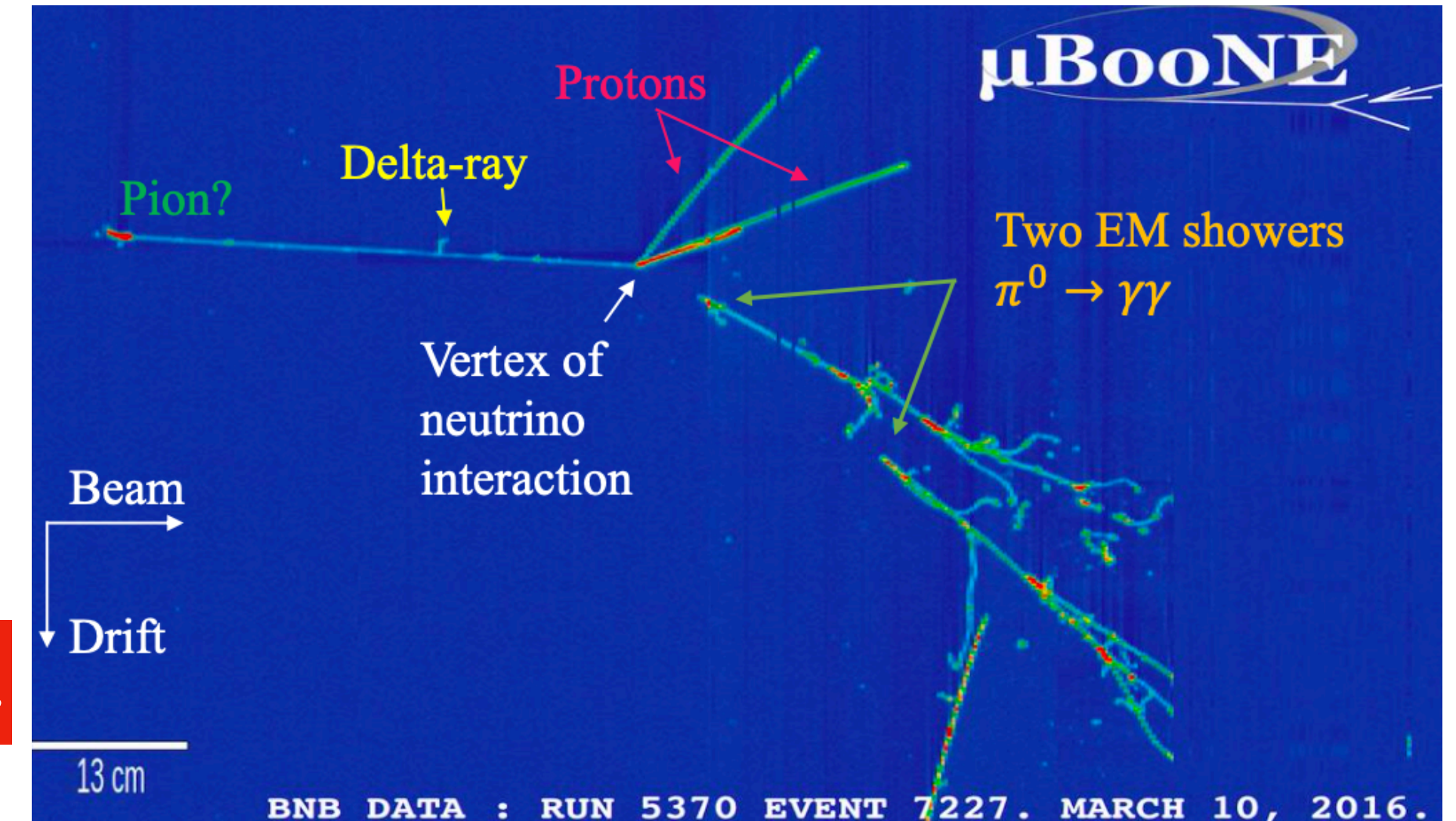
Liquid Argon Time Projection Chamber (LArTPC)

- Capable of identifying different species of particles and reconstructing 3D images with fine-grained information
- Neutrino vertex
- Particle flow (mother-daughter relationship)
- Track (μ , π , p etc.) vs shower (e, γ EM cascade)

- e / γ (e+e- pair production) separation

Important for $\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e$

1. Gap between shower start point and ν vertex
2. dE/dx two times difference (1 MIP vs 2 MIPs)



MicroBooNE Physics Program

Investigate
MiniBooNE Low
Energy Excess (LEE)
&
Search for BSM

Advance LArTPC
capabilities for next
generation neutrino
experiments (SBN
program, DUNE)

Study ν -Ar scattering
using one of the
largest ν -Ar data
collected to date!

μ BooNE



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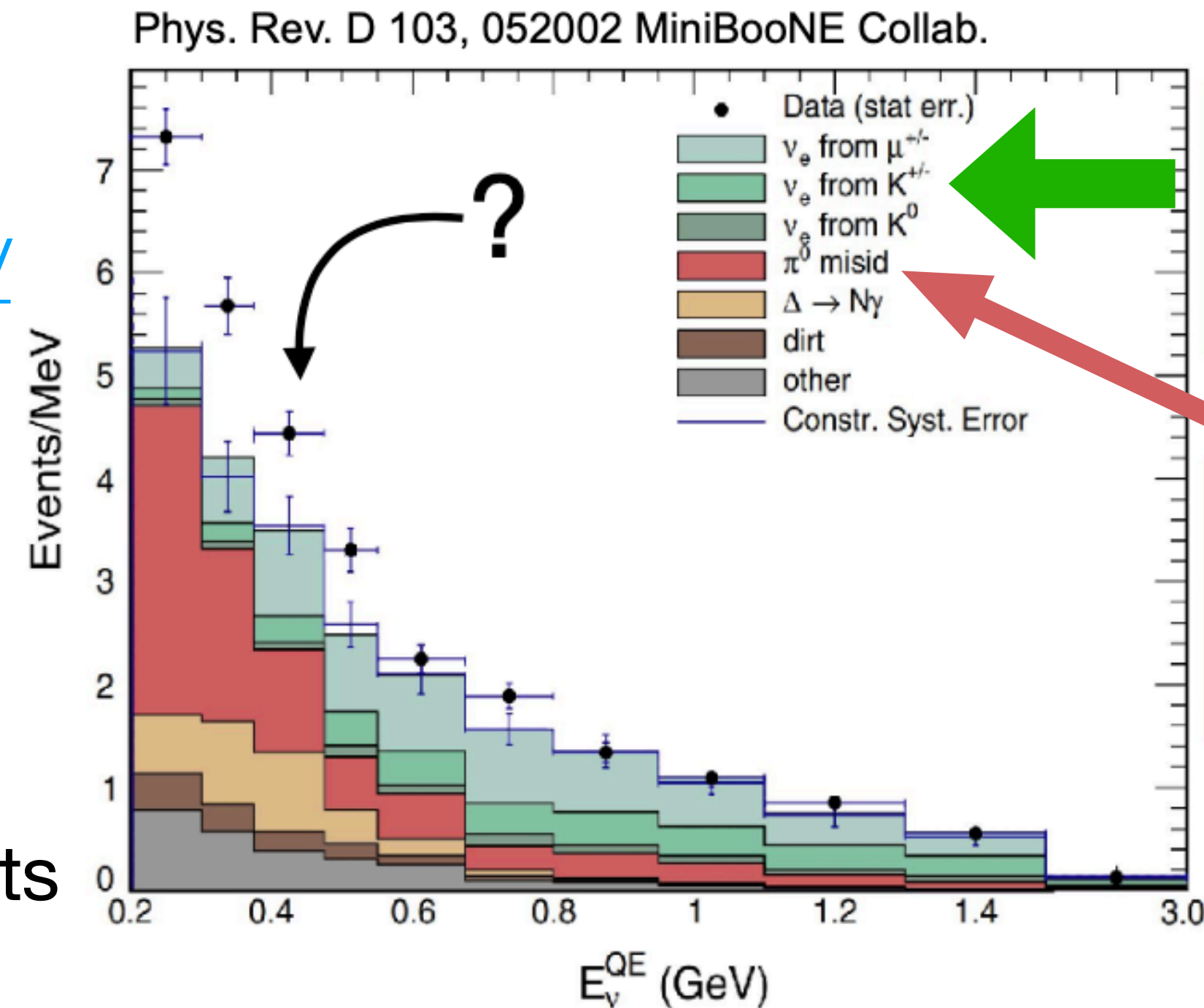
Study ν -Ar scattering
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μ BooNE

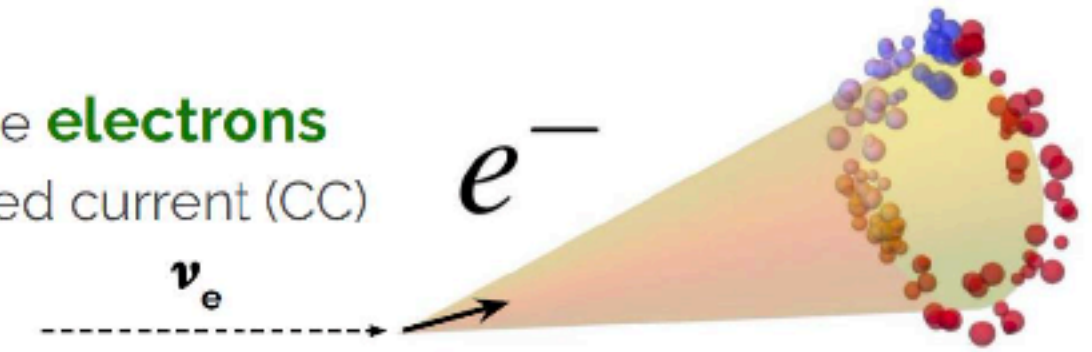


Short-baseline Neutrino Anomalies

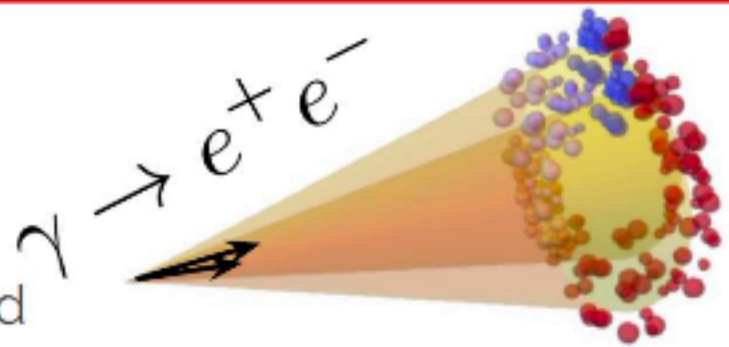
- Anomalous results observed at short baselines using various neutrino sources ([LSND](#), [MiniBooNE](#), [GALLEx](#), [SAGE](#), etc.)
 - Inconsistent with the standard 3ν framework if attributed to oscillations
- MiniBooNE observed the Low Energy Excess (LEE) of electromagnetic events with 4.8σ significance



It detected ν_e by the **electrons** produced in charged current (CC) interactions.



However, **photons**, that pair produce extremely collimated electron/positron pairs produced an identical Cherenkov ring



MiniBooNE

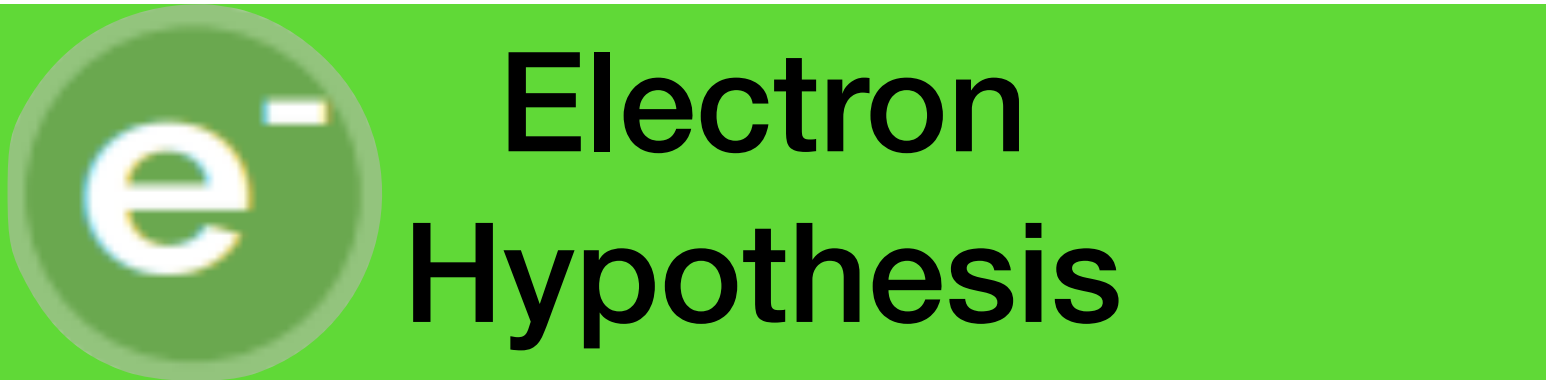
- Cherenkov detector
- Unable to distinguish between electrons and photons
- Unable to detect hadronic final-state particles below Cherenkov threshold

Same BNB beam
Almost same baseline

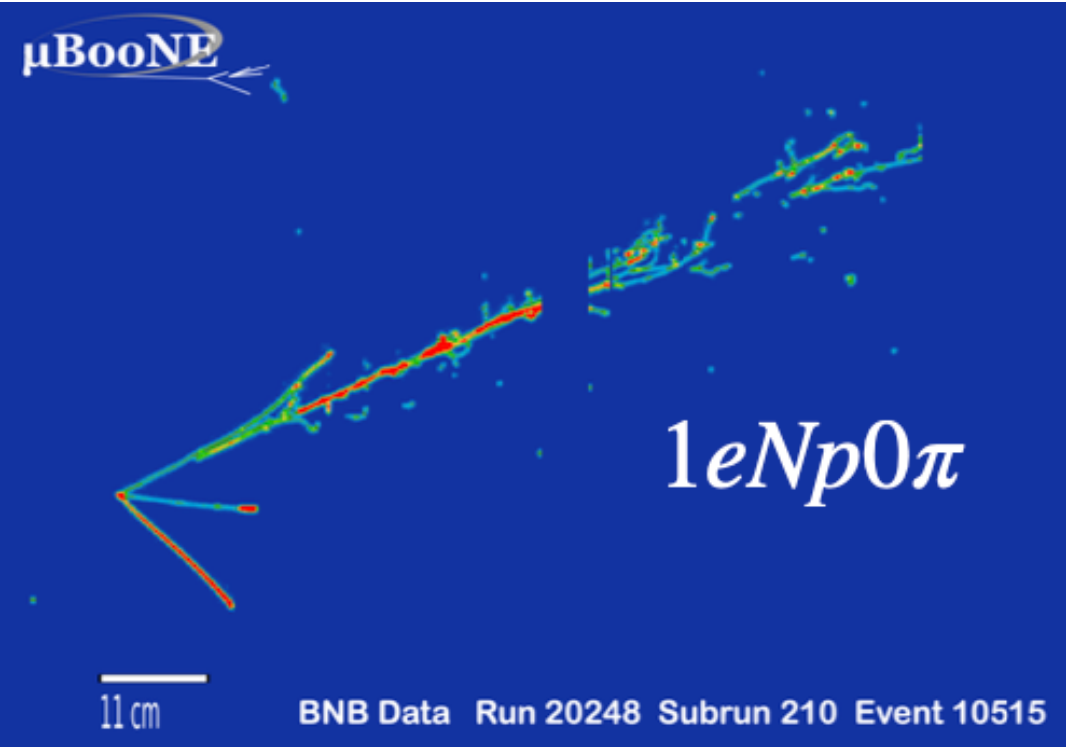
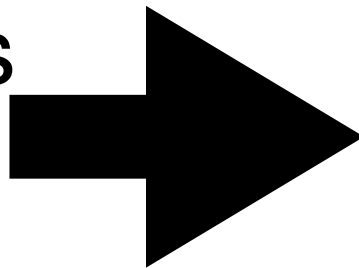
MicroBooNE

- LAr TPC detector
- Much better e/γ separation capabilities

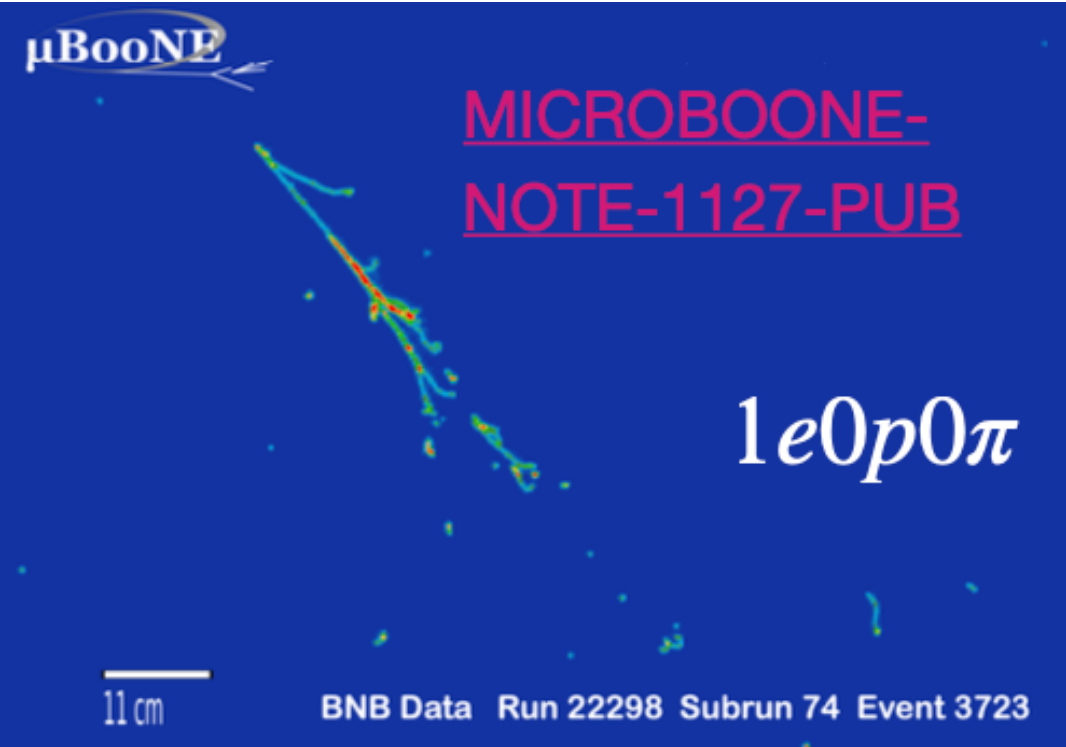
Low Energy Excess (LEE) Search : ν_e - like



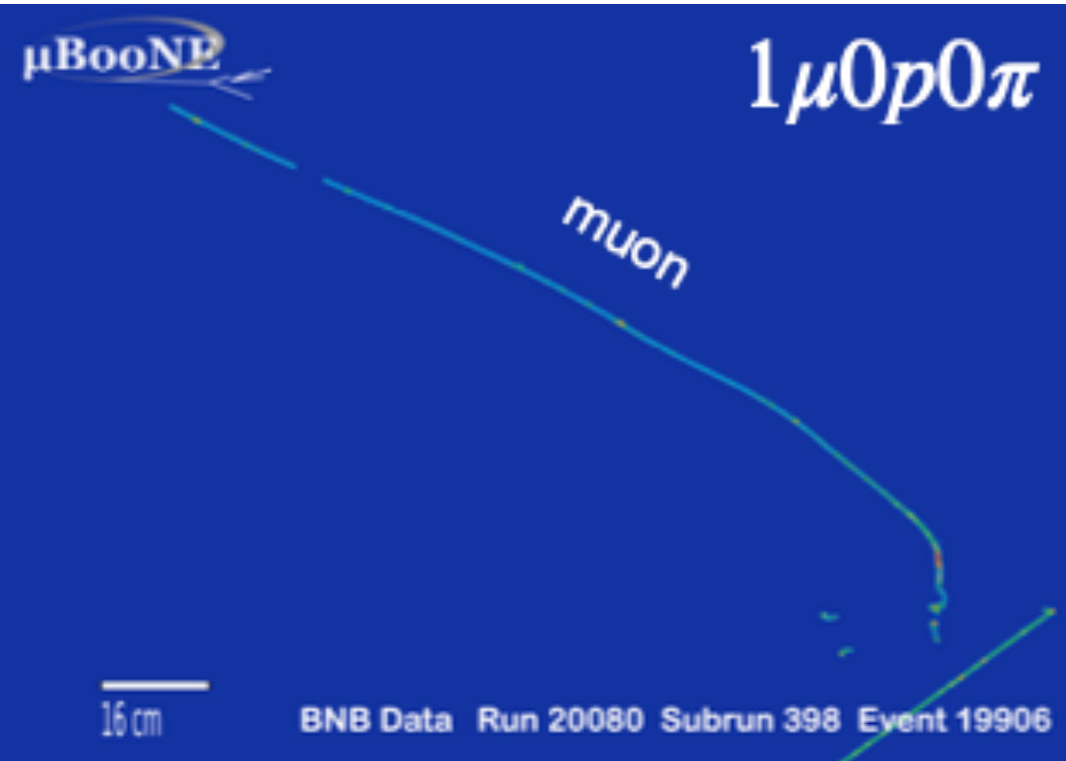
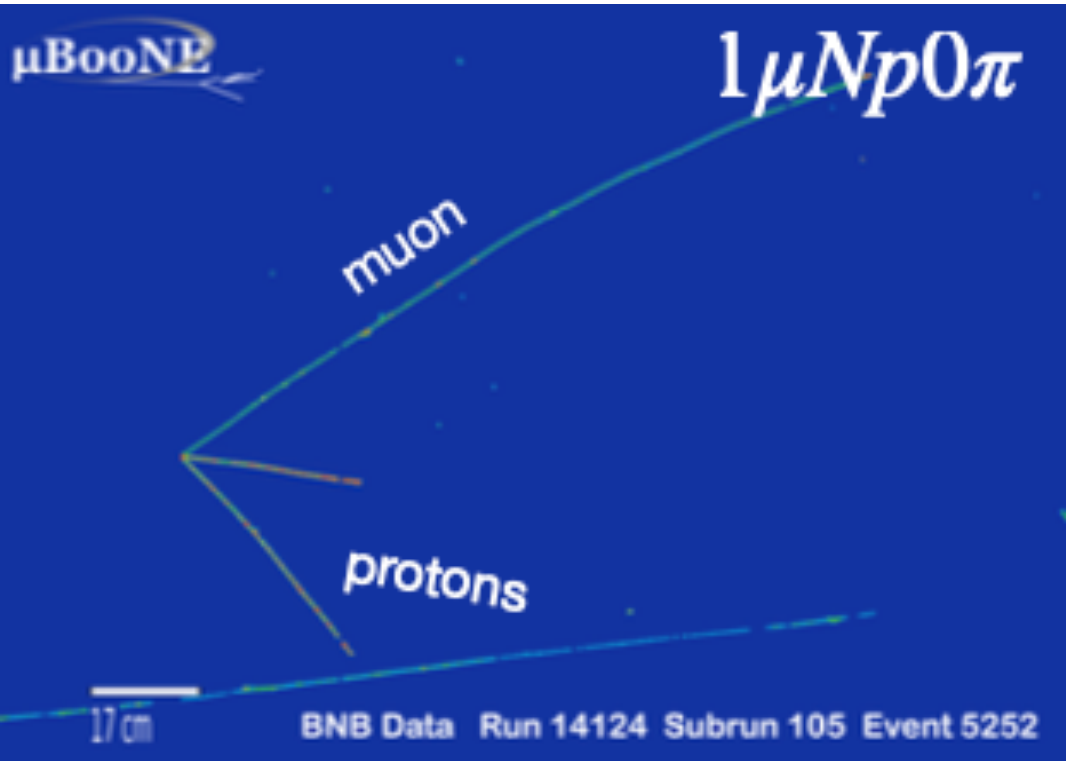
- Is LEE coming from electron neutrinos?
- Pionless ν_e LEE analysis \Rightarrow Same topology as MiniBooNE LEE ($\nu_e CC0\pi$)
- 1st generation saw no evidence of ν_e - like excess (>97% CL exclusion) [Phys. Rev. Lett. 128,241801]
- Update analysis :
 - First analysis to use full MicroBooNE dataset (BNB) \Rightarrow 60% POT increase
 - New background constraint $\Rightarrow \nu_\mu CC$ (divided between Np and 0p) and $NC \pi^0$ rich sidebands



MICROBOONE- Note-1127-PUB

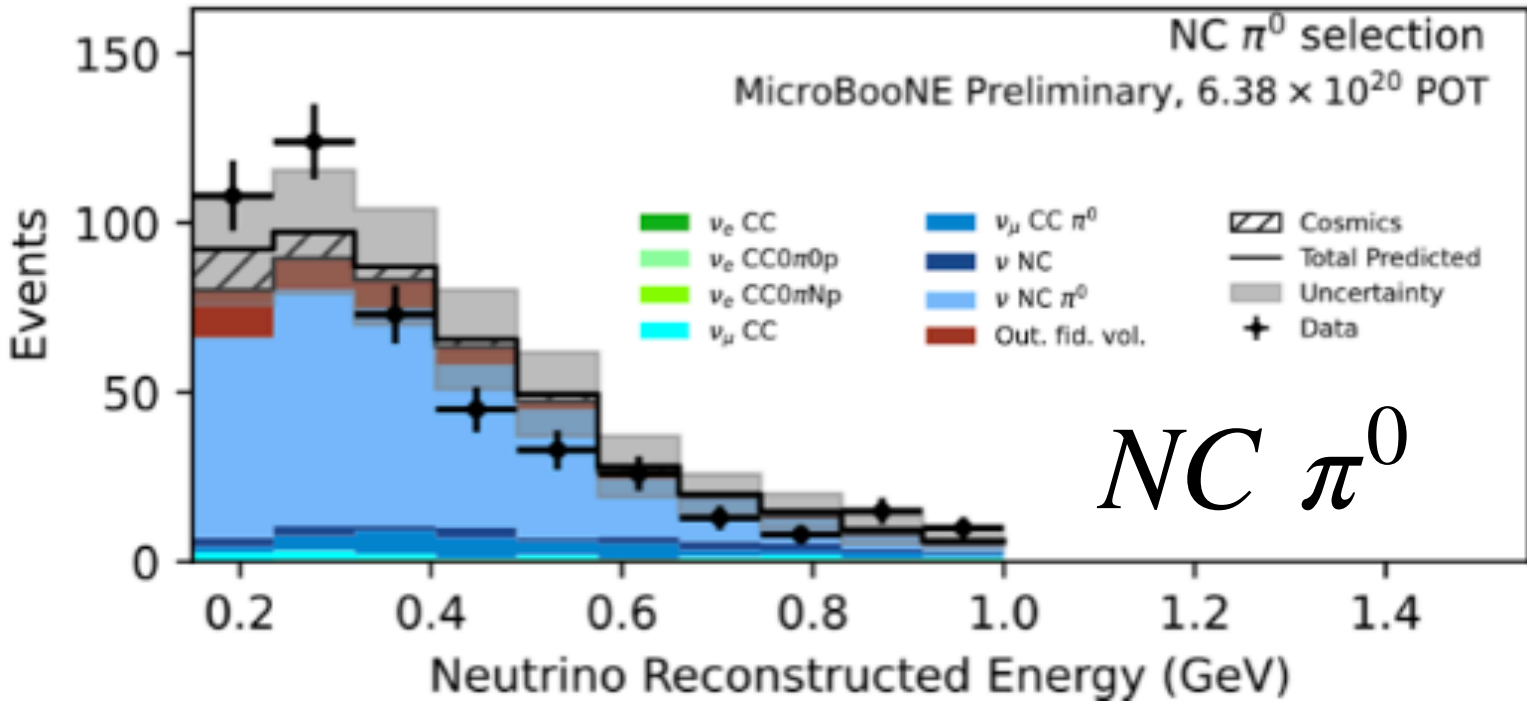
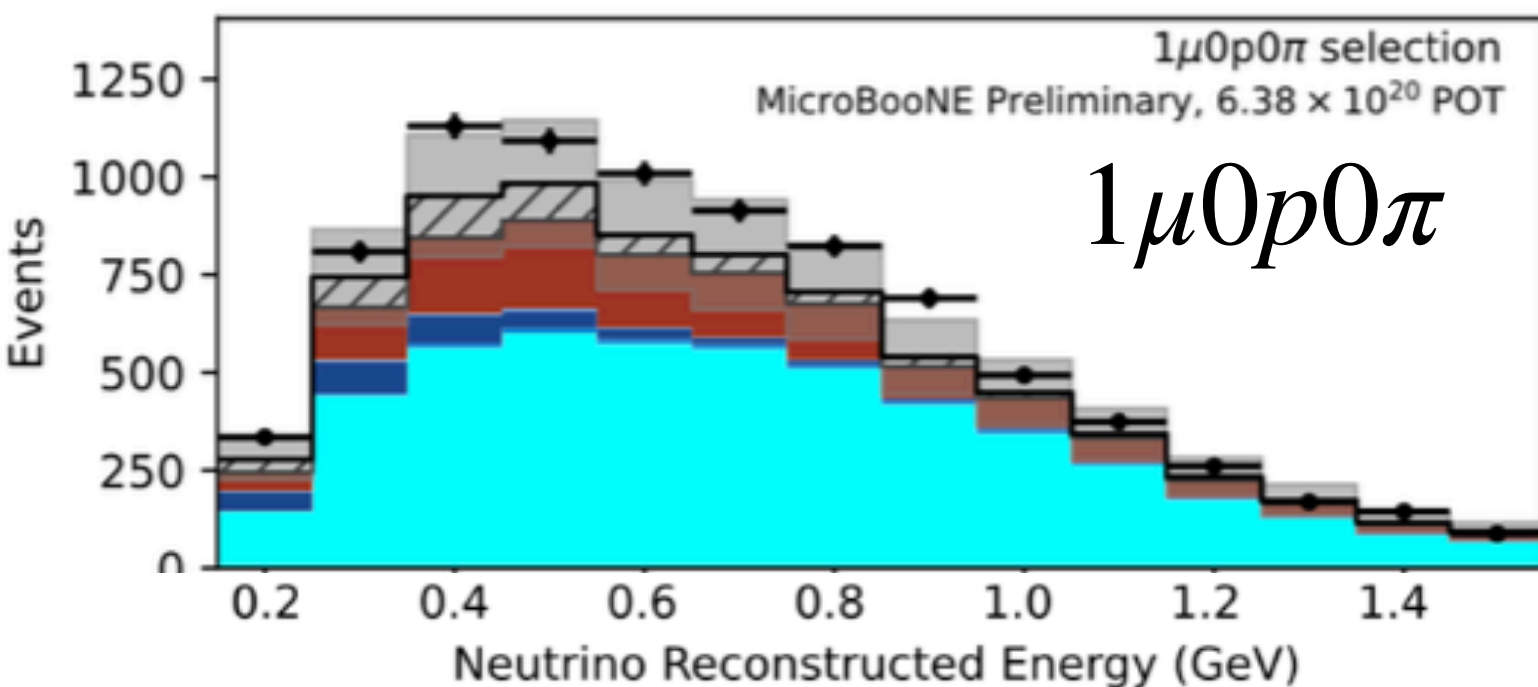
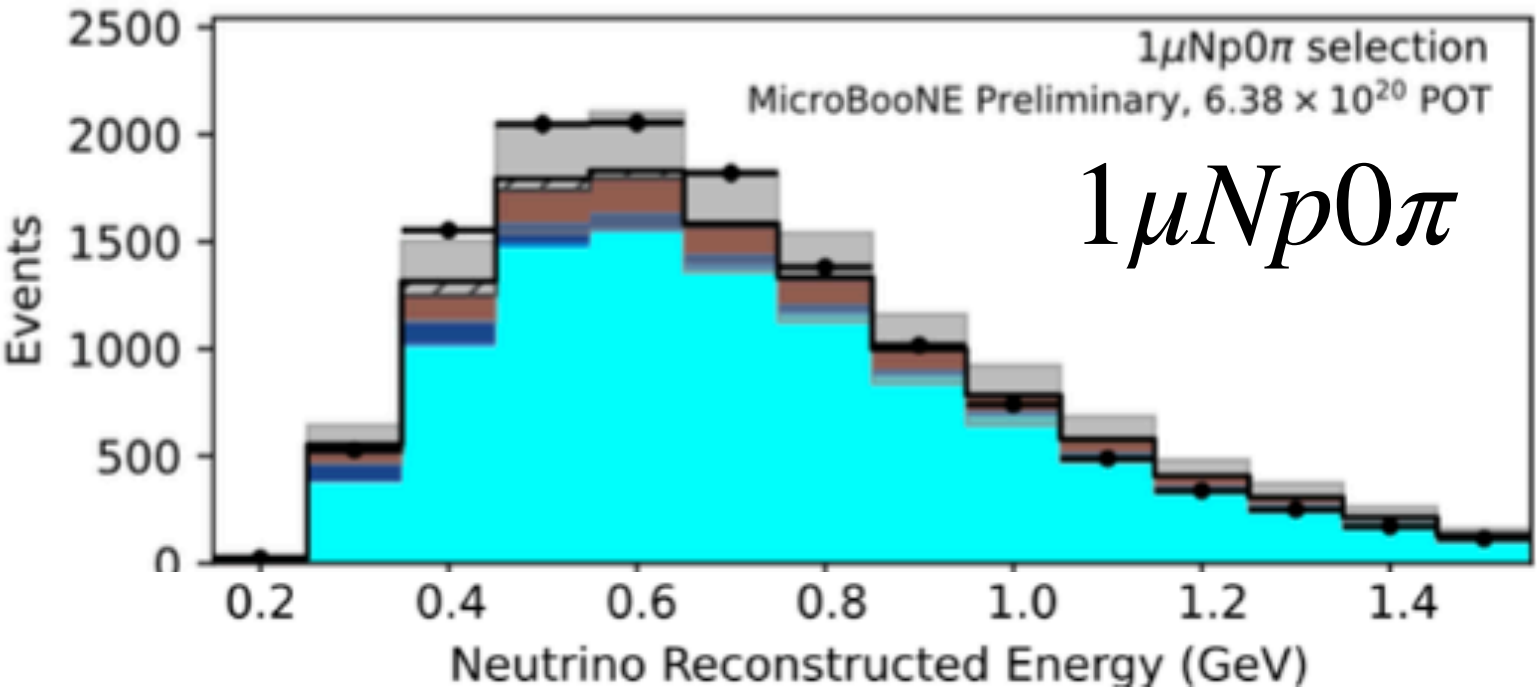


Phys. Rev. Lett. 135, 081802 (2025)



match hadronic final states of ν_e signal channel

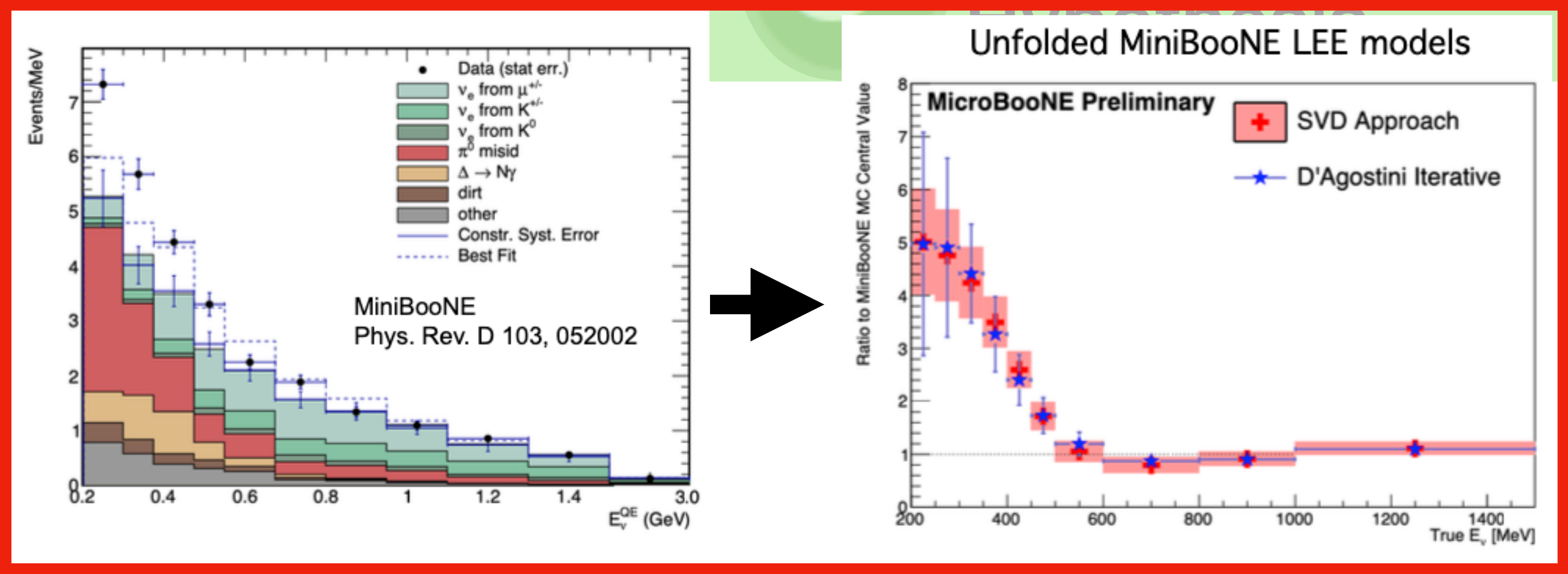
constrain dominant π^0 background



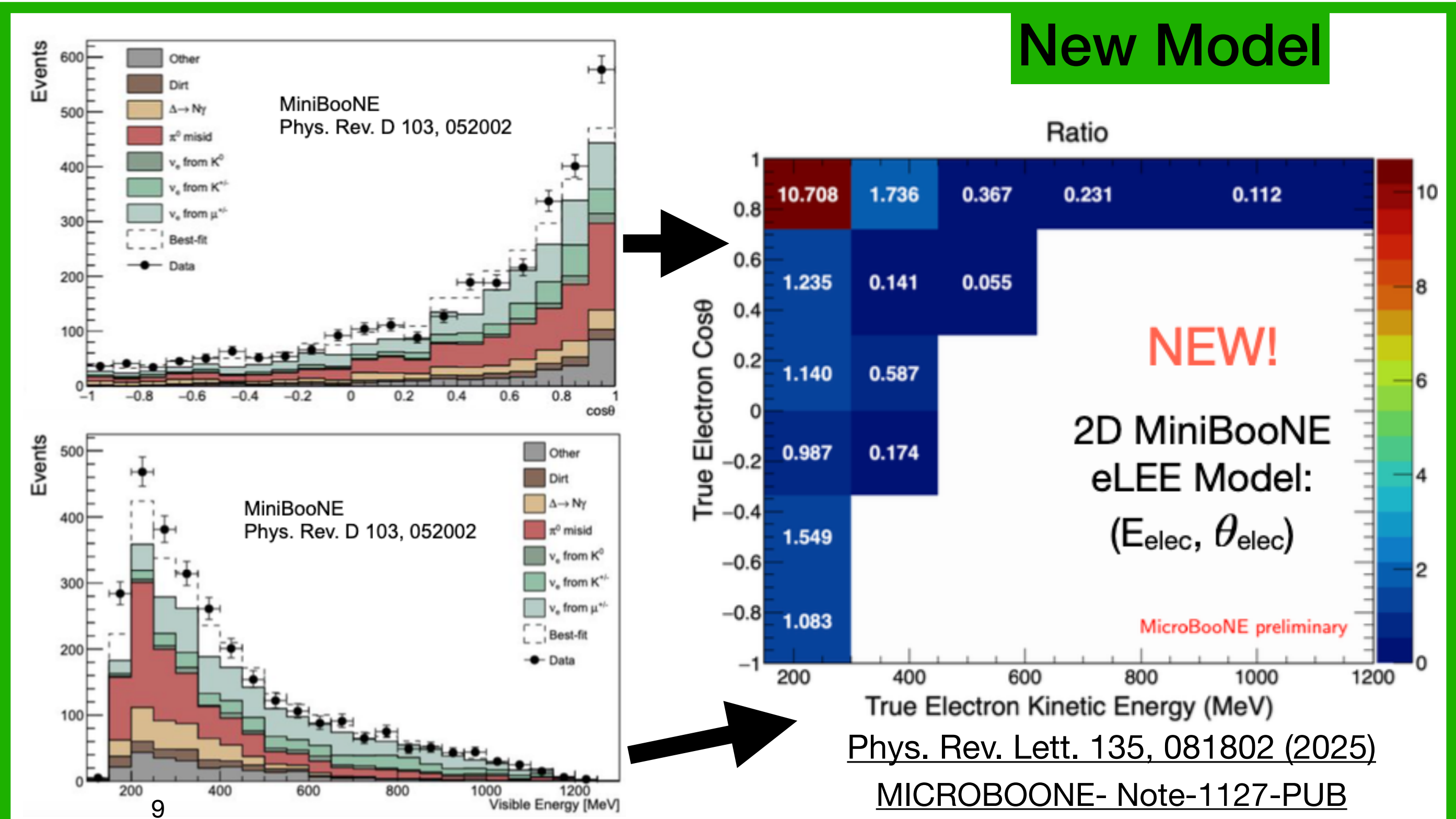
LEE Search : ν_e - like

- New signal model \Rightarrow address electron kinematic variables
- Initial Model:
 - MiniBoone-like excess based on true E_ν
- New Model:
 - Enchantment in true E_e , $\cos\theta_e$ (shower kinematics)
 - More Comprehensive MiniBooNE LEE hypothesis for ν_e -like

Initial Model



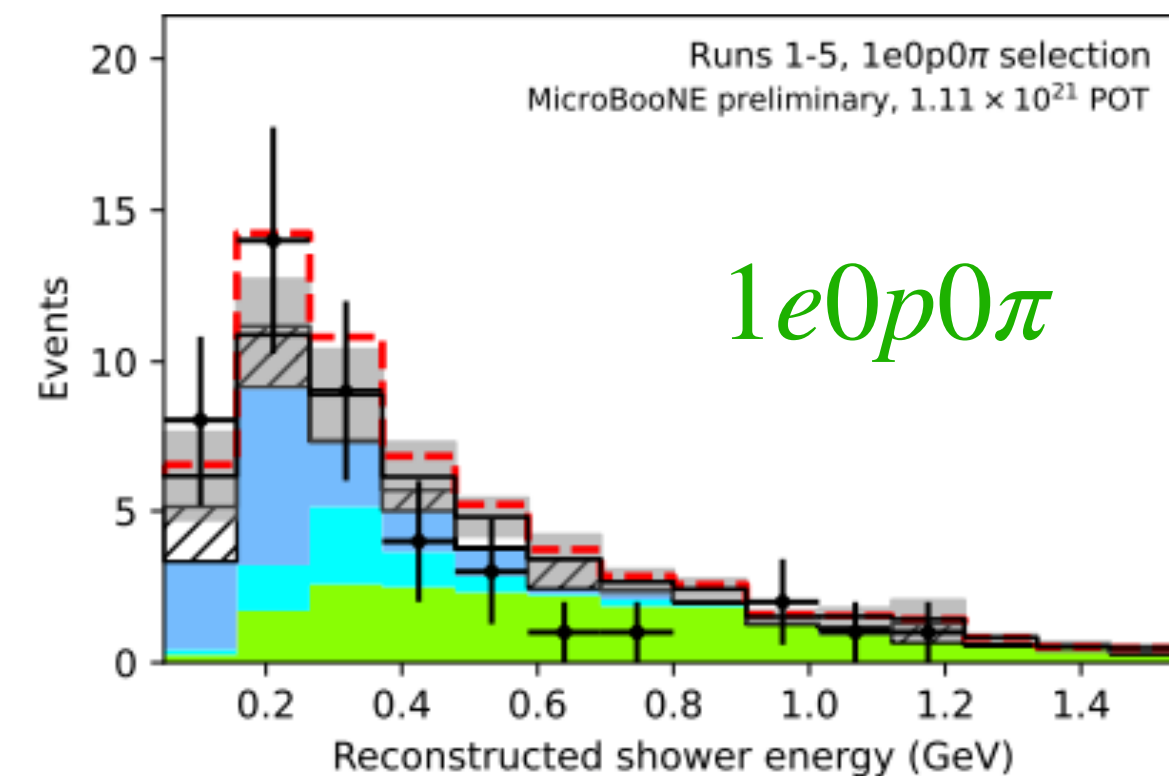
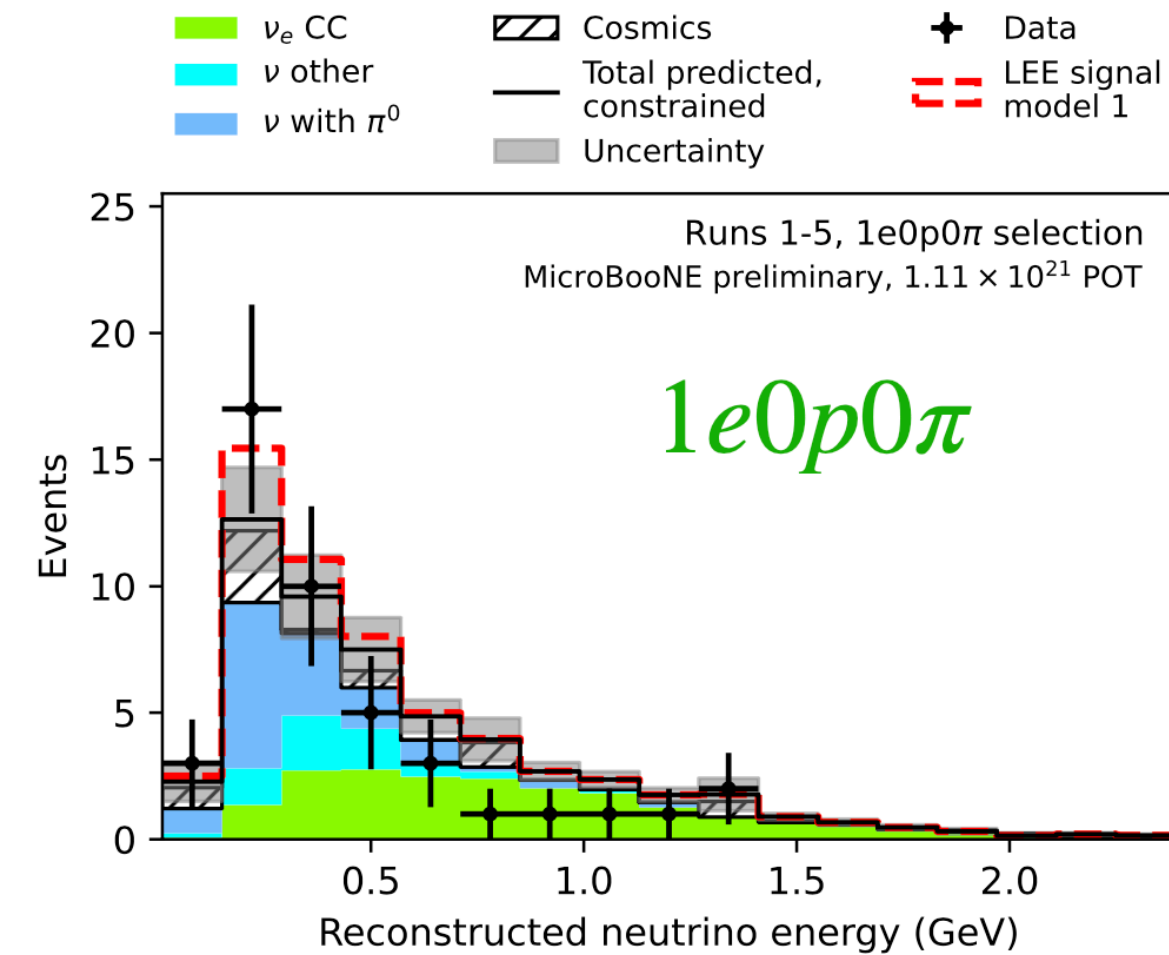
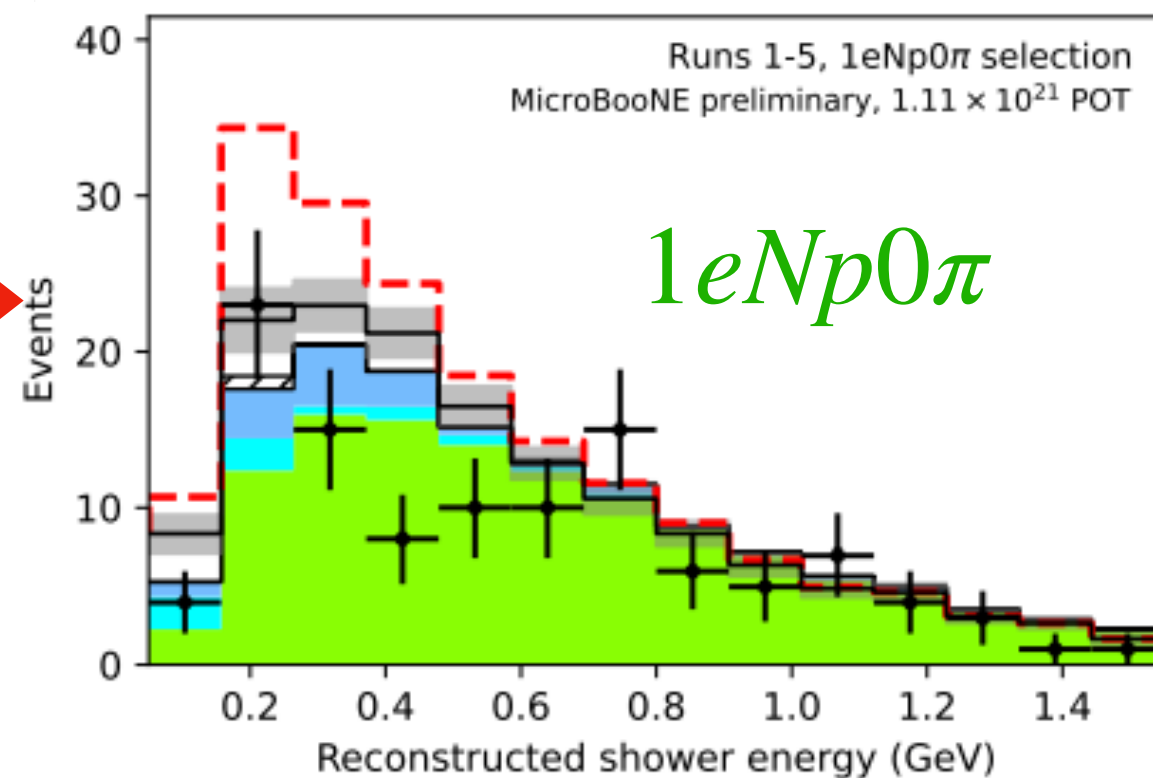
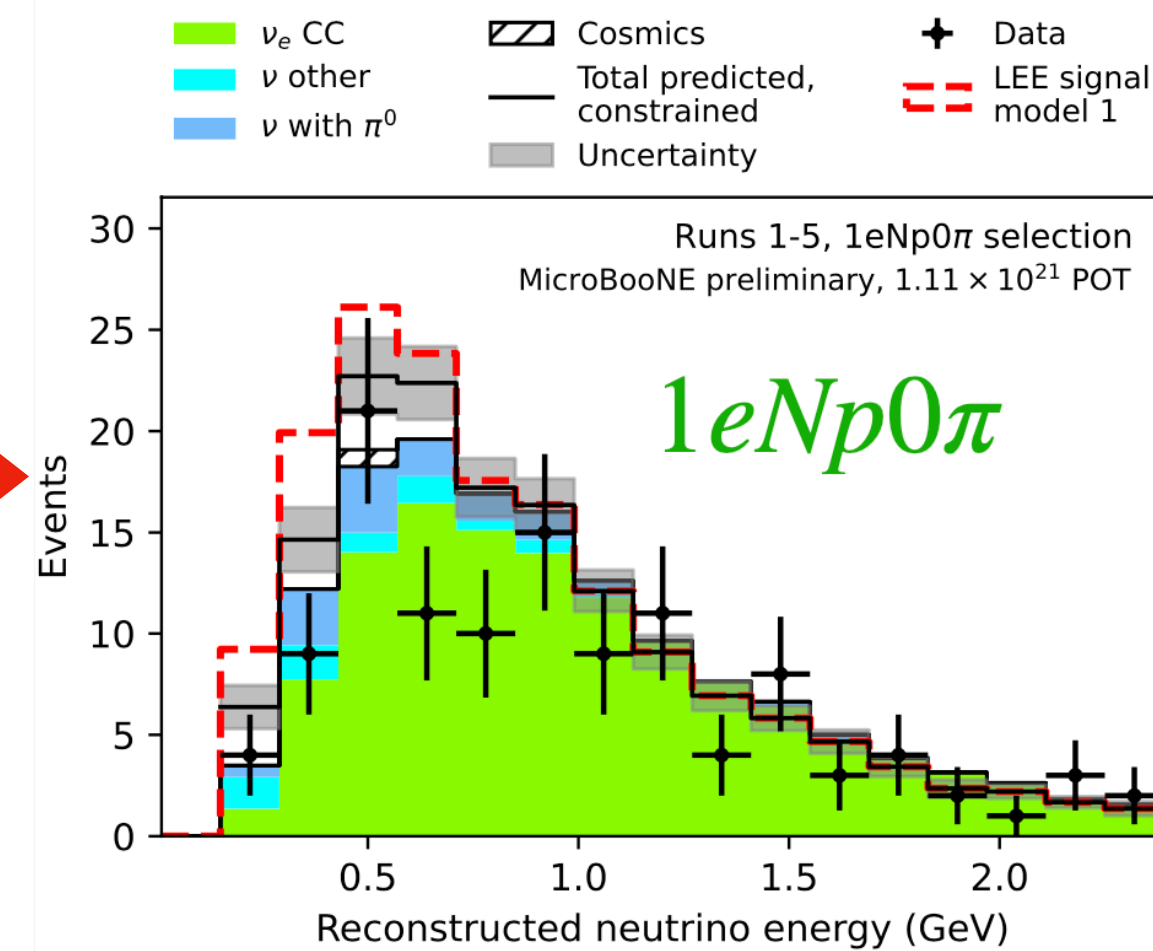
New Model



LEE Search : ν_e - like

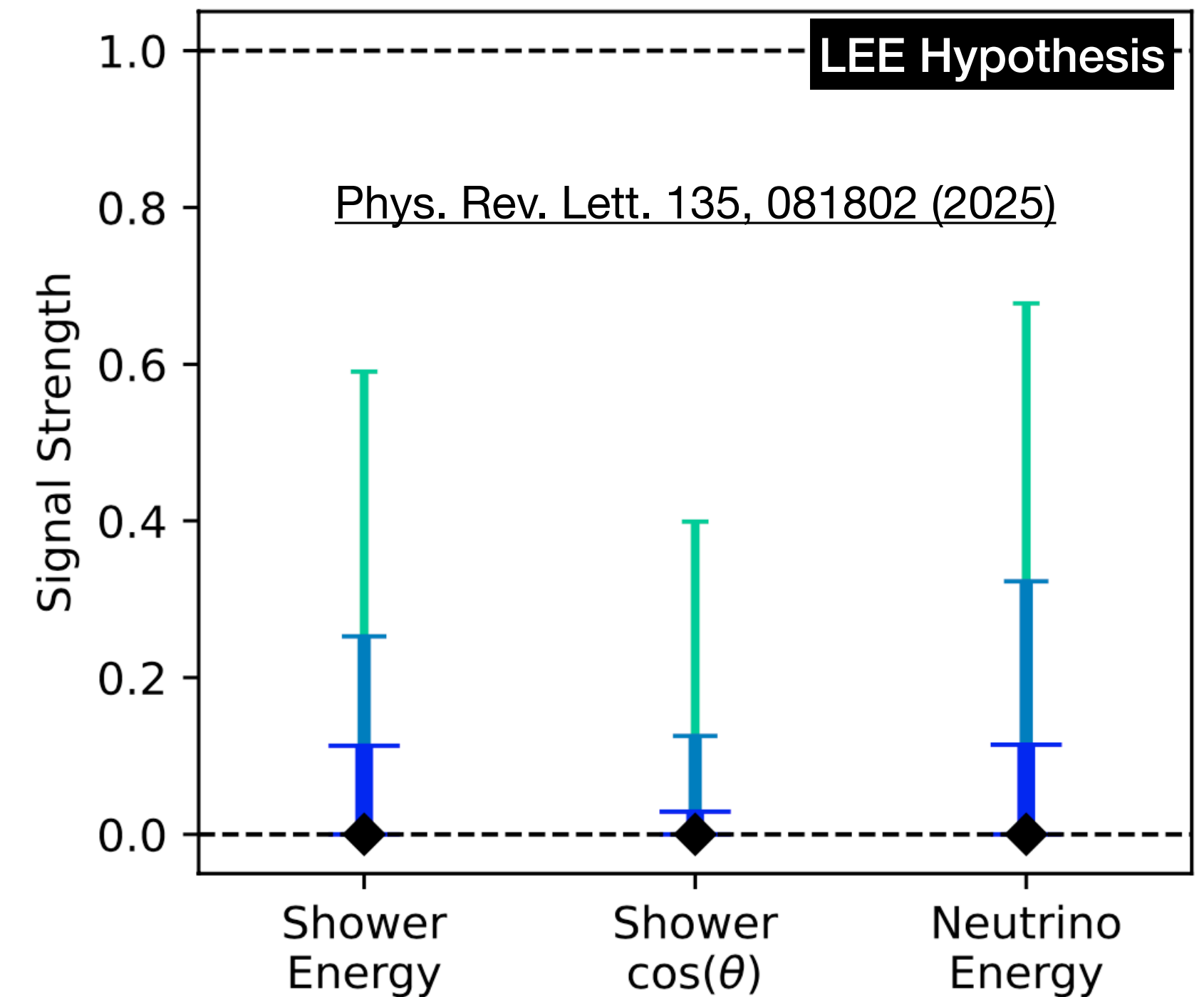
E_ν model

$E_e, \cos\theta_e$ model



Electron Hypothesis

◆ Best Fit Point
I 99% C.L.
I 90% C.L.
I 68% C.L.



- With ~65% more stats and new sideband constraints => able to provide strong limits on the MiniBooNE LEE ν_e -like

- Inconsistent with ν_e -like excess at > 99% CL!
- Consistent results across all kinematic observables

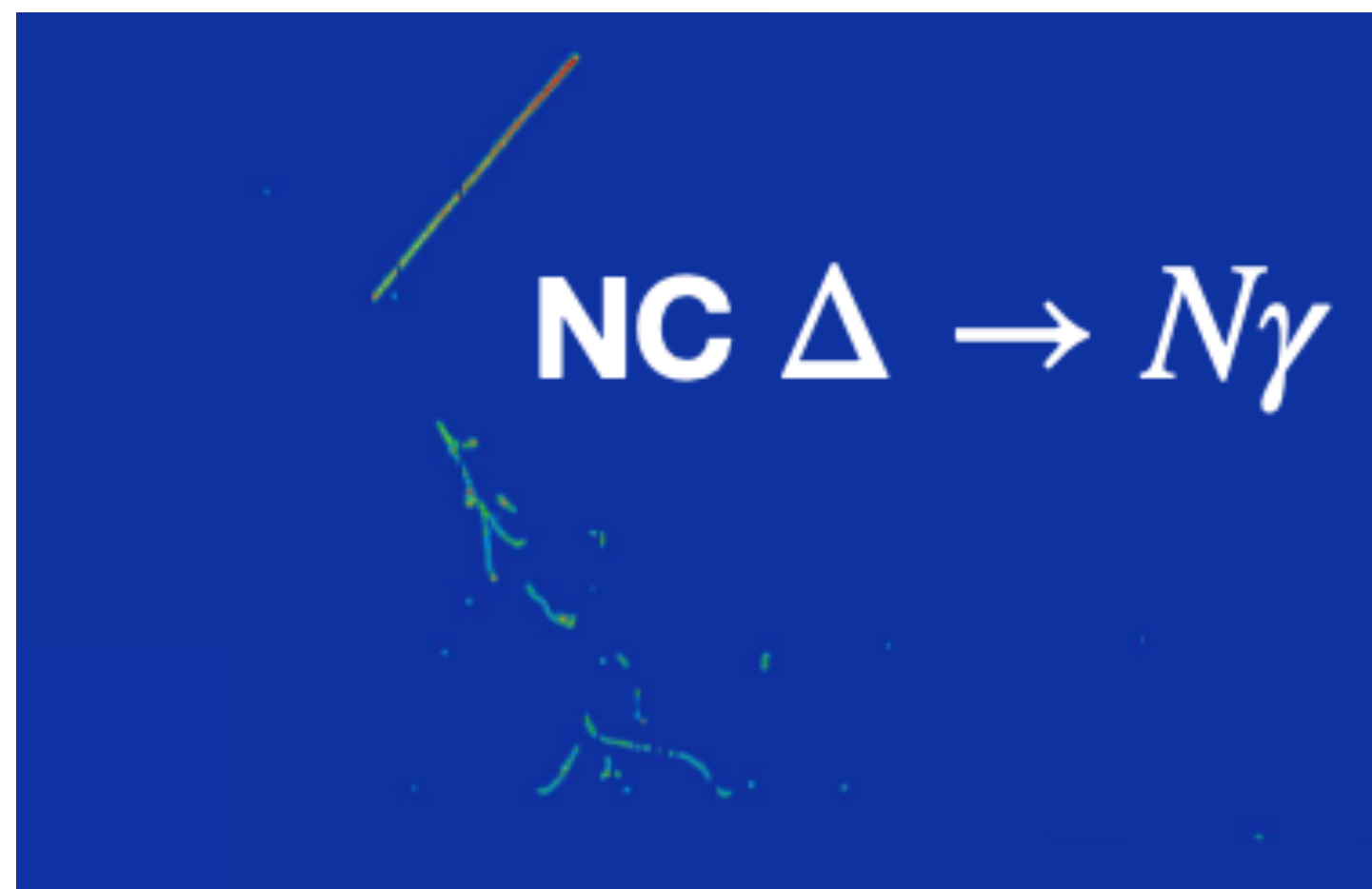
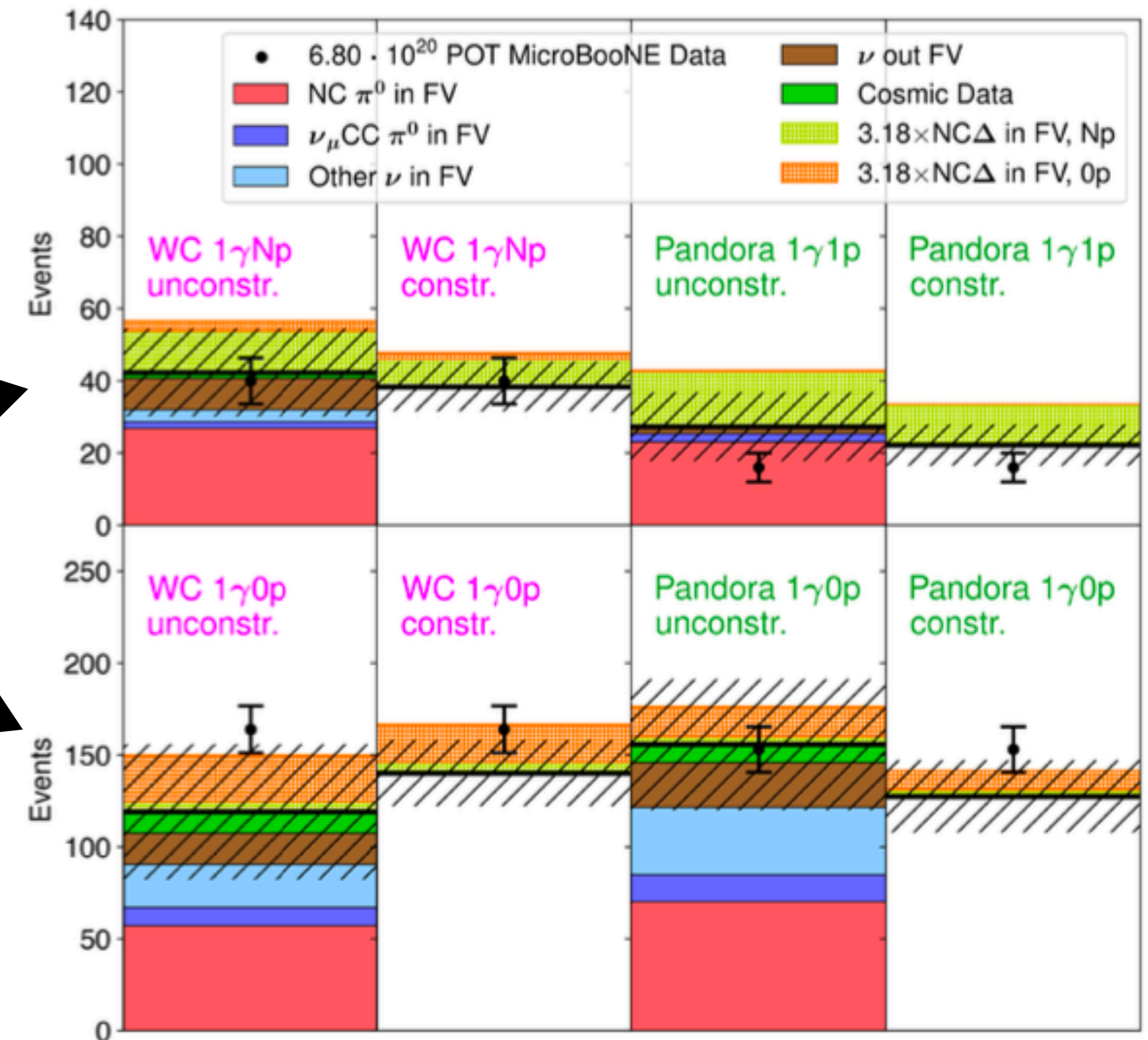
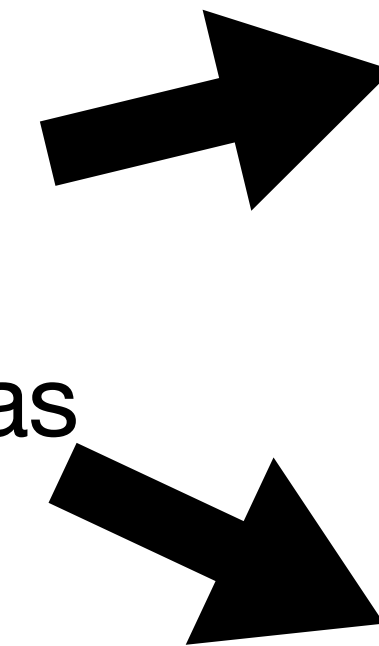
Previous $CC\nu_e$ analysis also shows no evidence of excess

PRL 128, 241801 (2022)
PRD 105, 112004 (2022)
PRD 105, 112003 (2022)
PRD 105, 112005 (2022)

LEE Search : single - γ ($NC\Delta \rightarrow N\gamma$)



- Is LEE coming from underestimated $NC\Delta$ background?
- Past MicroBooNE results focused on $NC \Delta \rightarrow 1\gamma$ SM background
- Disfavor sole MiniBooNE explanation at 95% CL [PRL 128, 111801 (2022)]
- An expanded $NC\Delta \rightarrow N\gamma$ search confirmed **no $NC\Delta$ excess** at 94.4% CL
- Cannot rule out an interpretation of the MiniBooNE LEE as an enhancement of $0p NC\Delta \rightarrow N\gamma$ events



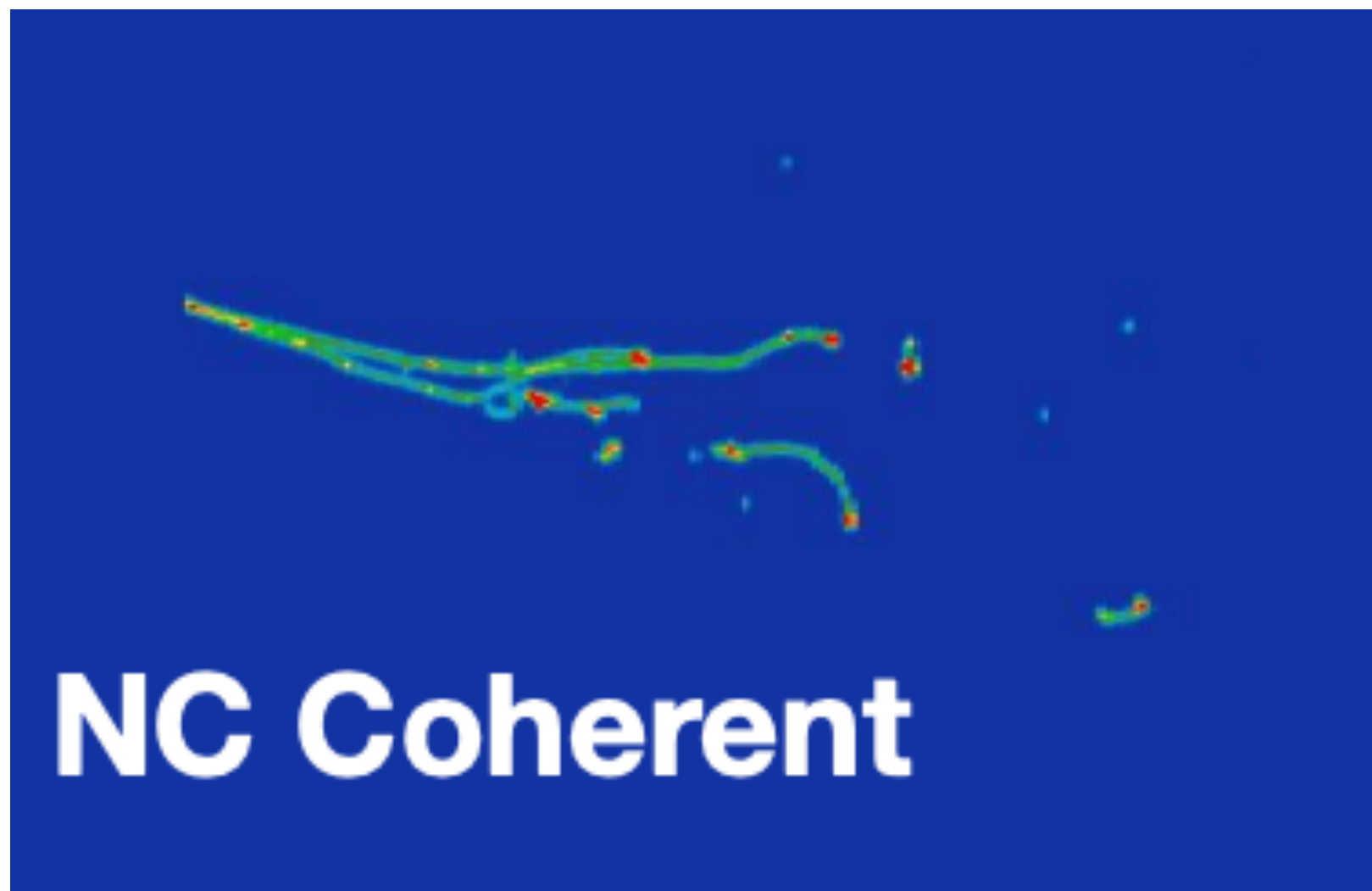
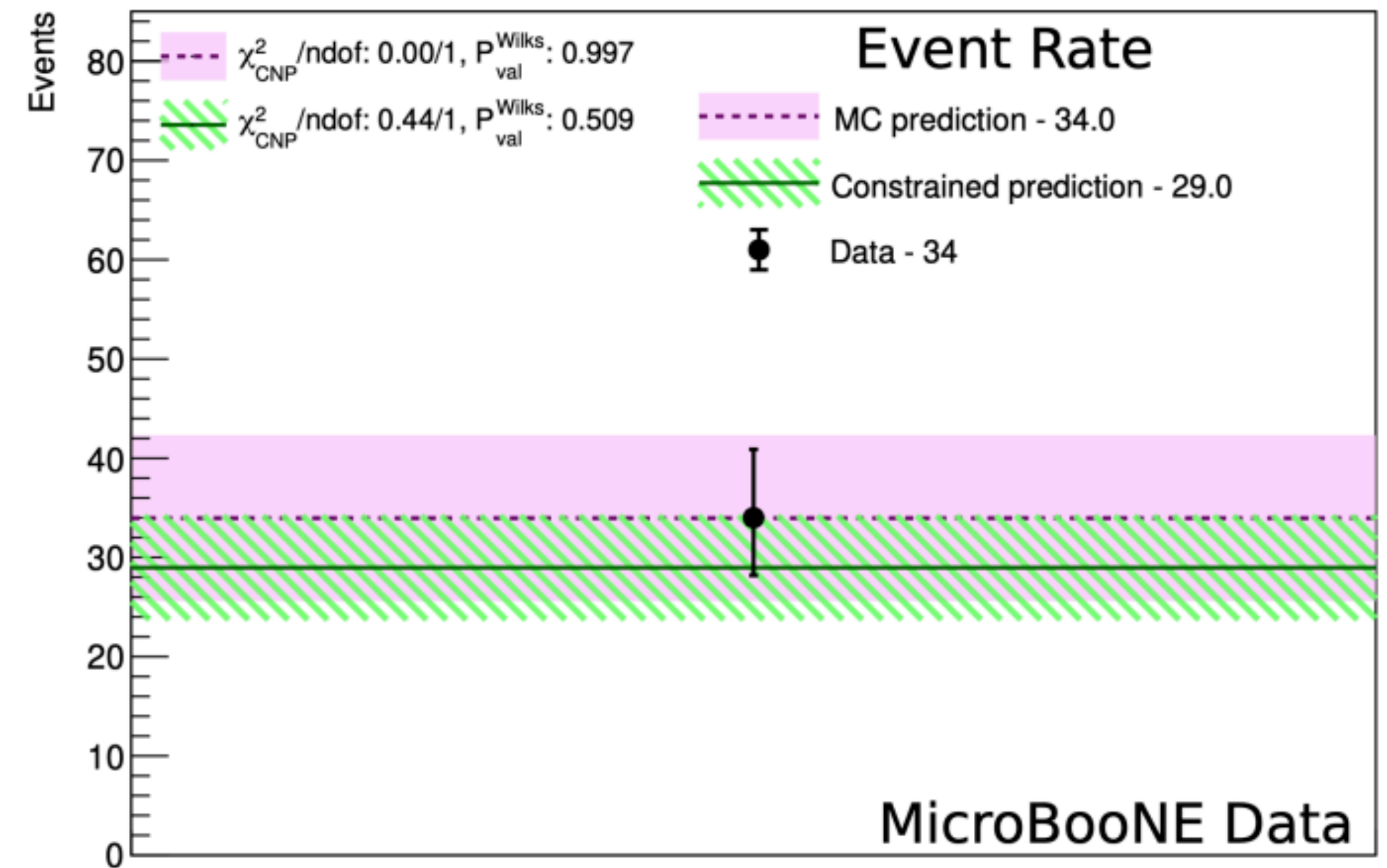
LEE Search : single - γ (NC Coherent Scattering)



Photon
Hypothesis

$$\nu(\bar{\nu}) + \text{Ar}_{gs} \rightarrow \nu(\bar{\nu}) + \text{Ar}_{gs} + \gamma$$

- NC Coherent Scattering : Sub Dominant source of single γ + 0p
- **No evidence** of any increased rate observed
- World's first upper limit on the cross section of the process of $1.49 \times 10^{-41} \text{cm}^2$ at 90% CL



LEE Search : single - γ (Inclusive Single γ)

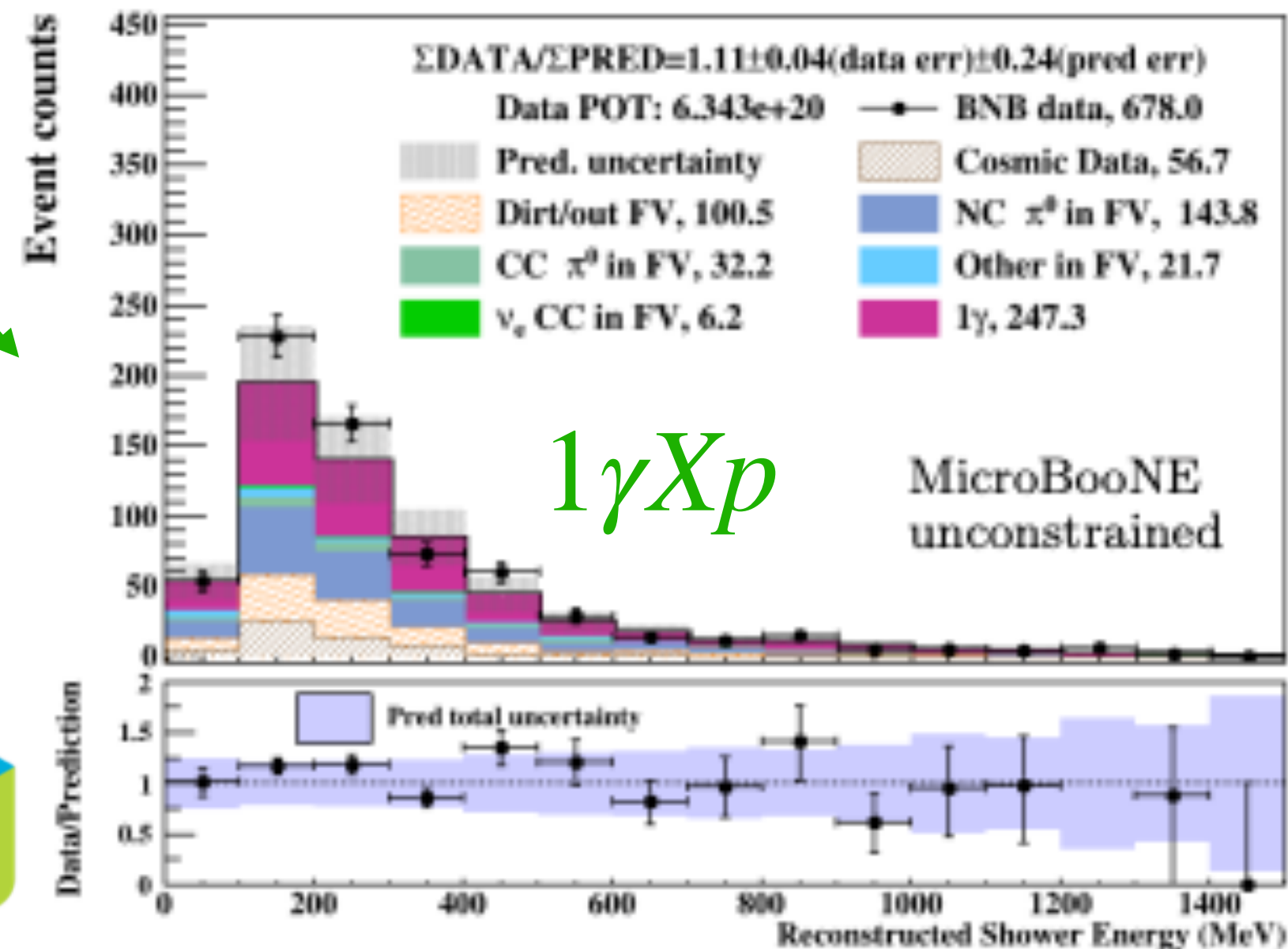
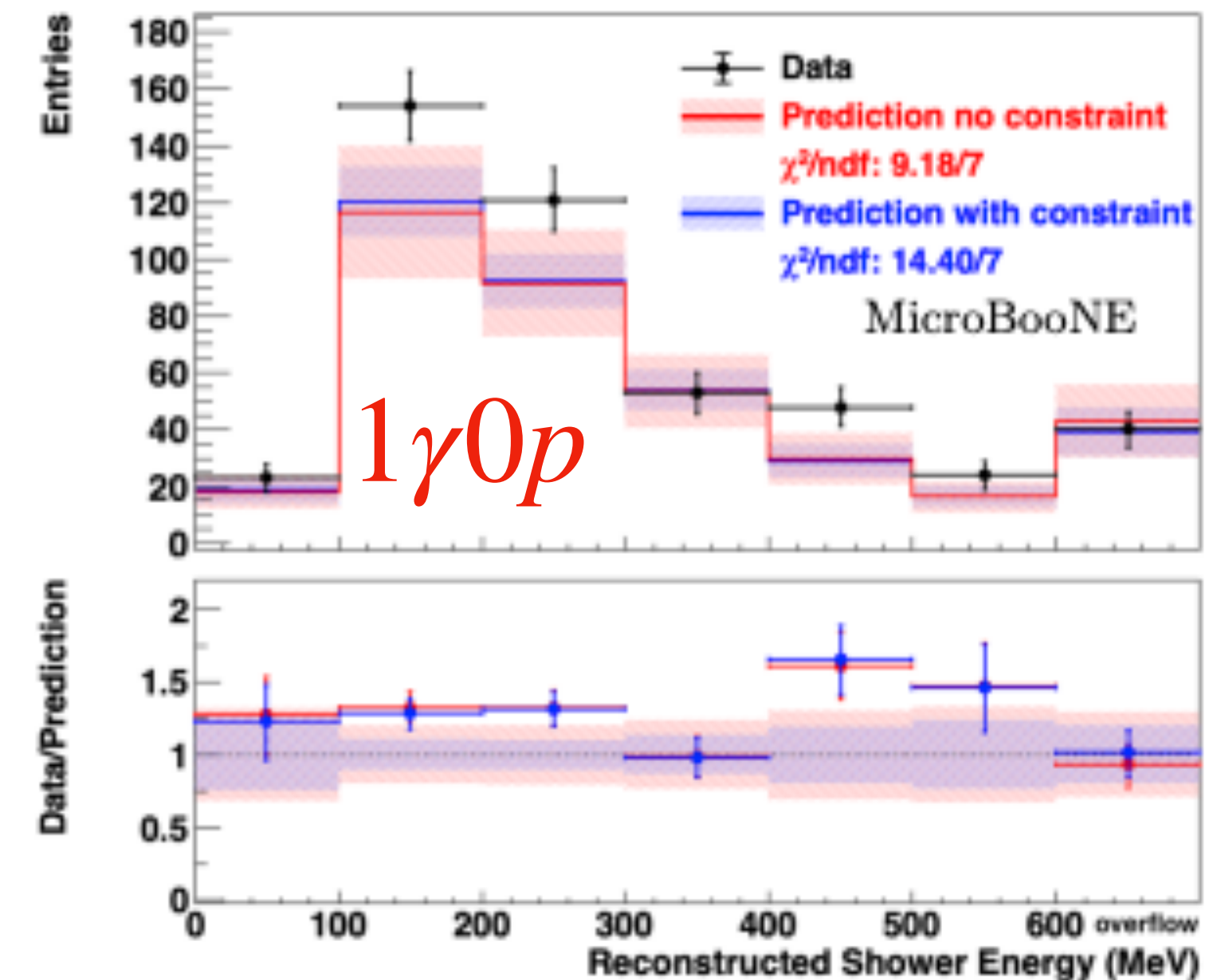


Photon Hypothesis

- Inclusive Single γ : Any event that would look like a single γ at MiniBooNE's threshold
- **Good agreement** with background observed in distributions where protons accompany the single-photons ($1\gamma Xp$)
- **Observed a 2σ excess** of single-photon events with no protons ($1\gamma 0p$) with shower energies below 600 MeV



single-photon, zero-proton events



Hagaman & Yandel @ Fermilab 2025

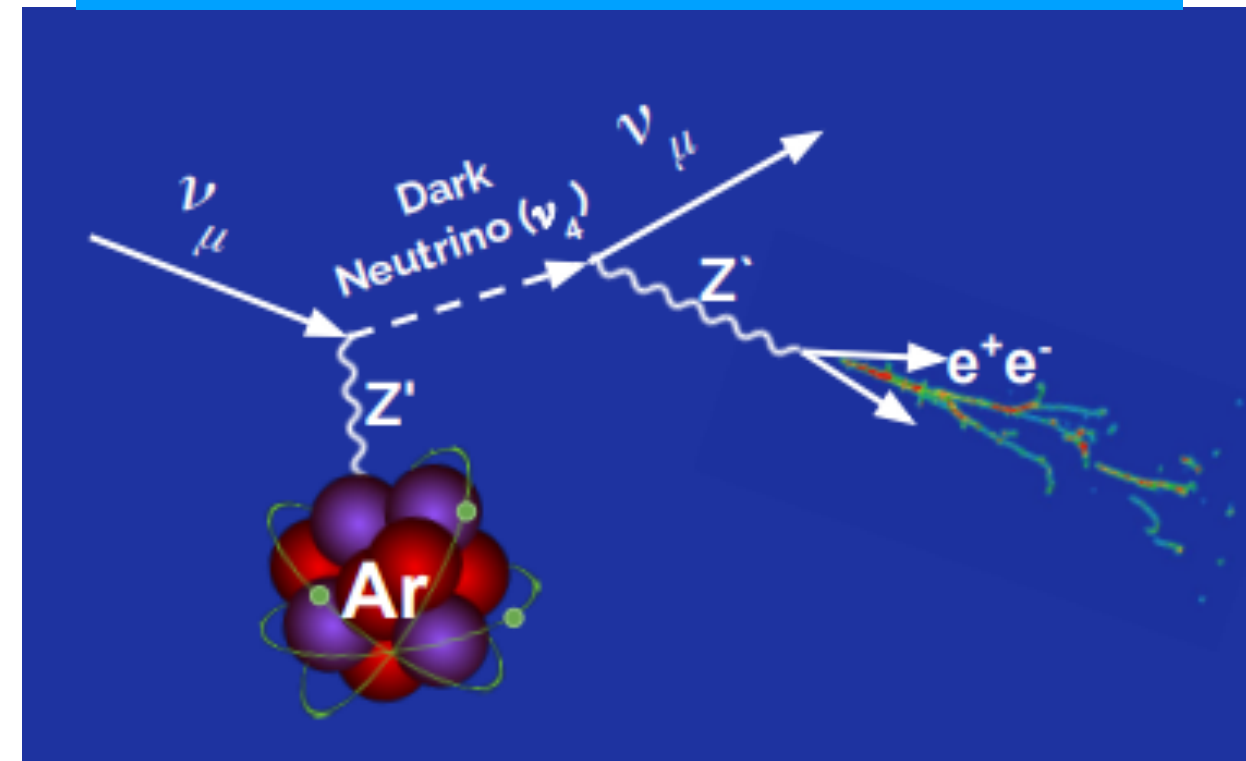
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2502.06064>

LEE Search : BSM e^+e^-



- Is BSM physics producing e^+e^- topology?
- **Models:** SM neutrino upscatters via exchange of dark boson (Z') into sterile neutrino, which decays via Z' into an e^+e^- pair
- **Result :**
 - No evidence for an e^+e^- signal consistent with a single or dual dark neutrino scenario
 - World's first direct test of these dark sector models as an explanation for the MiniBooNE low-energy excess
 - **Excludes the majority of the parameter space viable as a solution to the MiniBooNE anomaly** (especially for light Z' boson masses) at the 95% CL

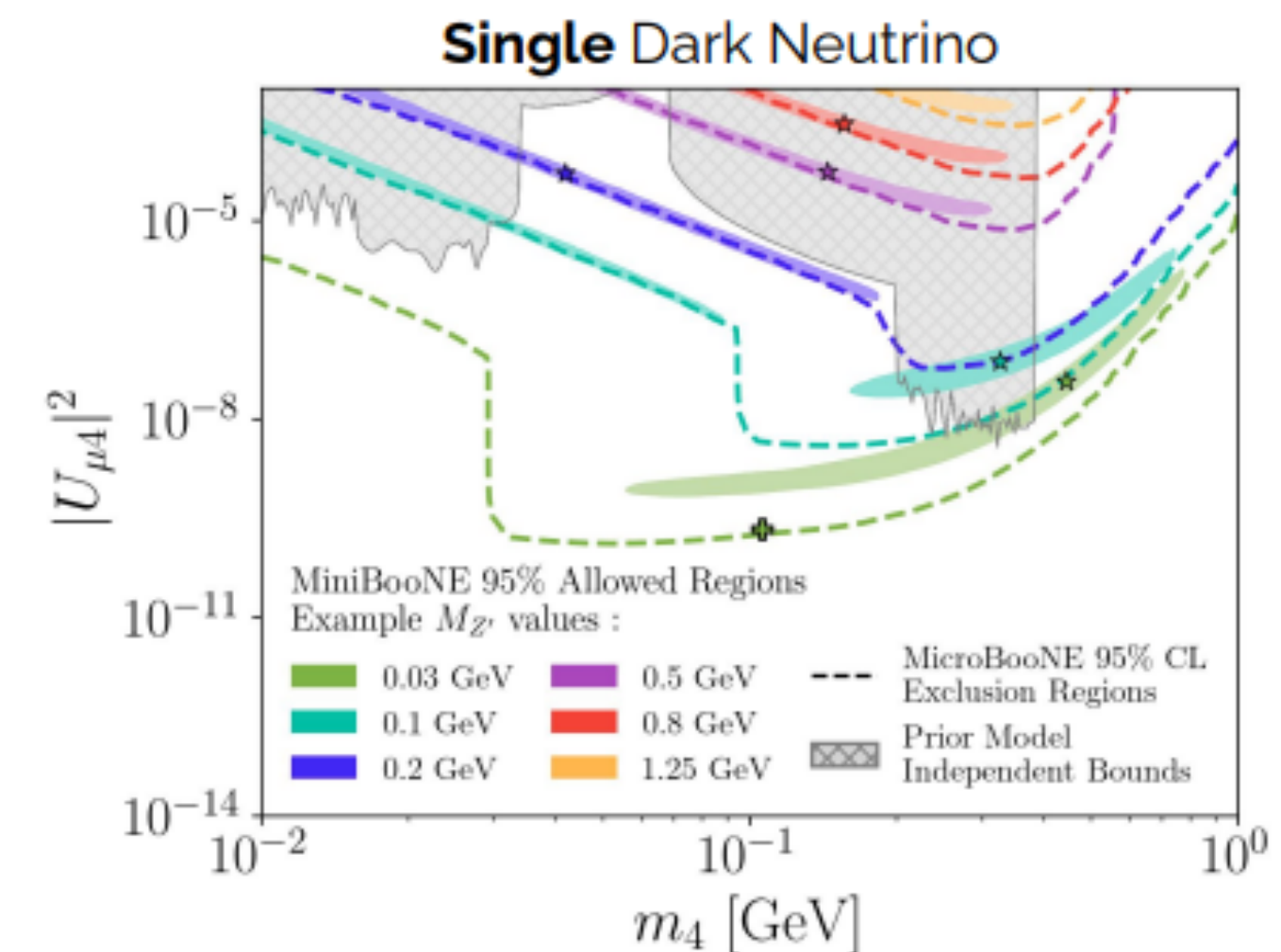
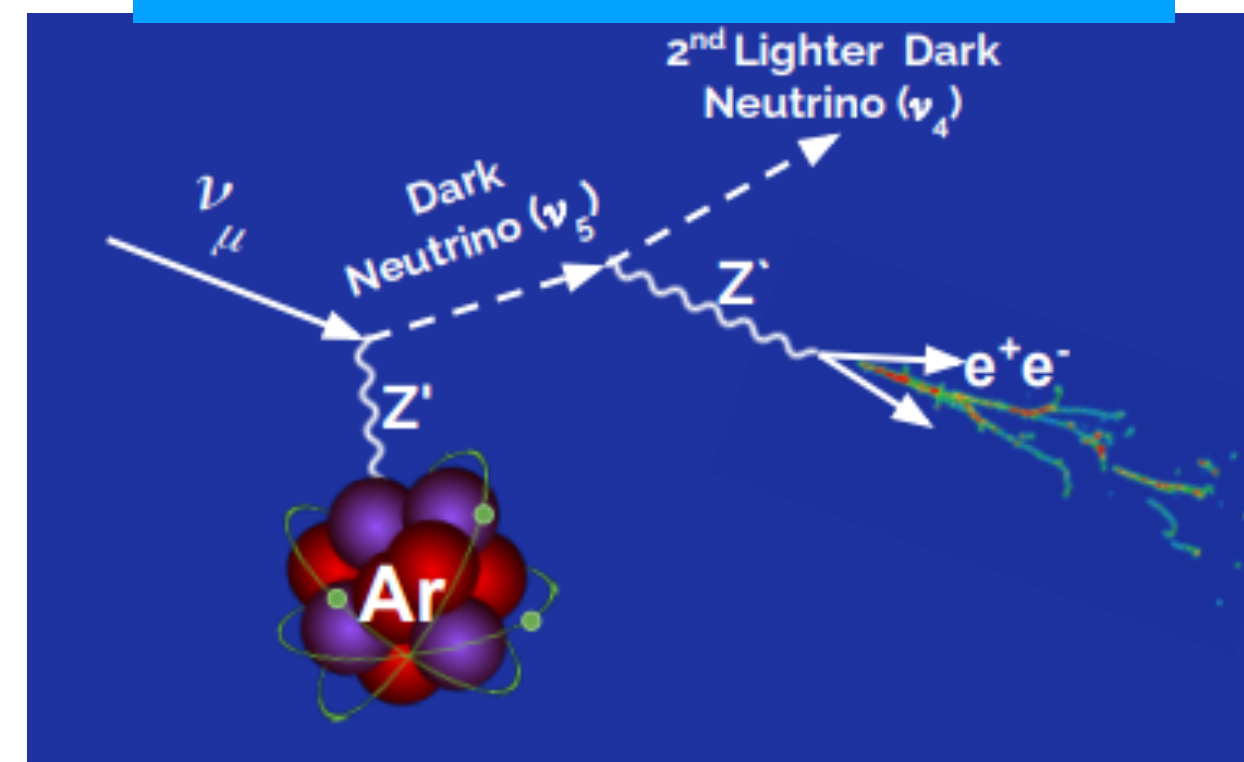
Single Dark Neutrino Model



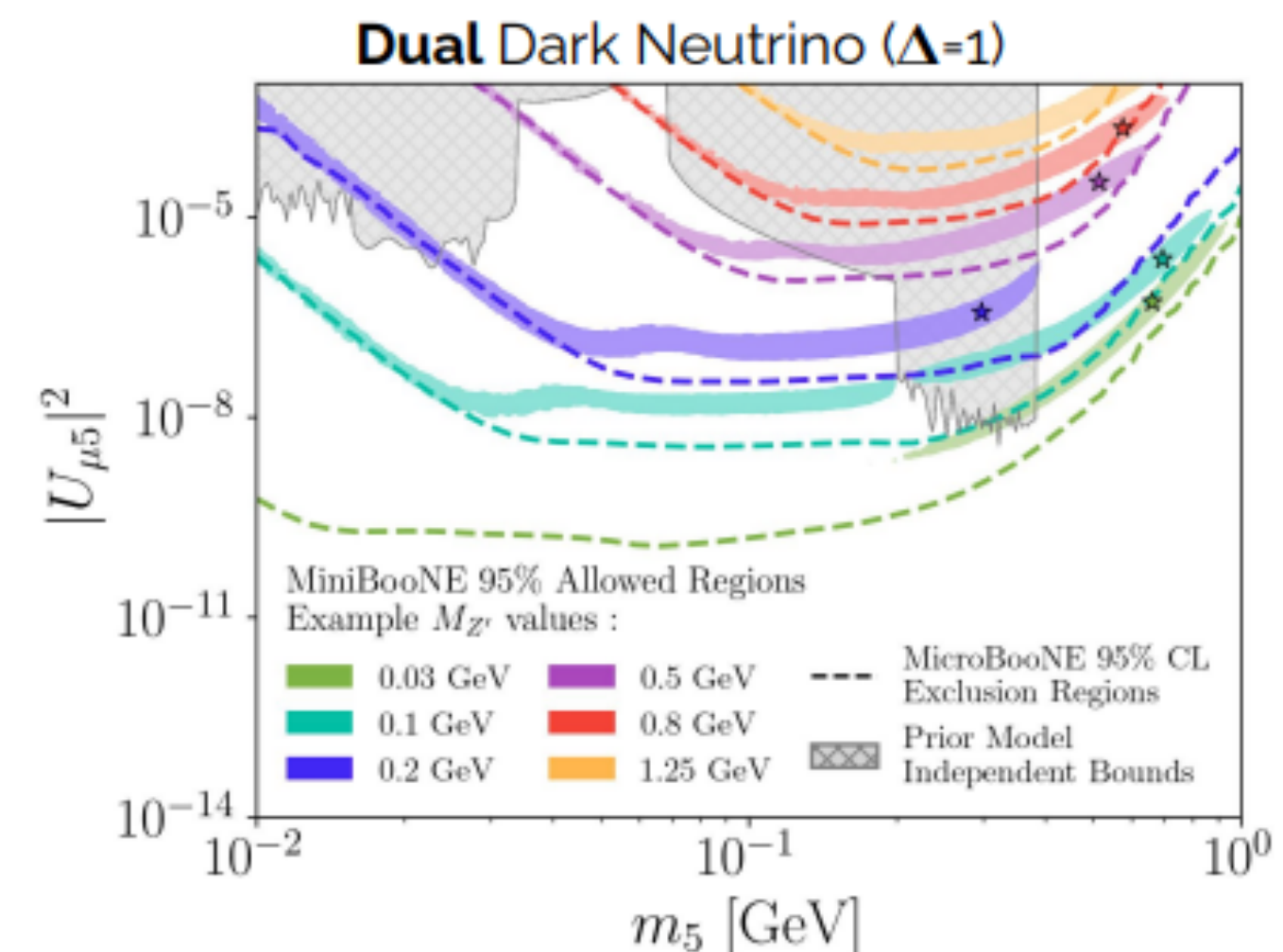
PRL 121 (2018) 24, 241801

PRD 99 (2019) 071701

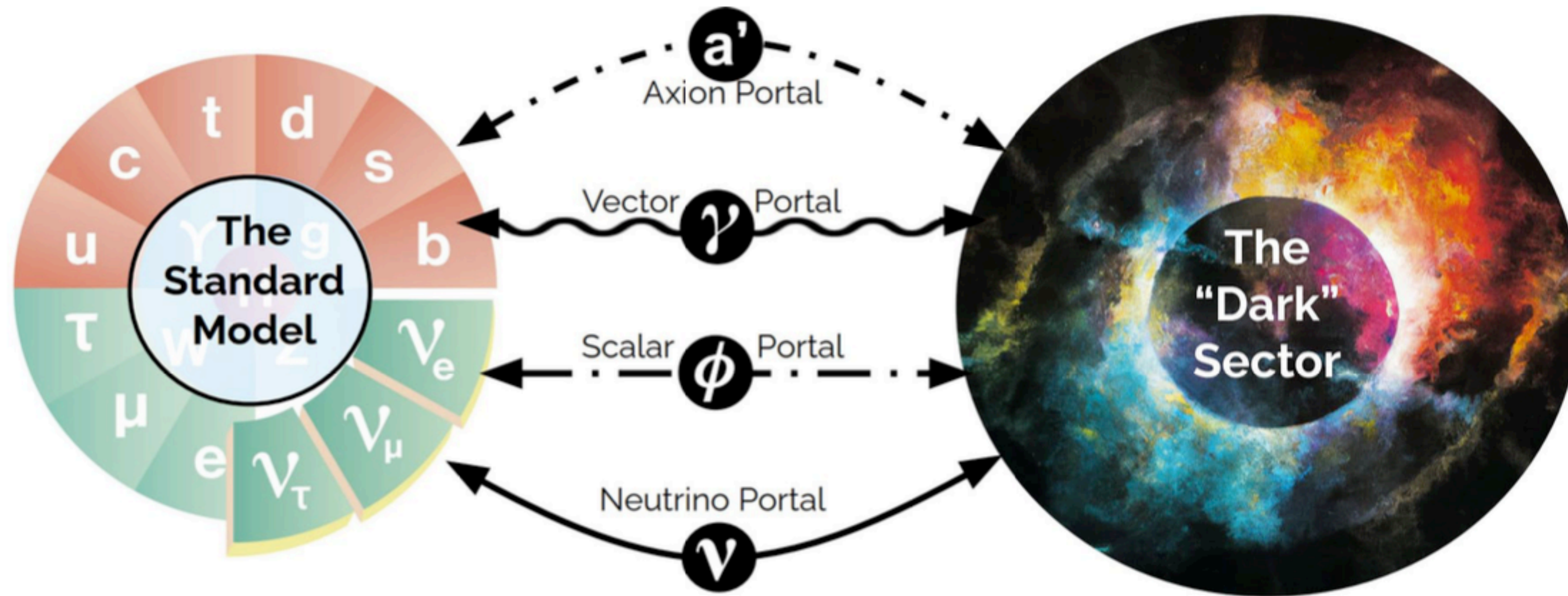
Dual Dark Neutrino Model



arXiv:2502.10900



Portals to the Dark Sector



ν Neutrino Portal
 $\mathcal{L} \supset -y^\alpha L_\alpha H N + \text{h.c.}$

- Light 3+1 sterile Neutrino

- Heavy Neutral Leptons

ϕ Scalar Portal
 $\mathcal{L} \supset (A S + \lambda S^2) H^\dagger H$

- Higgs Portal Scalars

γ Vector Portal
 $\mathcal{L} \supset \epsilon F'_{\mu\nu} B^{\mu\nu}$

- Light Dark Matter

- Millicharged Particles

a' Axion Portal
 $\mathcal{L} \supset c_{GG} \frac{\alpha_s}{4\pi} \frac{a}{f} G_{\mu\nu}^a \tilde{G}^{a,\mu\nu}$

- Heavy QCD Axions

$\nu \gamma$ Combined and Non-Minimal Portals

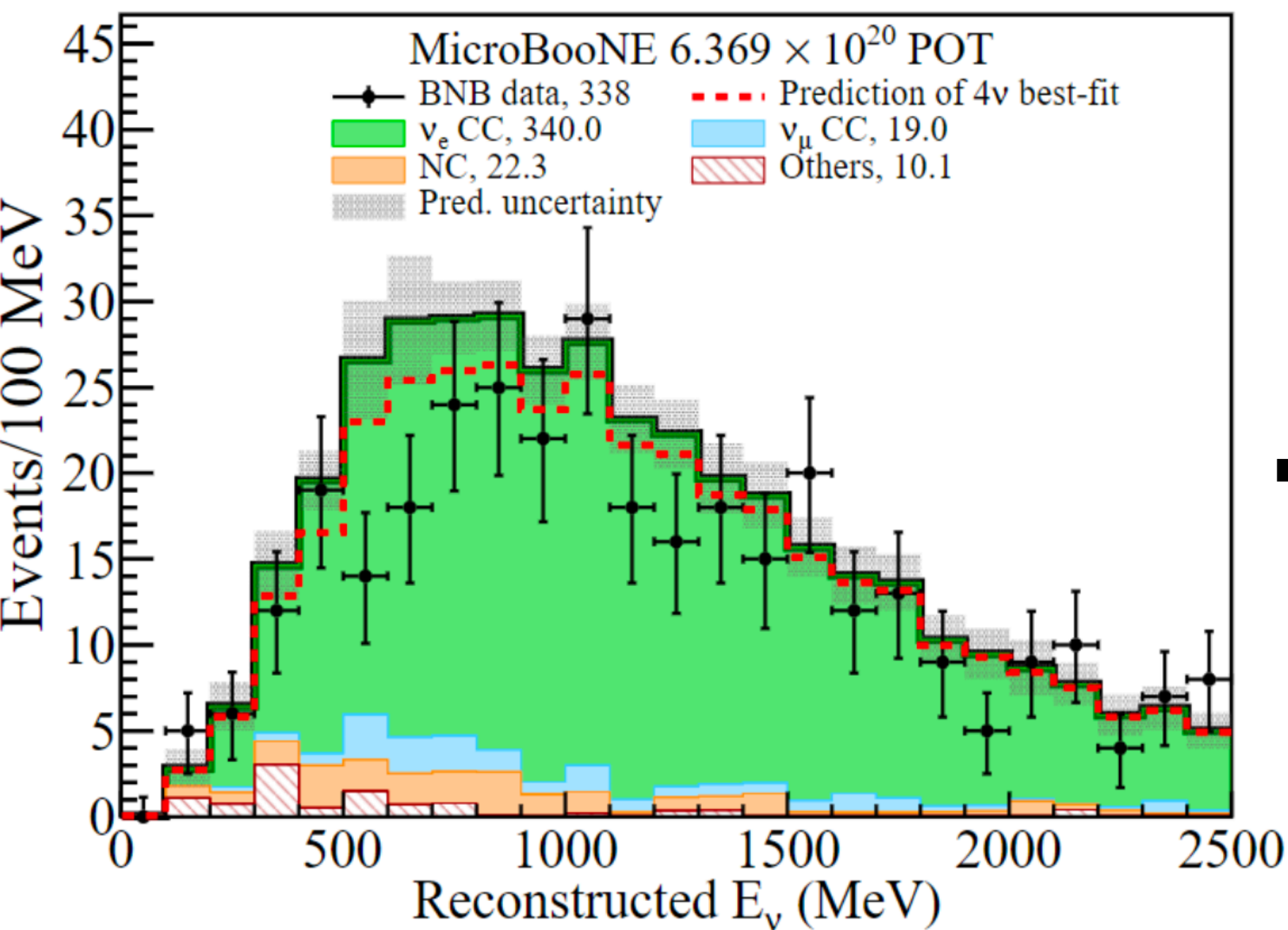
Results

Ongoing work

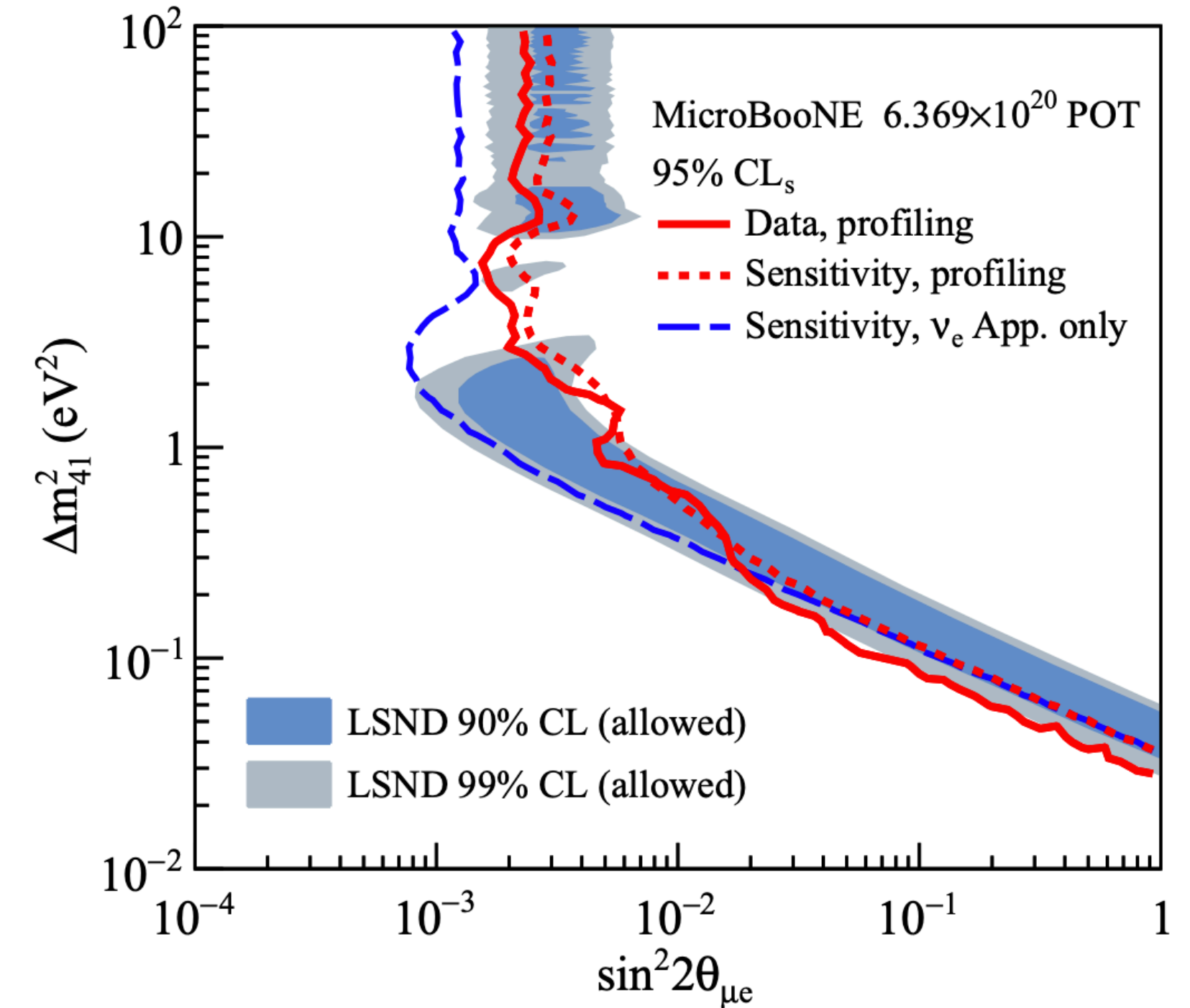
Credit: Mark Ross-Lonergan



3+1 Oscillation Analysis : BNB-only results



LEE ν_e search was
reinterpreted under 3+1 sterile
neutrino oscillation hypothesis



- Analysis considered ν_e appearance and disappearance effects simultaneously
- The BNB data result is found to be **consistent with the 3ν hypothesis within 1σ** following the Feldman-Cousins approach
- Excluded some region allowed by LSND at 95% CL



3+1 Oscillation Analysis : Degeneracy of Oscillation Parameters

MICROBOONE-NOTE-1132-PUB

- Observed ν_e events are a combination result of ν_e appearance and disappearance:

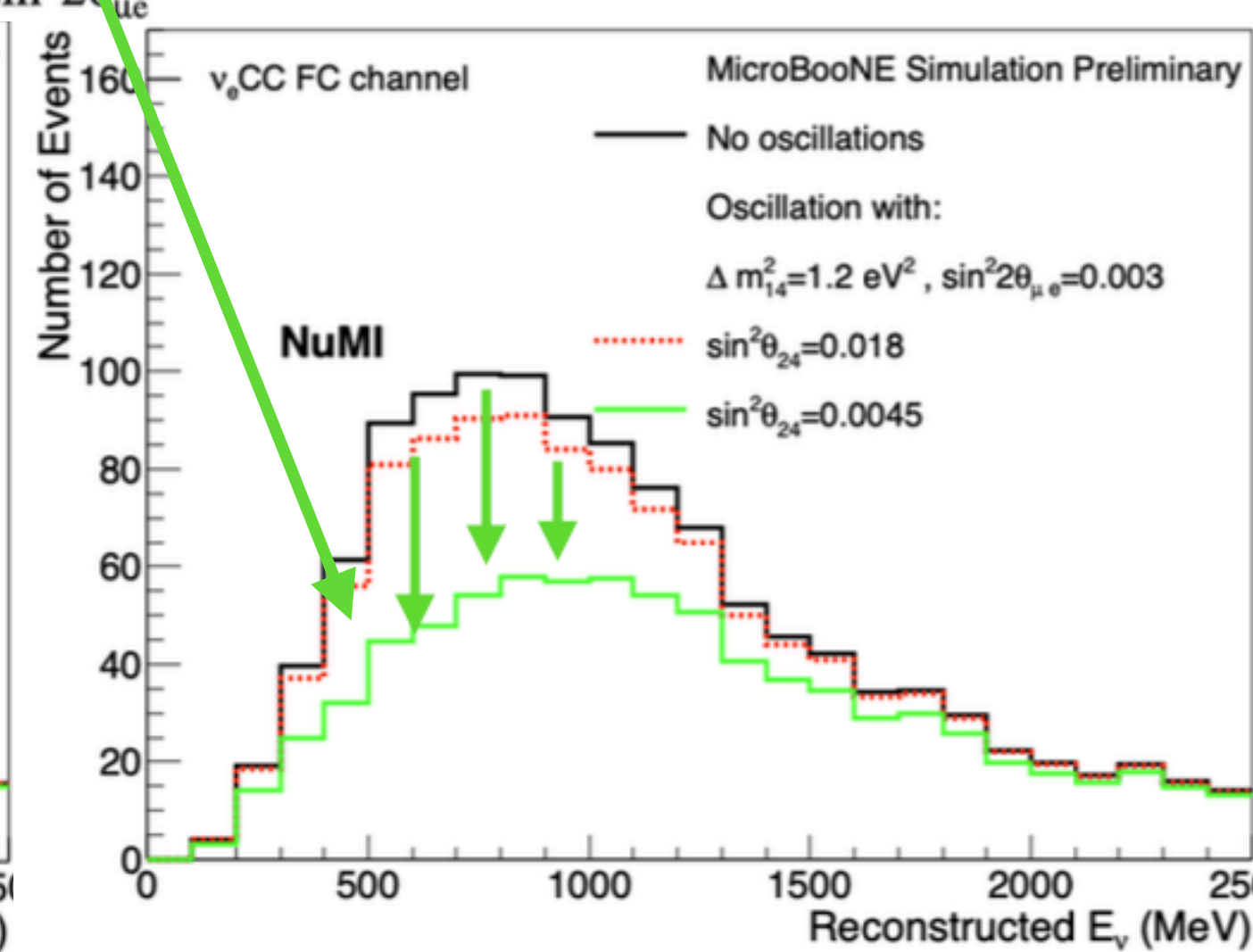
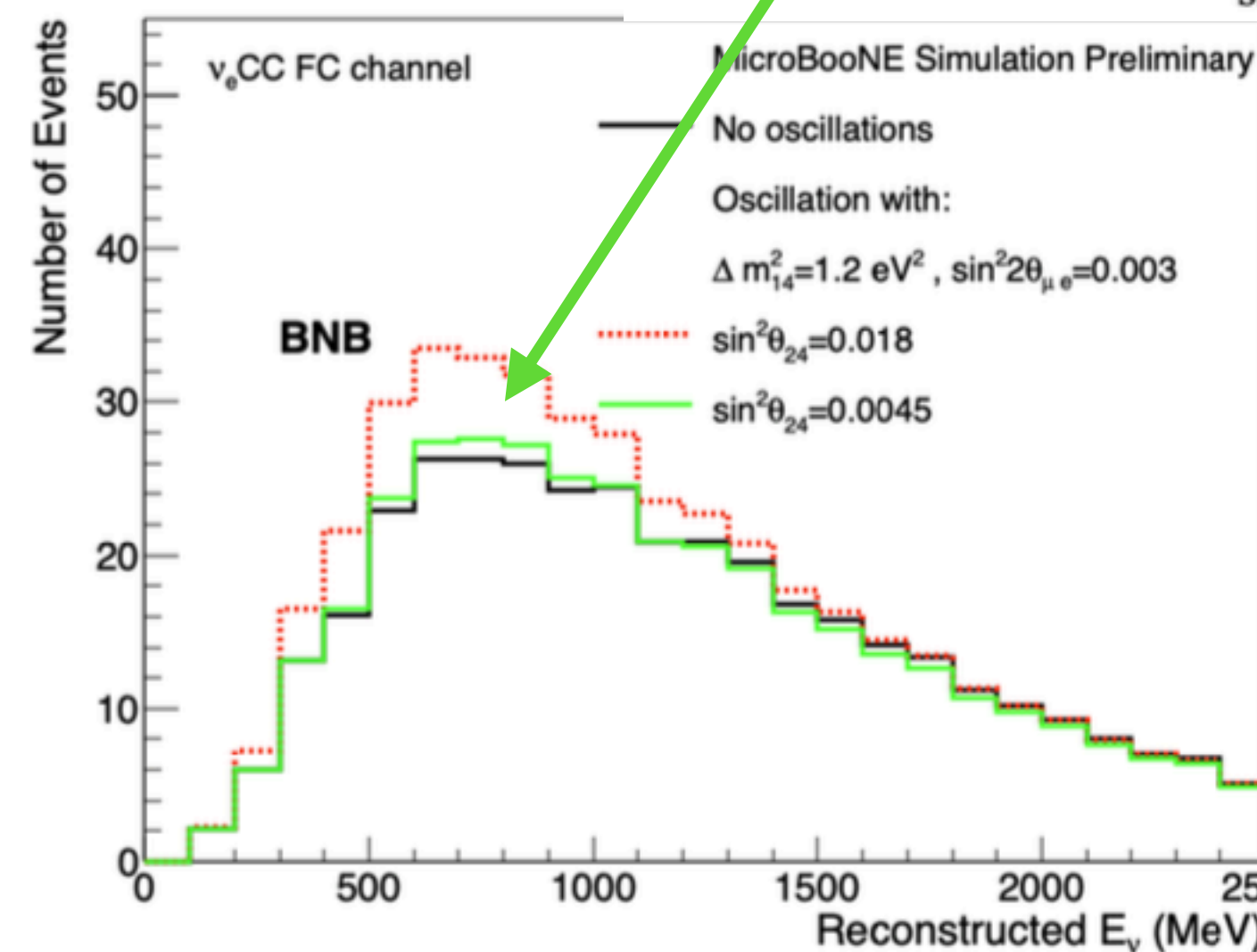
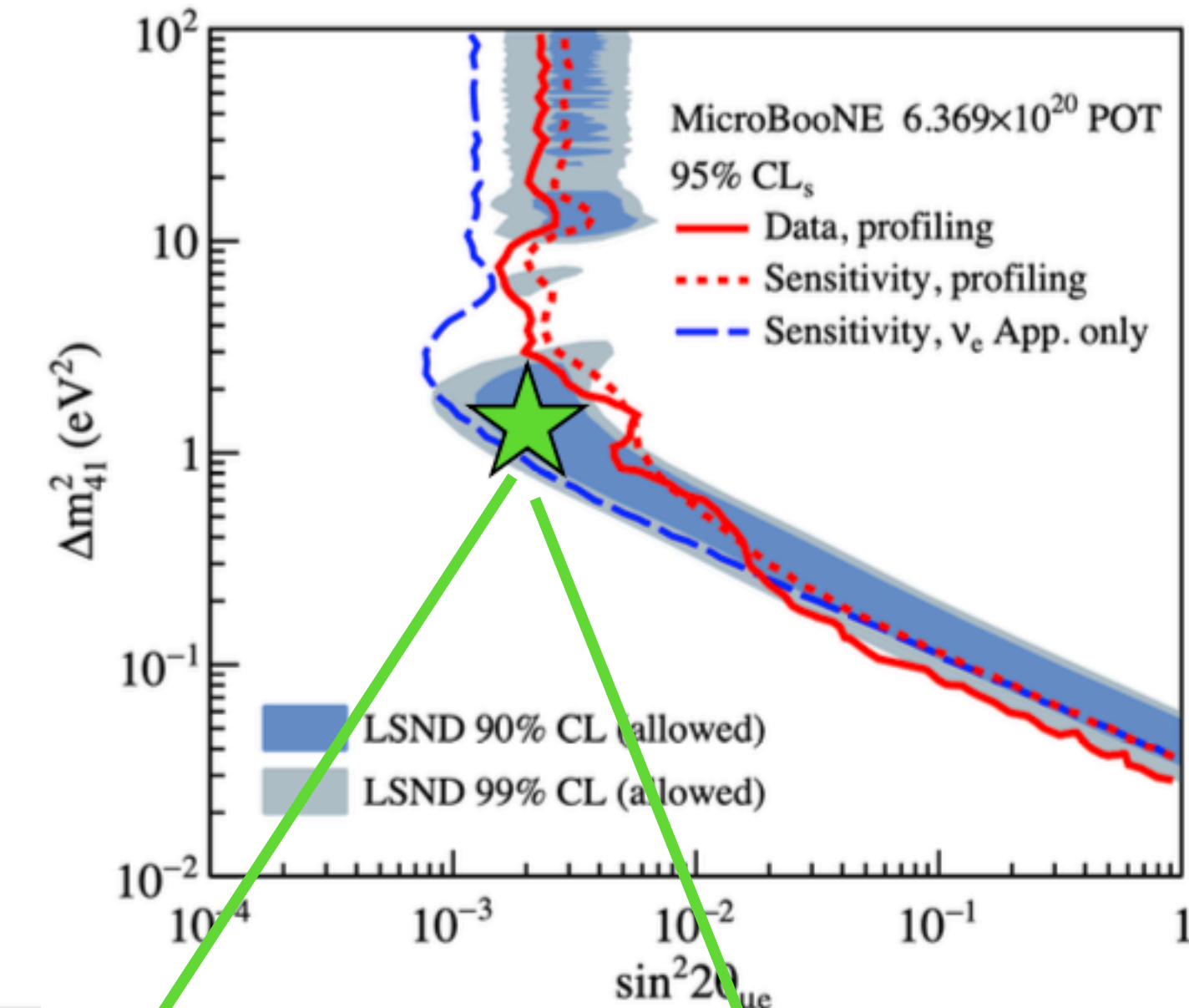
$$N_{\nu_e} = N_{\text{intrinsic } \nu_e} \cdot P_{\nu_e \rightarrow \nu_e} + N_{\text{intrinsic } \nu_\mu} \cdot P_{\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e}$$

$$= N_{\text{intrinsic } \nu_e} \cdot \left[1 + (R_{\nu_\mu/\nu_e} \cdot \sin^2 \theta_{24} - 1) \cdot \sin^2 2\theta_{14} \cdot \sin^2 \Delta_{41} \right]$$

- Degeneracy when $\sin^2 \theta_{24}$ approaches R (the ratio of beam intrinsic ν_e and ν_μ flux):

- BNB and NuMI beams have different degeneracy points:

- ~0.005 for BNB [on-axis with baseline ~470m]
- ~0.04 for NuMI [off-axis with baseline ~680m]

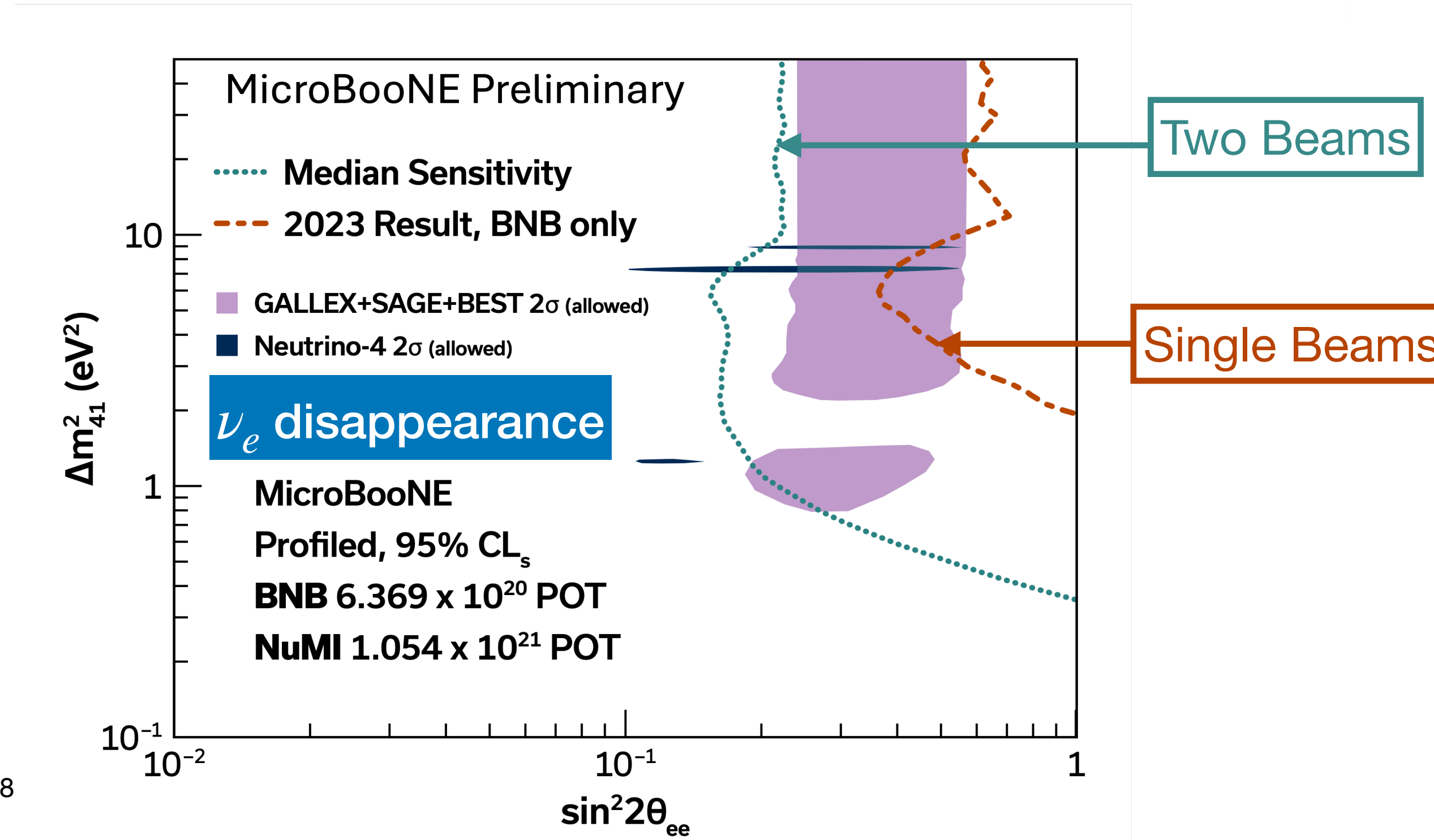
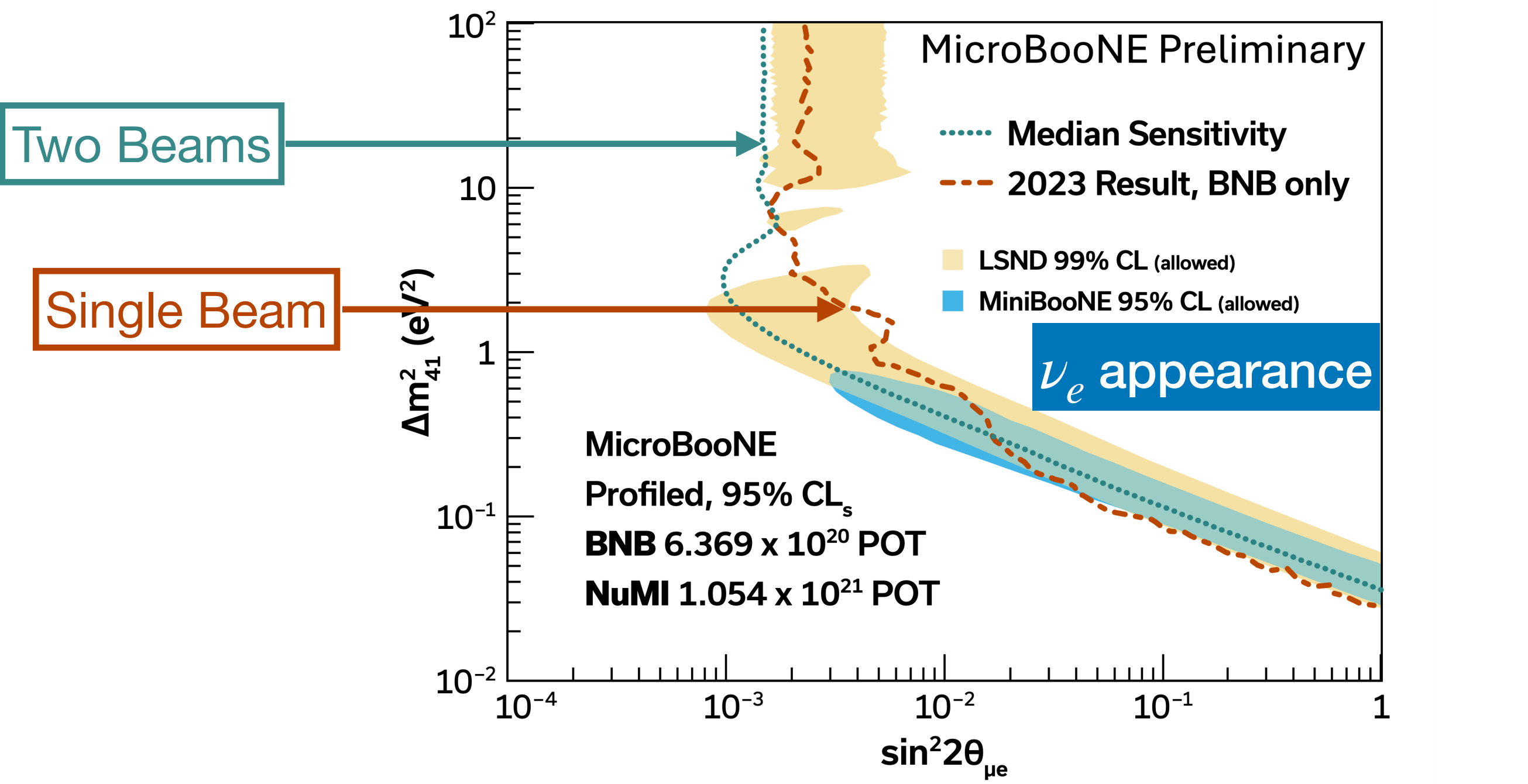


Combination of two beams can break degeneracy!



3+1 Oscillation Analysis : Sensitivities

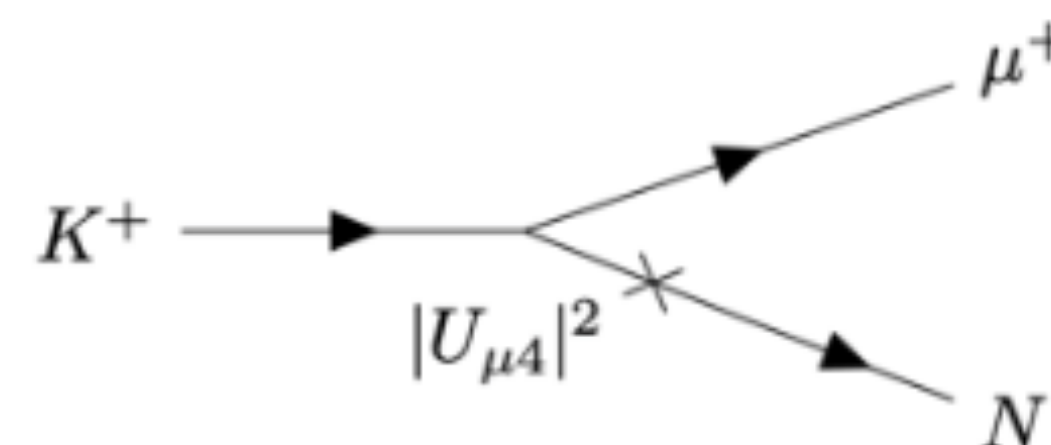
- Joint 3+1 analyst with **BNB + NuMI** allows significant enhancement to sensitivity
- Results a coming very soon! (~ a couple months)
- More details in [MICROBOONE-NOTE-1132-PUB](#)



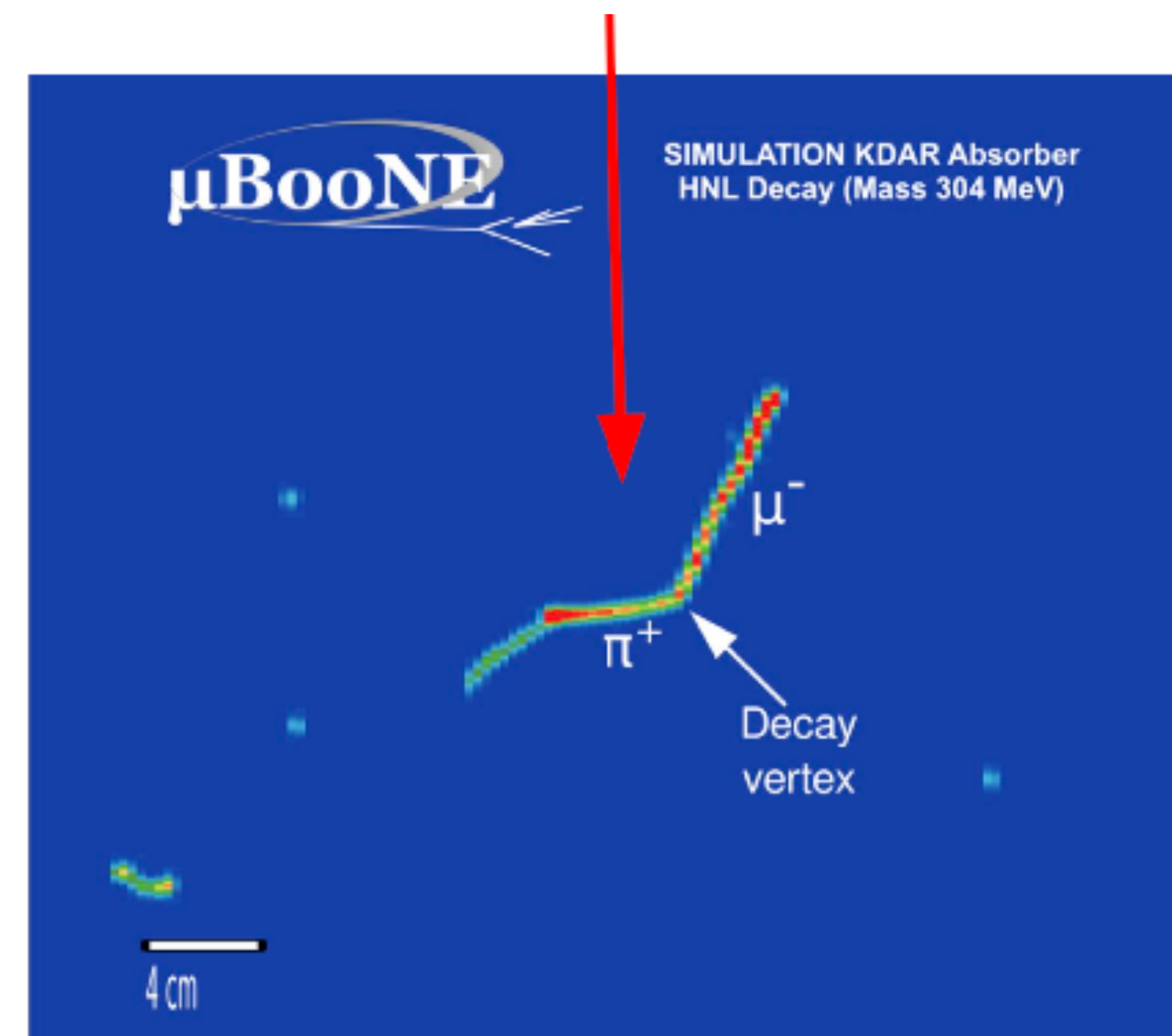
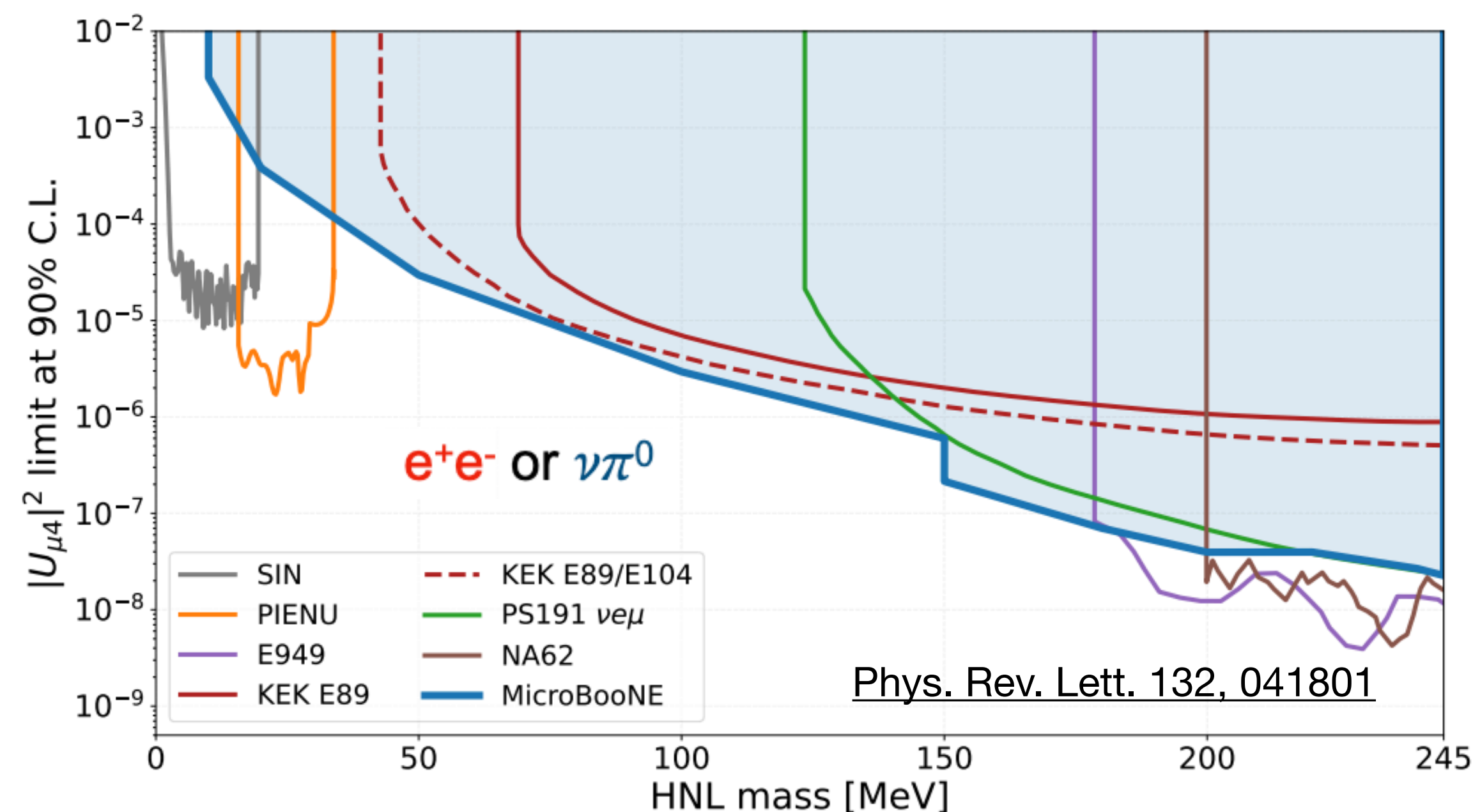
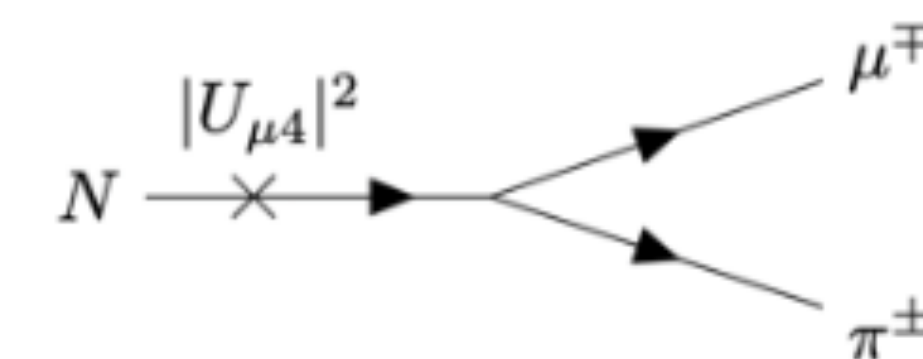
Heavy Neutral Leptons

- Heavy Neutral Lepton (HNL) relevant for neutrino mass (see-saw), Baryon asymmetry, and Dark matter
- Competitive limit across broad range of HNL mass, including $<100\text{MeV}$ (multiple final states)

produced in beam via mixing

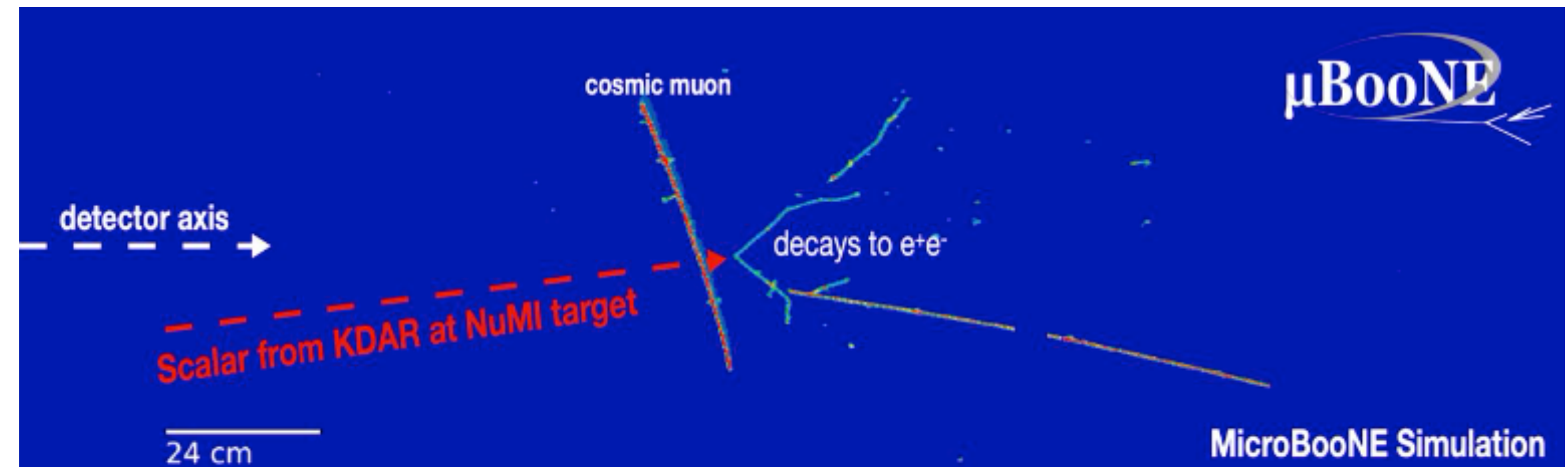
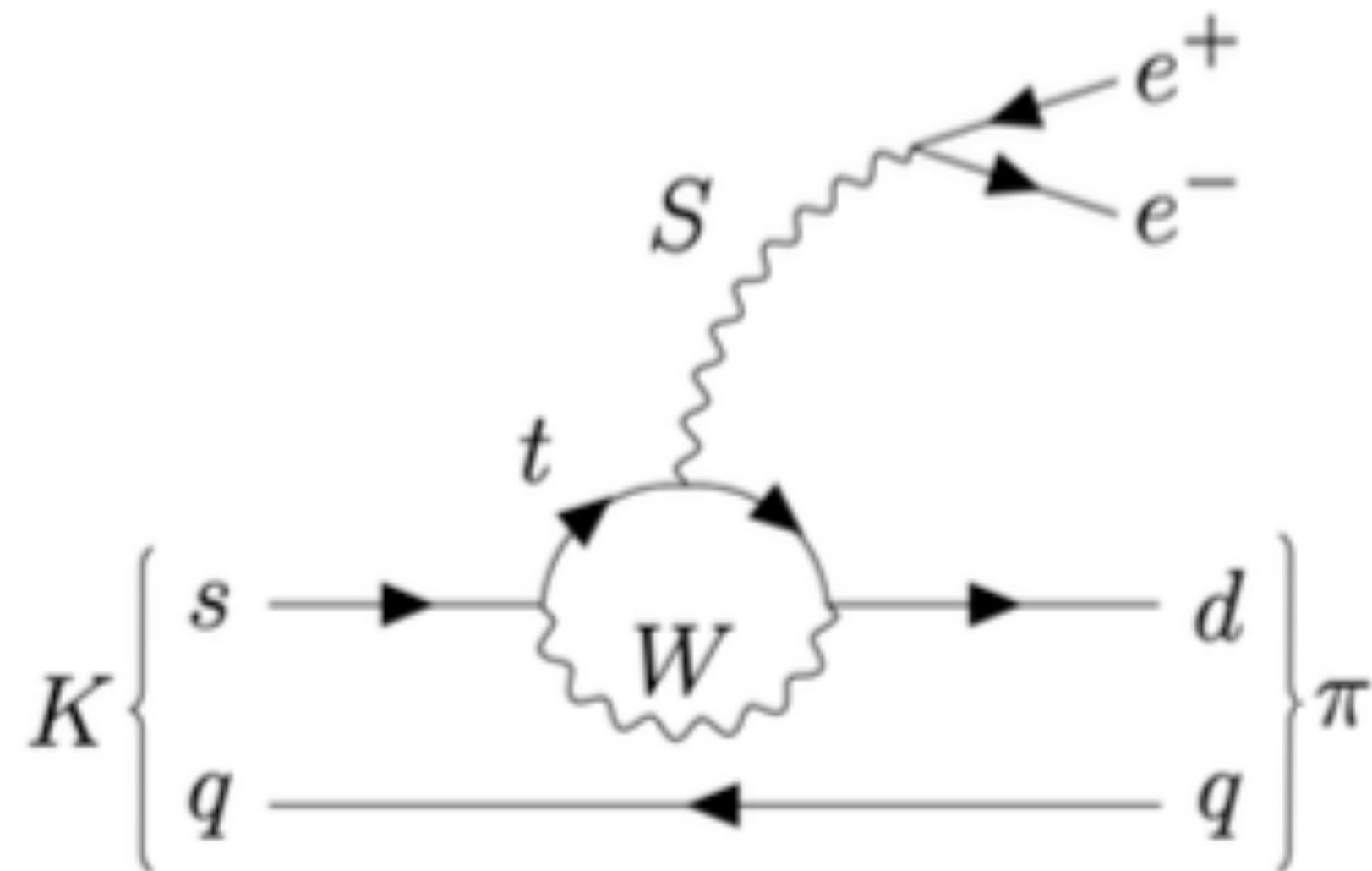
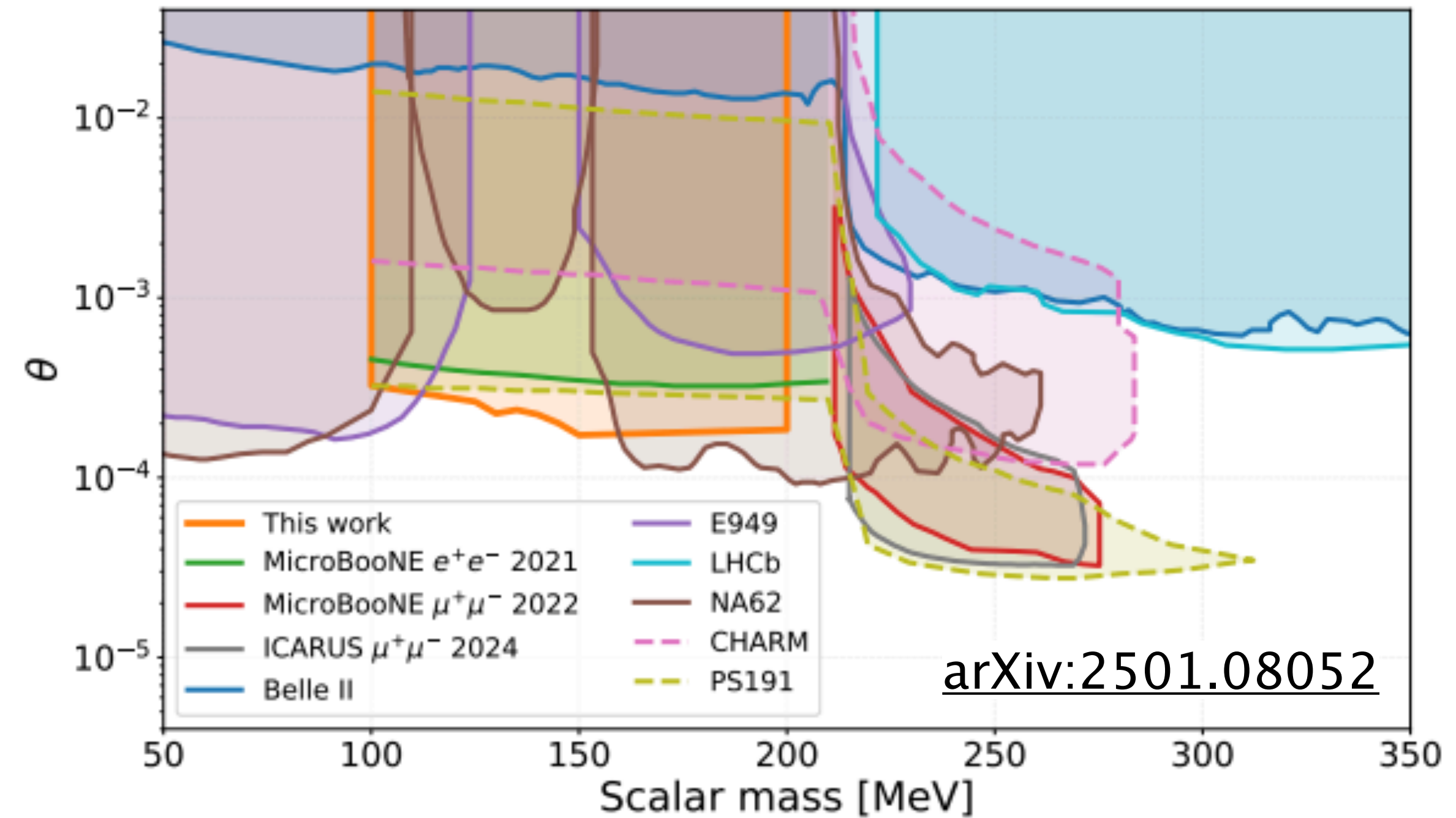


decay in the detector



Higgs Portal Scalar

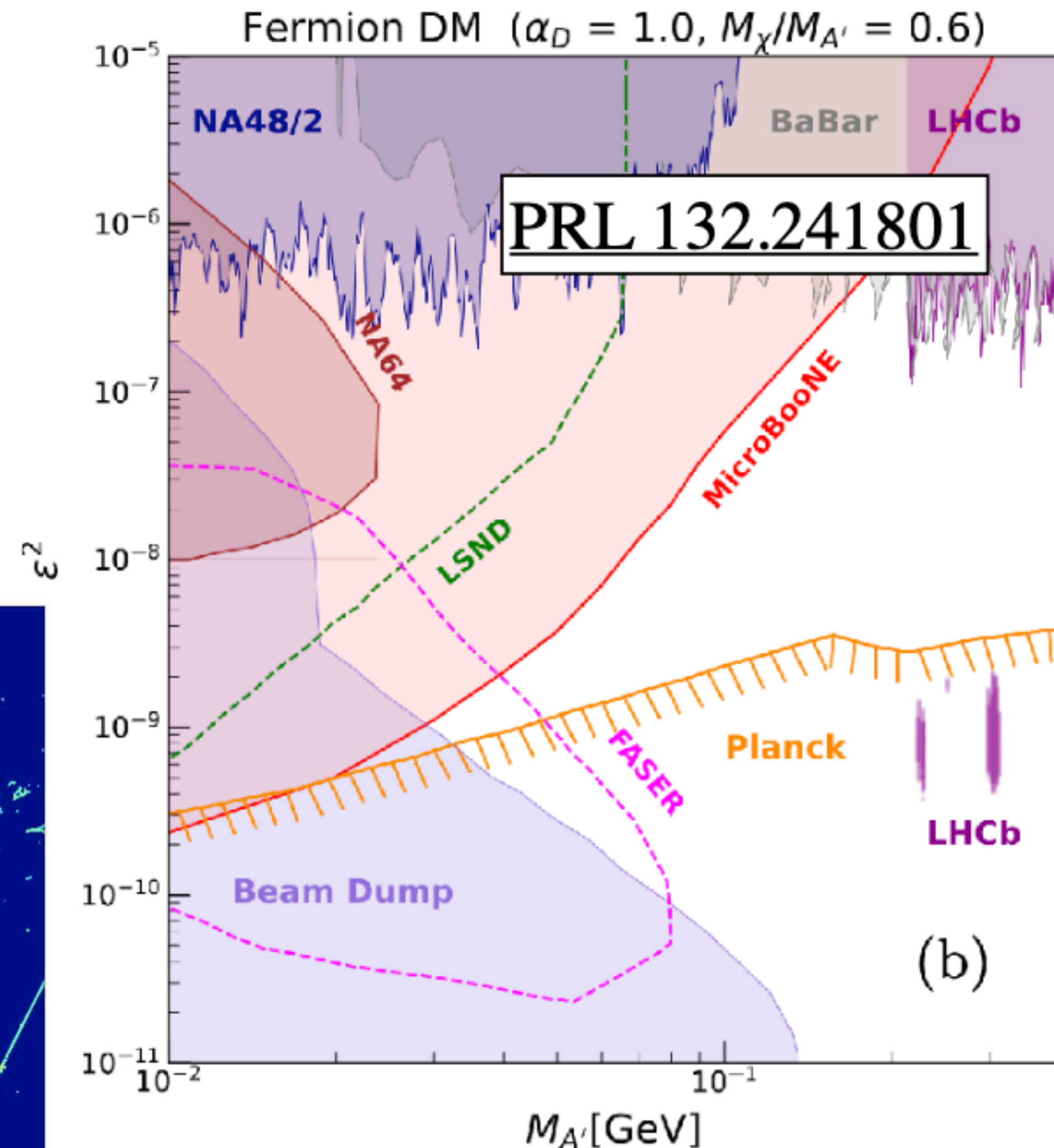
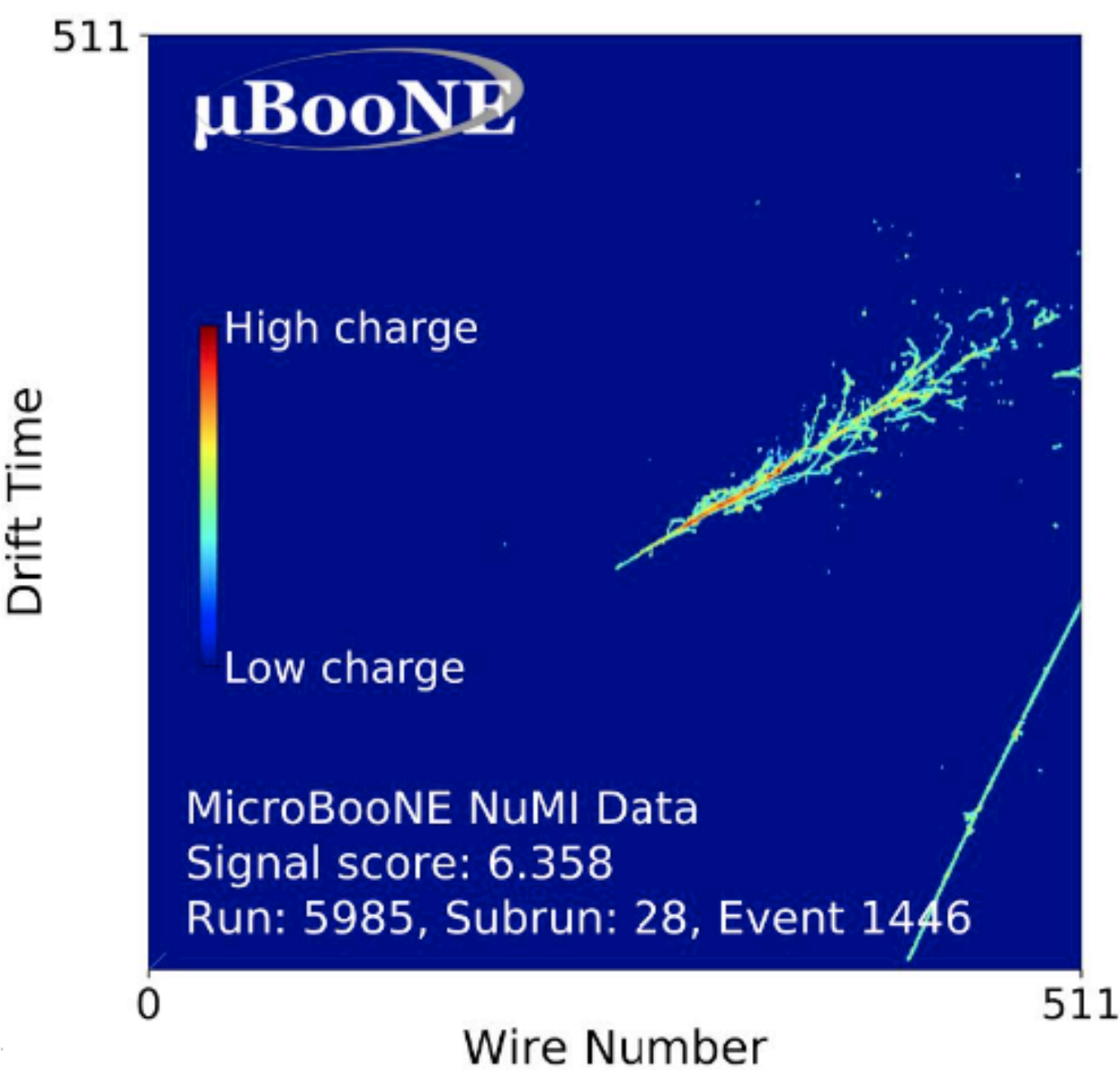
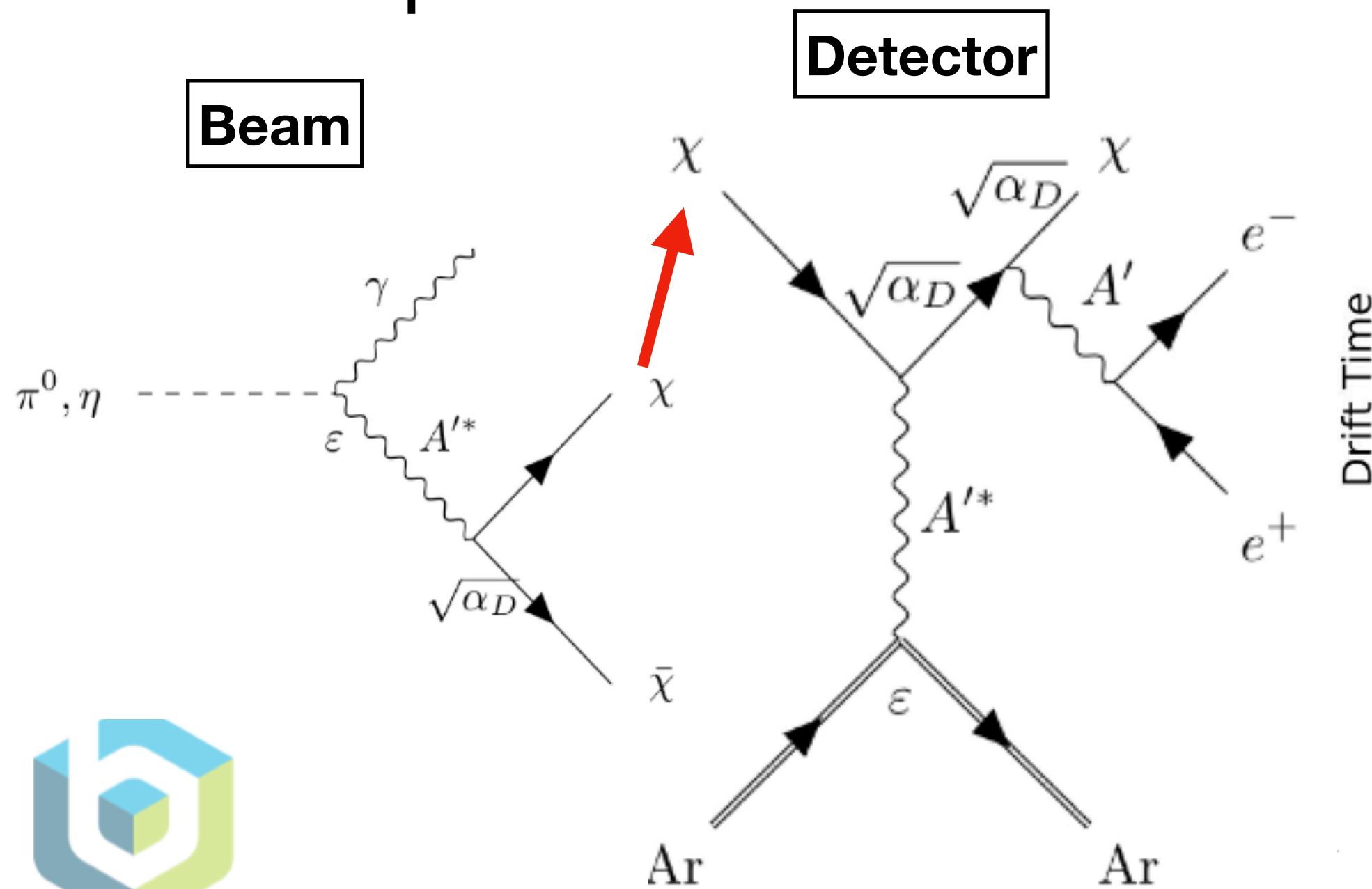
- Coupling to SM via neutral scalar singlet S , which mixes with Higgs boson via mixing angle θ
- Production from kaon decay (At rest @NuMI target/absorber and Inflight @NuMI Decay Pipe)
- Strongest limit in 115 MeV to 155 MeV mass range



Dark Tridents

γ Vector Portal
 $\mathcal{L} \supset \epsilon F'_{\mu\nu} B^{\mu\nu}$

- Dark tridents \Rightarrow light dark matter production via dark photon mediation resulting in e^+e^- topology
- First search for dark-trident using a LArTPC
- Exploring new phase space and setting competitive limits



(b)

MicroBooNE Physics Program

Investigate
MiniBooNE Low
Energy Excess (LEE)
&
Search for BSM

Advance LArTPC
capabilities for next
generation neutrino
experiments (SBN
program, DUNE)

Study ν -Ar scattering
using one of the
largest ν -Ar data
collected to date!

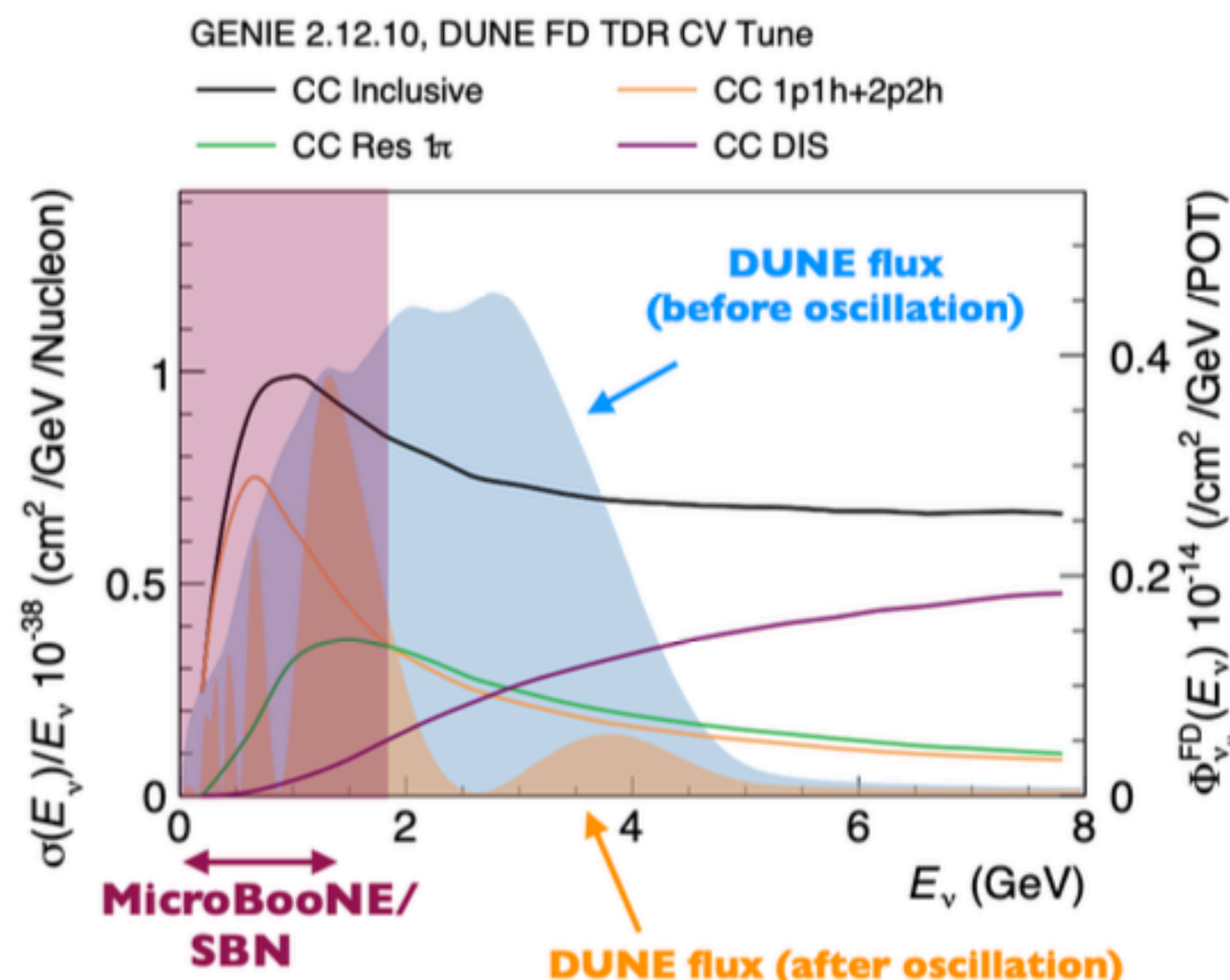
μ BooNE



MicroBooNE Cross Section Program

MicroBooNE Cross Sections

- One of the largest uncertainties in neutrino oscillation experiments!
- MicroBooNE possesses a **large comprehensive** neutrino-argon interaction dataset
- Probes nuclear effects at the GeV scale across multiple final state topologies
- MicroBooNE aims to support both our BSM program and future LArTPC experiments like DUNE and SBN



CC inclusive

- 1D ν_μ CC inclusive @ BNB : [PRL 123 131801 \(2019\)](#), [PRL 128 151801 \(2022\)](#)
- 1D ν_μ CC inclusive @ BNB : [PRL 133 041801 \(2024\)](#), [PRD 110 L013006 \(2024\)](#)
- 1D ν_μ CC inclusive @ BNB : [arXiv:2307.06413](#)
- 1D ν_e CC inclusive @ NuMI : [PRD 104 052002 \(2021\)](#), [PRD 105 051102 \(2022\)](#)

CC0 π

- 1D, 2D ν_μ CC0 π Np @ BNB : [PRD 102 112013 \(2020\)](#), [arXiv:2403.19574](#), [arXiv:2507.00921](#)
- 1D ν_μ CC0 π 1p @ BNB : [PRL 125 201803 \(2020\)](#)
- 1D, 2D ν_μ CC0 π 1p TKI @ BNB : [PRL 131 101802 \(2023\)](#), [PRD 108 053002 \(2023\)](#)
- 1D, 2D ν_μ CC0 π 1p GKI @ BNB : [PRD 109 092007 \(2024\)](#)
- 1D, 2D ν_μ CC0 π 1p AKI @ BNB : [PRD 111 113007 \(2025\)](#)
- 1D ν_μ CC0 π 2p @ BNB : [arXiv:2211.03734](#)
- 1D ν_e CC0 π Np @ BNB : [PRD 106 L051102 \(2022\)](#)

Pion Production

- 1D ν_μ CC1 π^0 @ BNB : [PRD 99 091102 \(2019\)](#), [PRD 110 092014 \(2024\)](#)
- 1D, 2D ν_μ NC1 π^0 @ BNB : [PRD 107 012004 \(2023\)](#), [PRL 134 161802 \(2025\)](#)
- 1D ν_μ CC1 π^\pm @ BNB : [arXiv:2509.03628](#)
- 1D ν_e CC1 π^\pm is @ NuMI : [arXiv:2503.23384](#)

Rare Channels and novel identification techniques

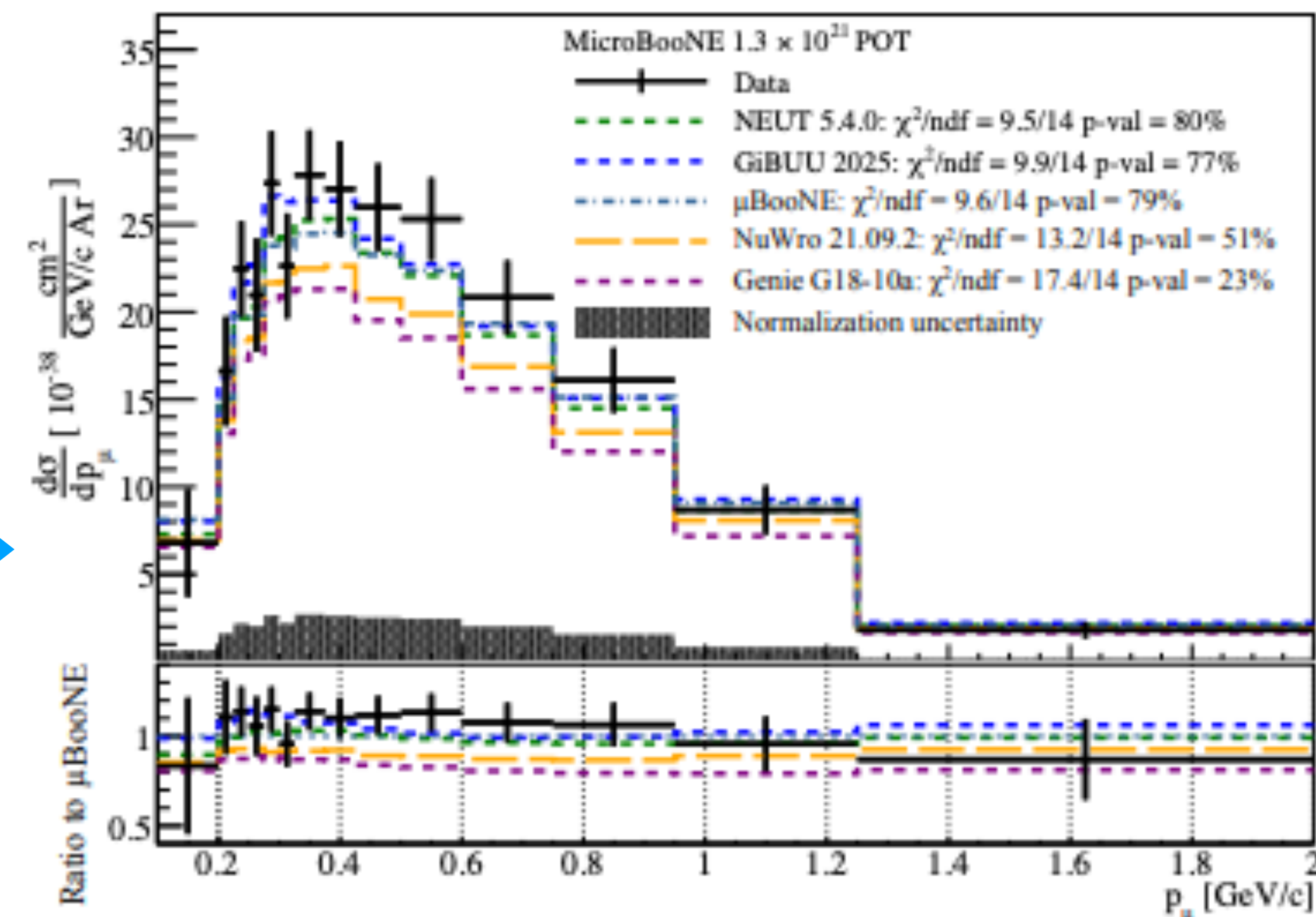
- Λ production @ NuMI : [PRL 130 231802 \(2023\)](#)
- η production @ BNB : [PRL 132 151801 \(2024\)](#)
- K^+ production @ BNB : [arXiv:2503.00291](#)
- Neutron Identification : [EPJC 84 1052 \(2024\)](#)
- Model Validation : [PRD 111 092010 \(2025\)](#)



$\nu_\mu CC + 0\pi$ measurements

- High statistics $\nu_\mu CC$ pionless measurements: precision probes of nuclear modeling and final state interactions

- $\nu_\mu CC0\pi$ (arXiv: 2507.00921)
- Full data-set + 1D and 2D measurements
- Sparked joint analysis with ANNIE [on-going], water Cherenkov detector same beam

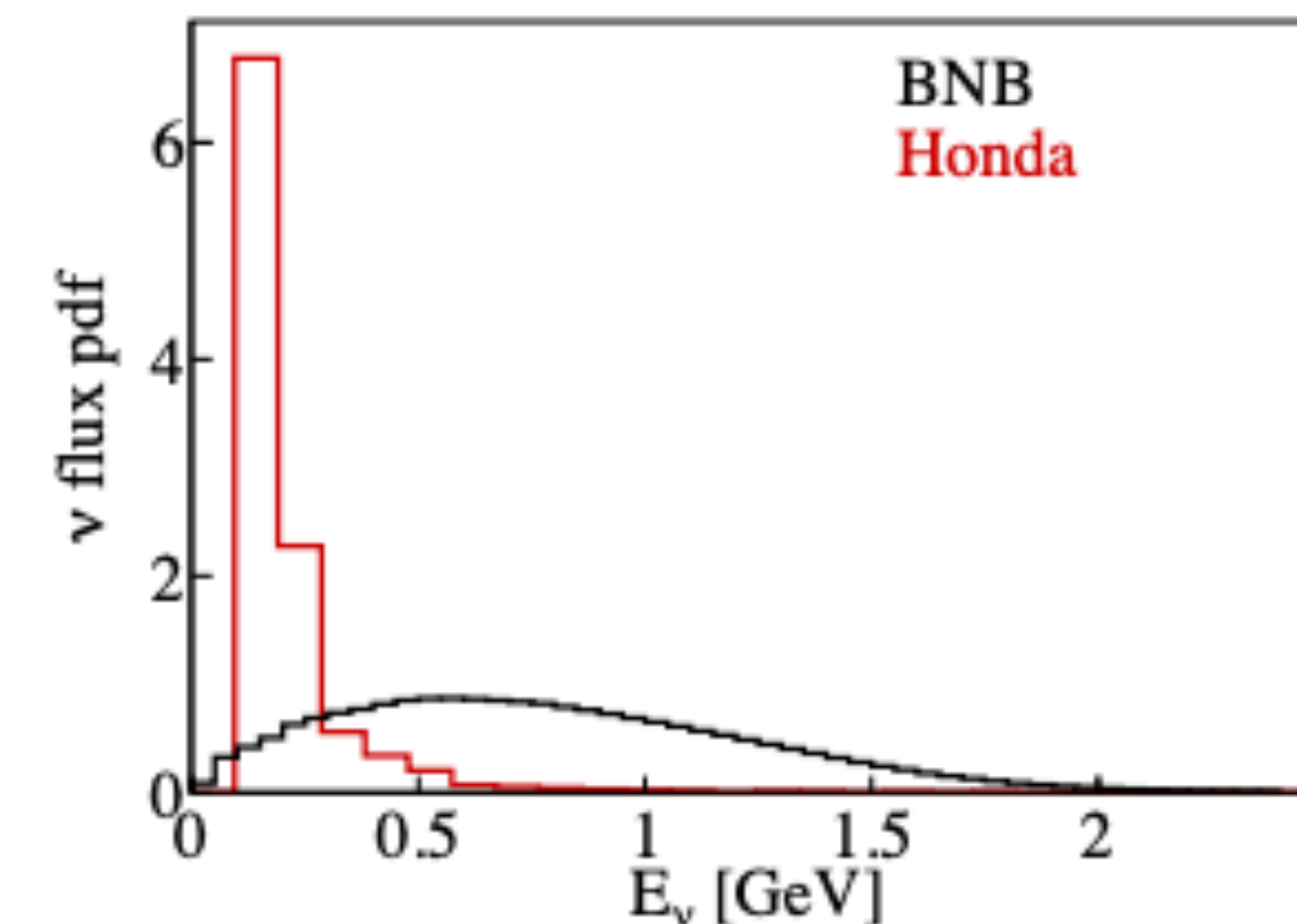
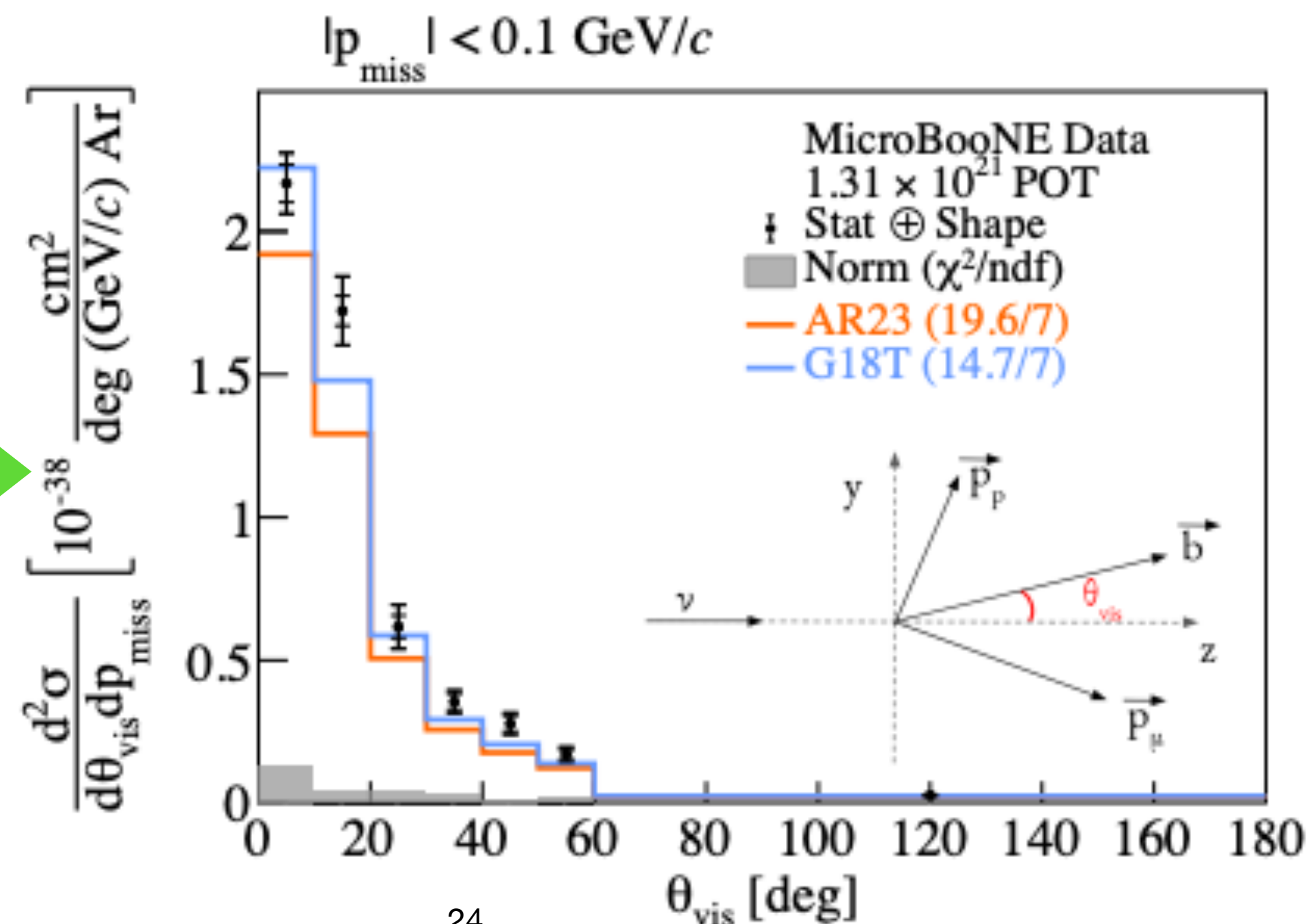


- $\nu_\mu CC0\pi 1p$, “AKI” (Phys. Rev. D 111, 113007 (2025))

- Neutrino direction reconstruction resolution, key for DUNE atmospheric

- Prediction re-weighting to DUNE Honda atmospheric flux

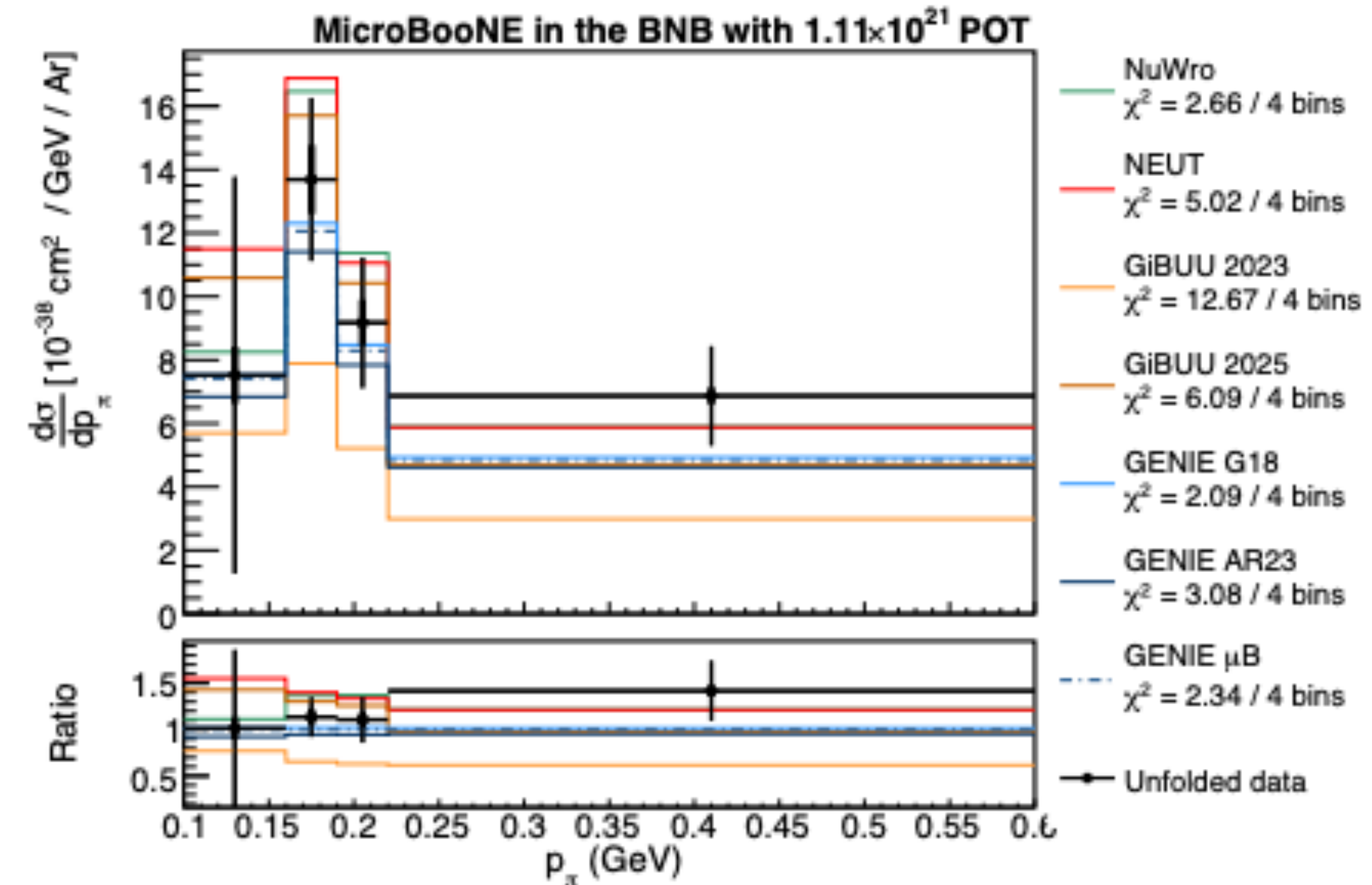
- Angular kinematic imbalance, sensitive to nuclear effects impacting direction determination



Measurements with π^\pm

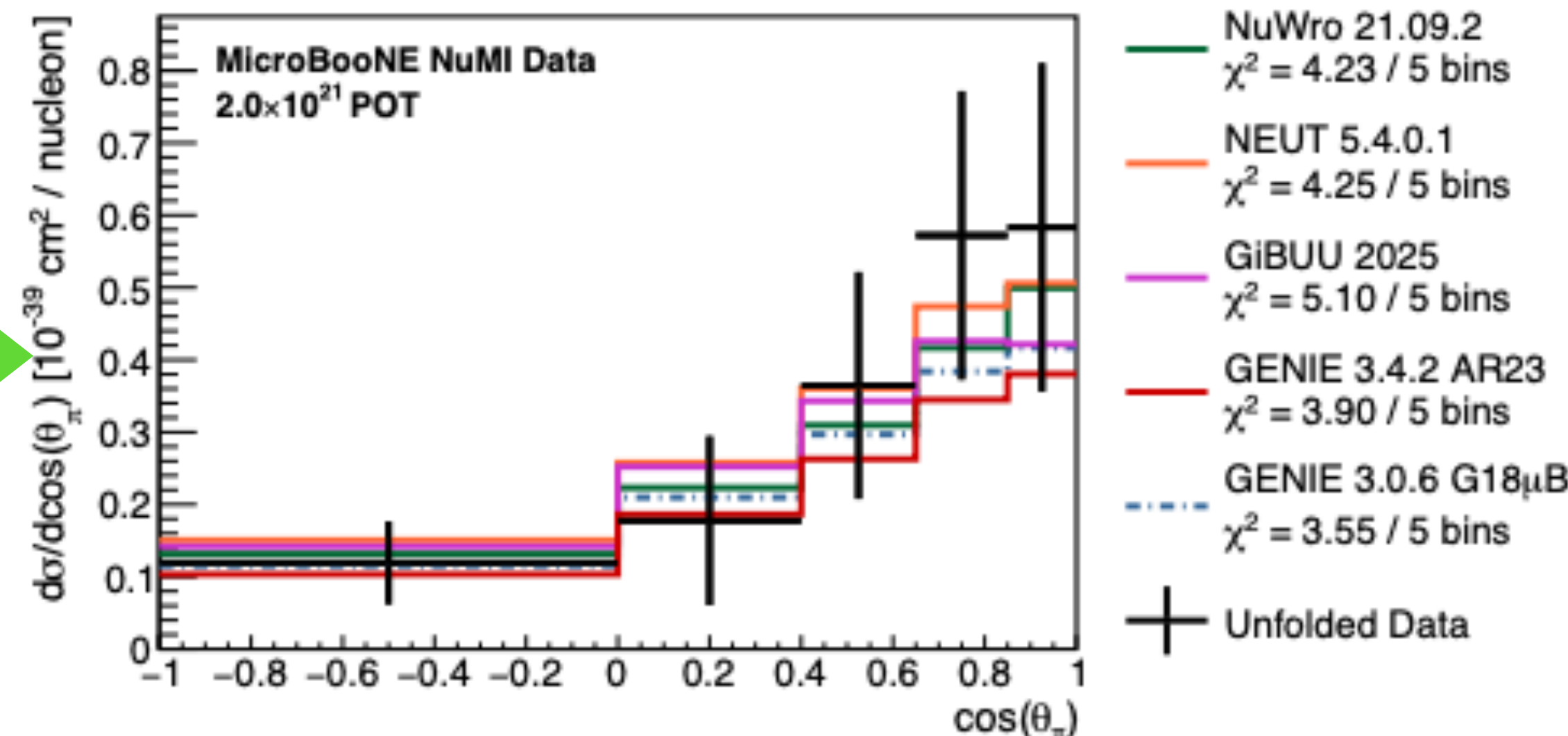
- First measurements of charged-pion production: one of the dominant interaction modes at energy of DUNE

- $\nu_\mu \text{CC1}\pi^\pm$ ([arXiv:2509.03628](https://arxiv.org/abs/2509.03628))
- Full data-set, first measurement of pion momentum
- Signs of mis-modeling at low Q^2 and for high pion momenta driven by final state interactions



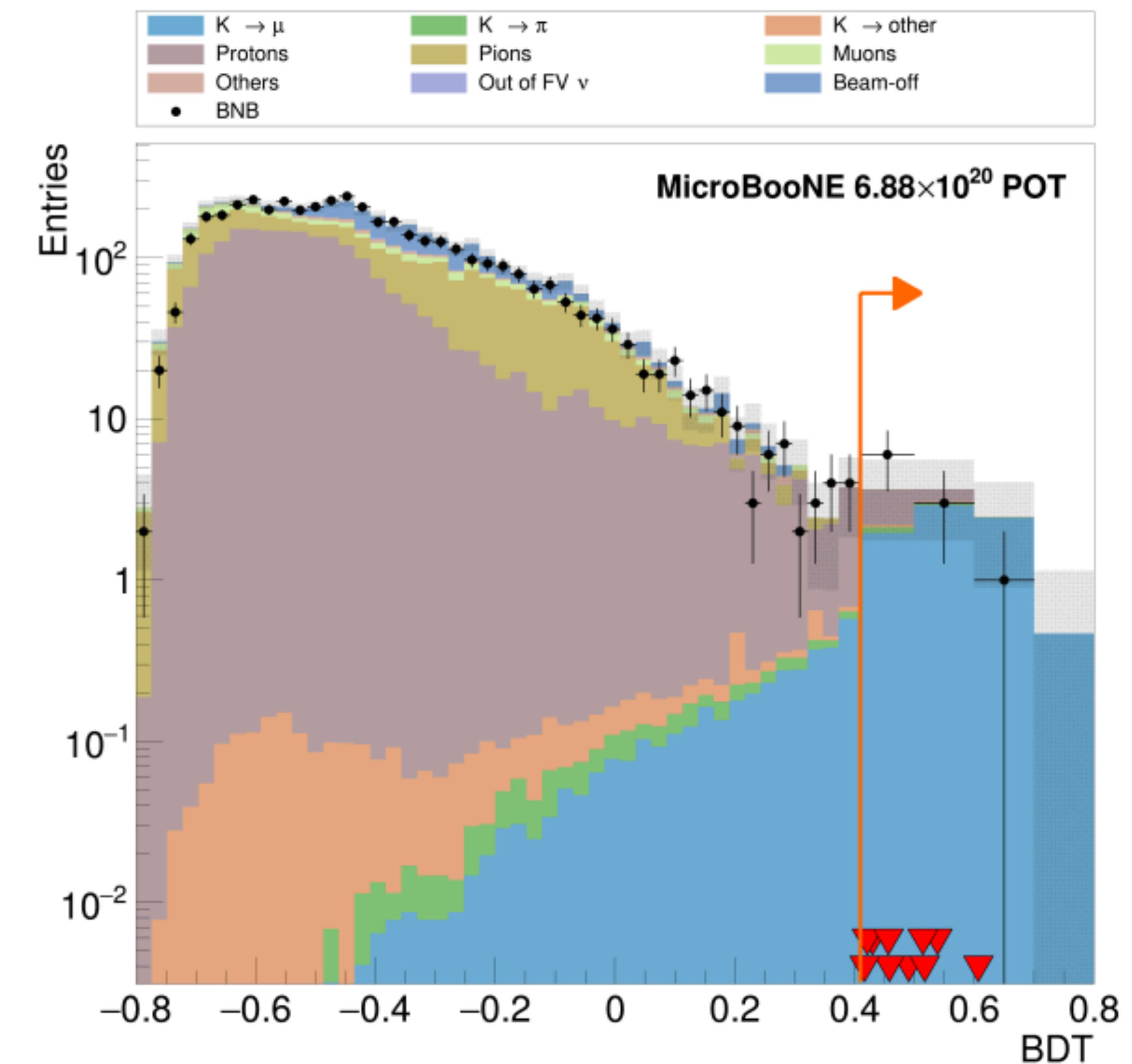
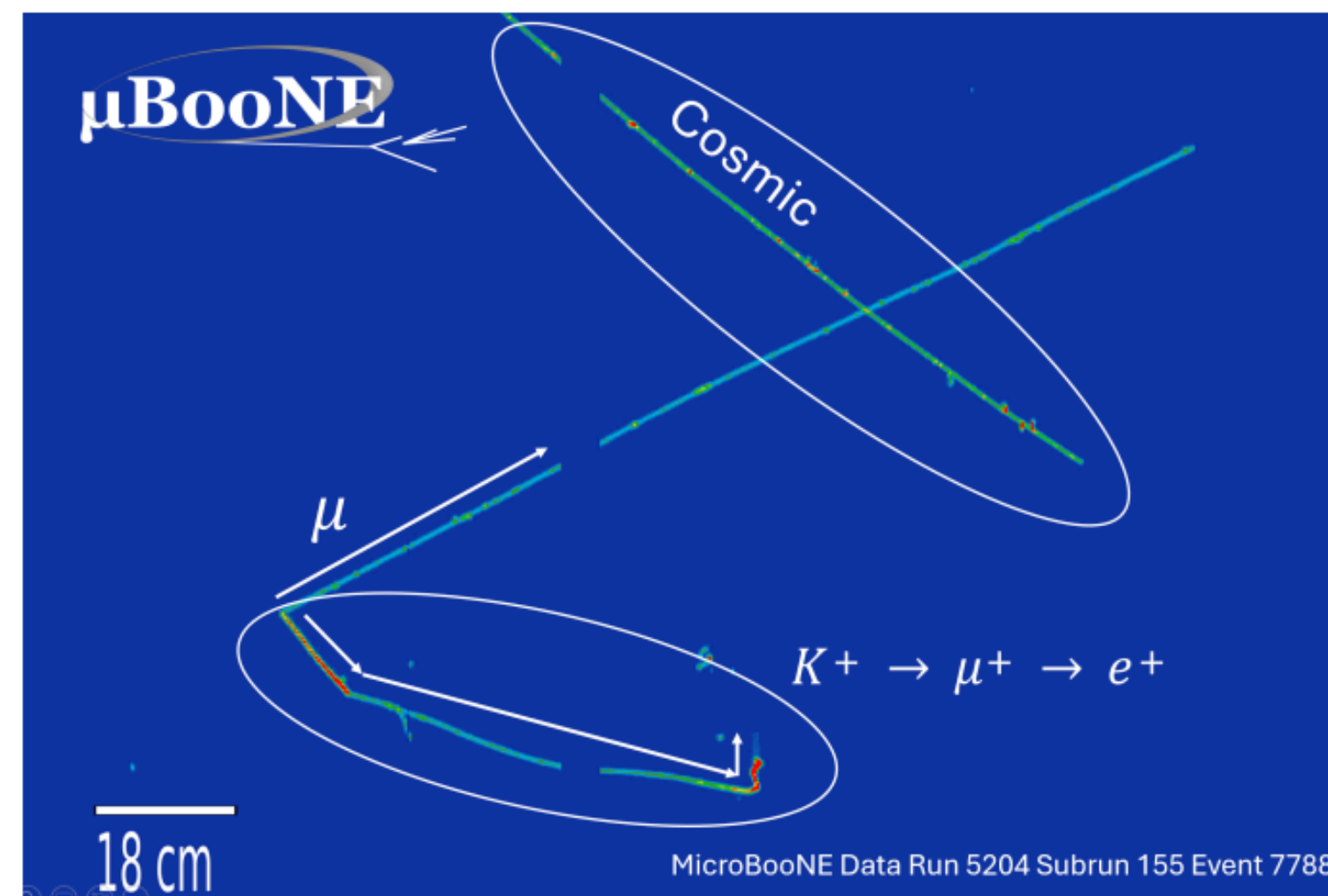
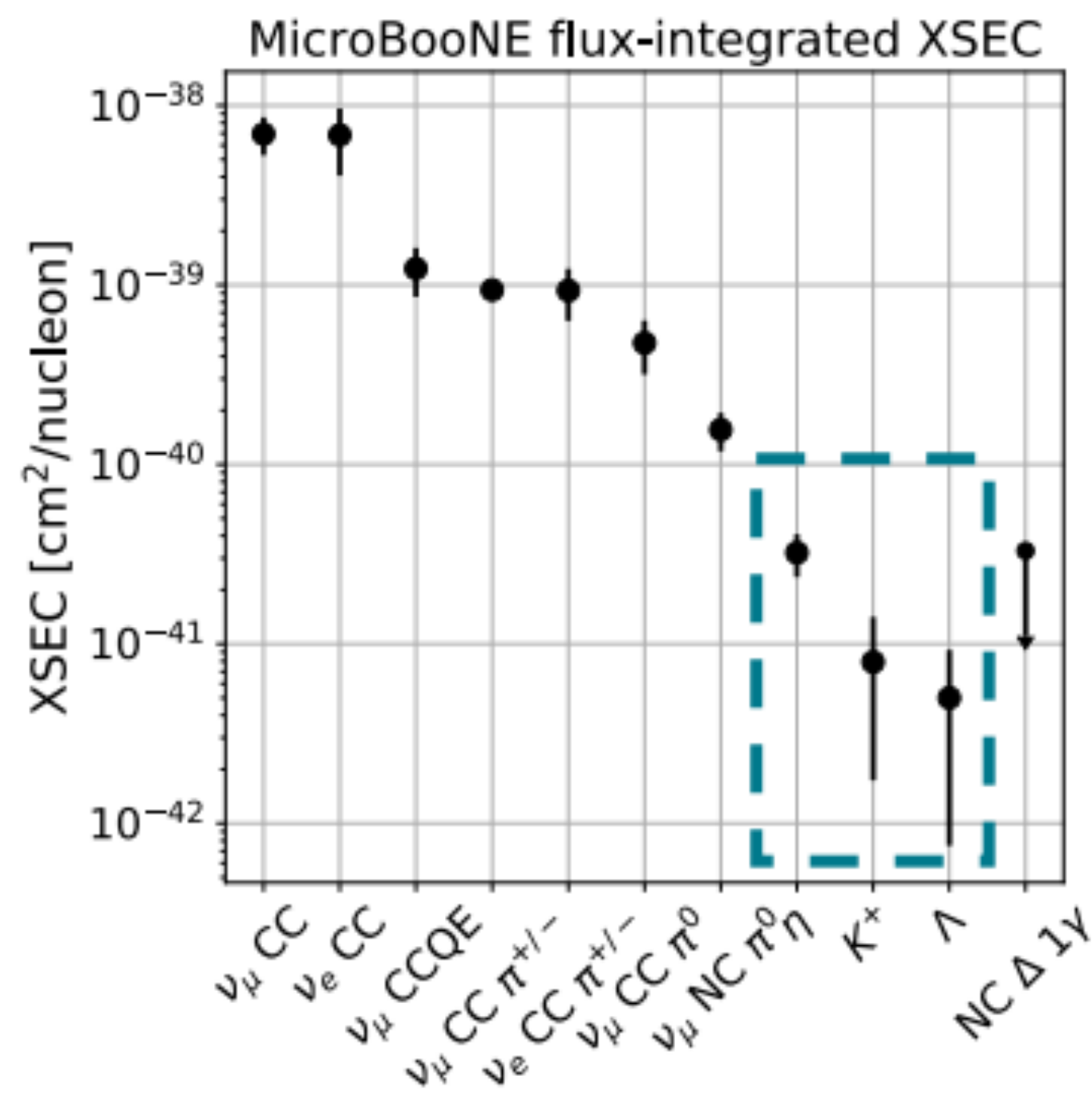
- $\nu_e \text{CC1}\pi^\pm$ ([Phys. Rev. Lett. 135, 061802 \(2025\)](https://arxiv.org/abs/2509.03628))

- First measurement of $\nu_e \text{CC1}\pi^\pm$ on argon
- Uses full NuMI dataset, higher ν_e content
- Good modeling seen within uncertainties



Rare processes

- Provide insights into higher resonances and help with constraints of key backgrounds for nucleon decay
- Recent measurements: $\nu_\mu CC\Lambda$ (Phys. Rev. Lett. 130, 231802 (2023)) and $\nu_\mu CC\eta$ (Phys. Rev. Lett. 132, 151801 (2024))
- New $\nu_\mu CCK^+$: first measurement of K^+ on argon (arXiv: 2503.00291)
- Background for proton decay $p \rightarrow K^+\nu$ in DUNE



MicroBooNE Physics Program

Investigate
MiniBooNE Low
Energy Excess (LEE)
&
Search for BSM

Advance LArTPC
capabilities for next
generation neutrino
experiments (SBN
program, DUNE)

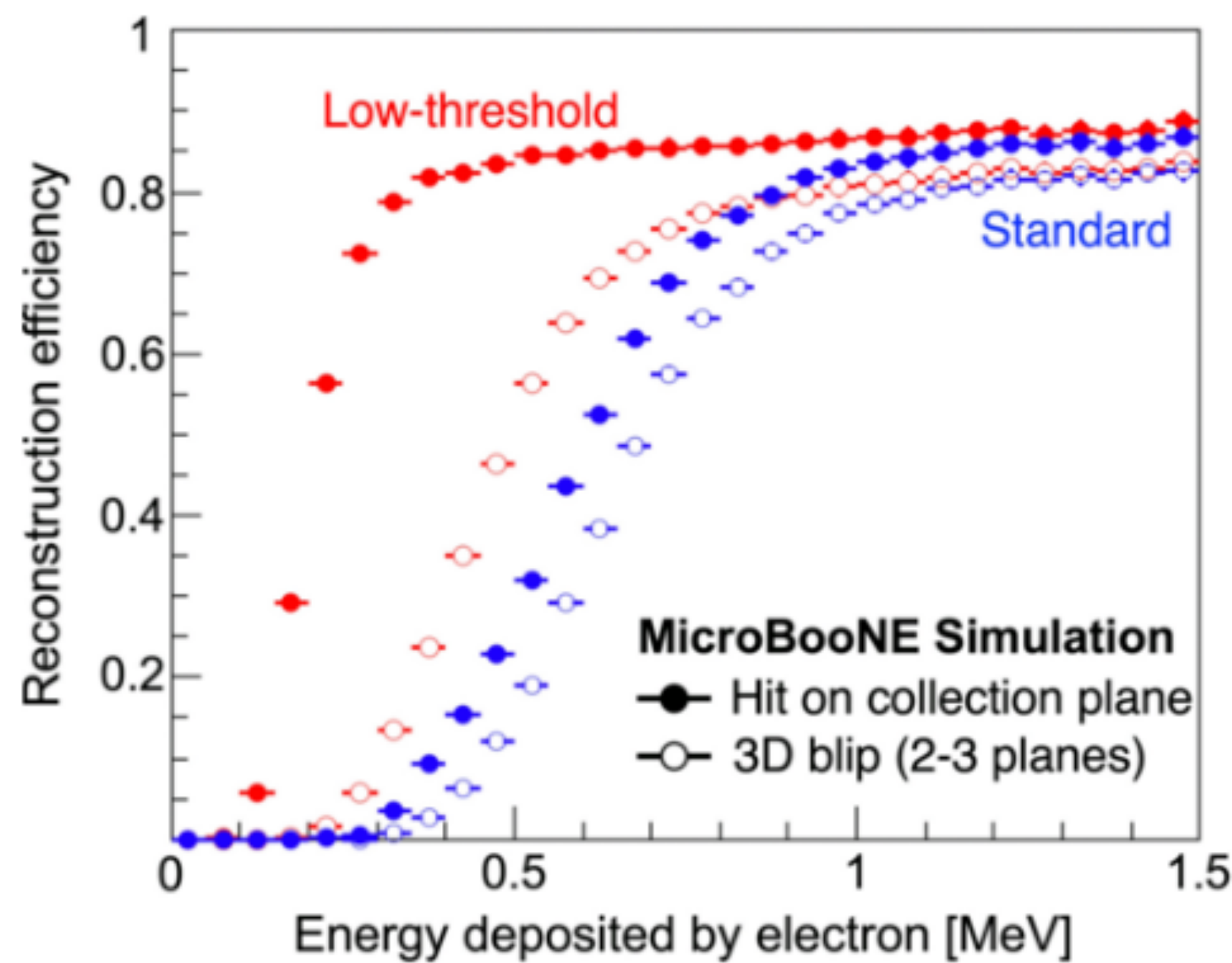
Study ν -Ar scattering
using one of the
largest ν -Ar data
collected to date!

μ BooNE



MeV-scale physics

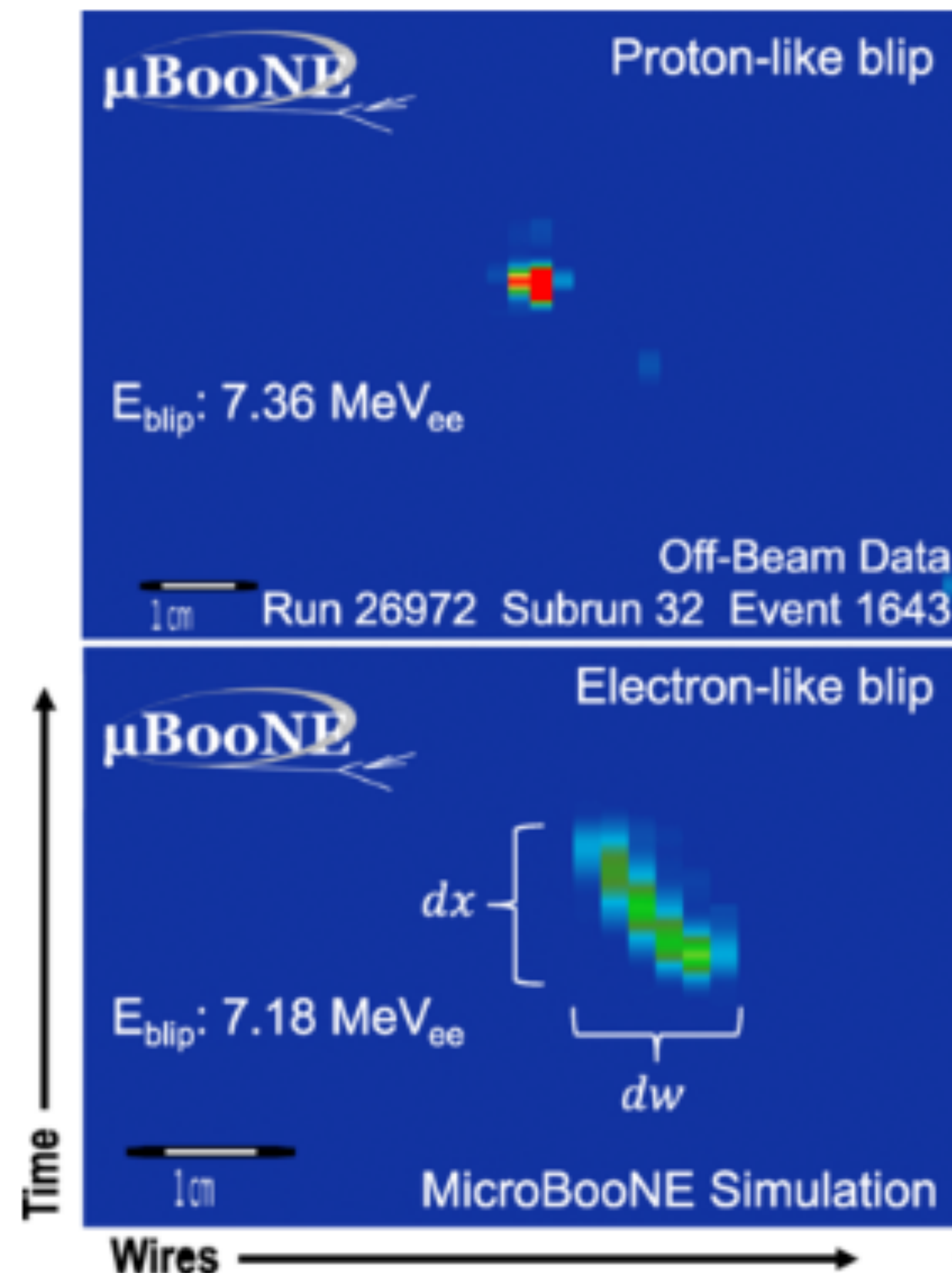
- Techniques to reconstruct “blips” (isolated O(MeV) energy depositions from various sources) pioneered at ArgoNeut \Rightarrow refined by MicroBooNE
- Achieved 150 keV detection threshold
- Vast range of applications: improved calorimetry, lower particle thresholds, BSM searches, muon/pion separation, neutron tagging, etc.



28

Phys. Rev. D 109, 052007 (2024)

Phys. Rev. D 111, 032005 (2025)



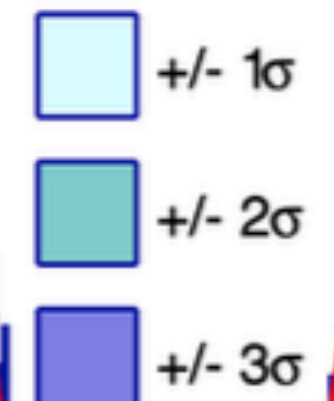
LArTPC capabilities

PRD 108 (2023) 5, 052010

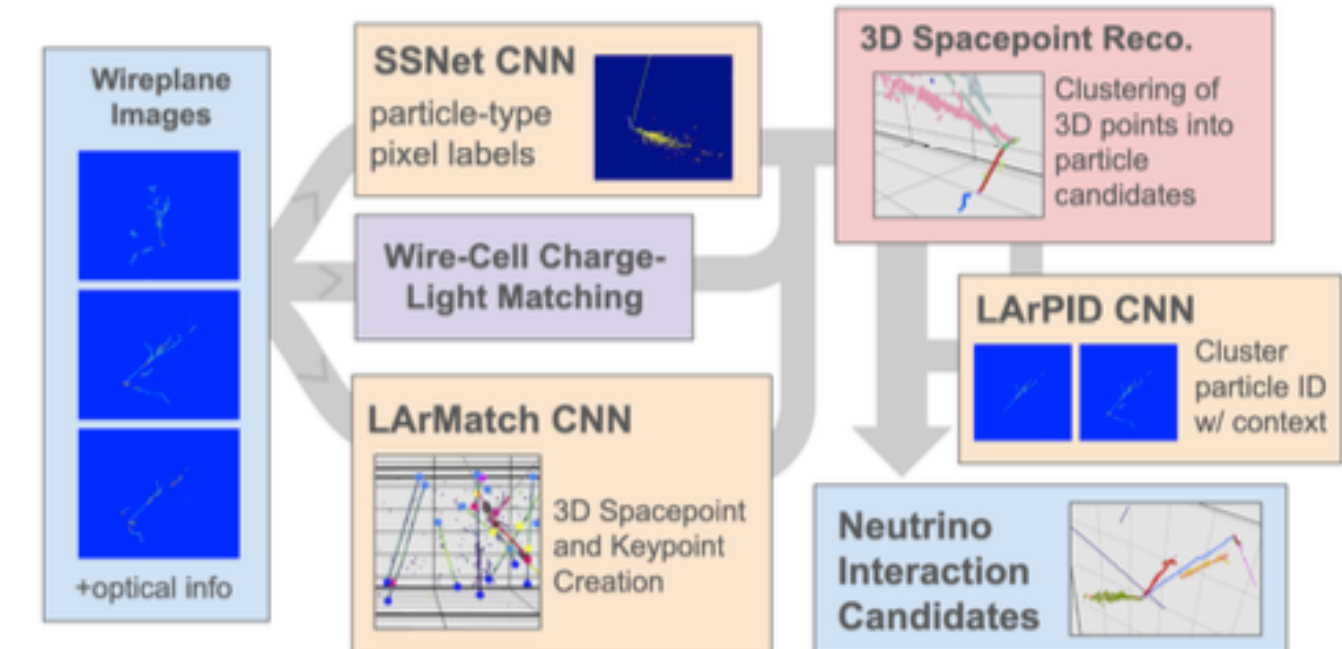
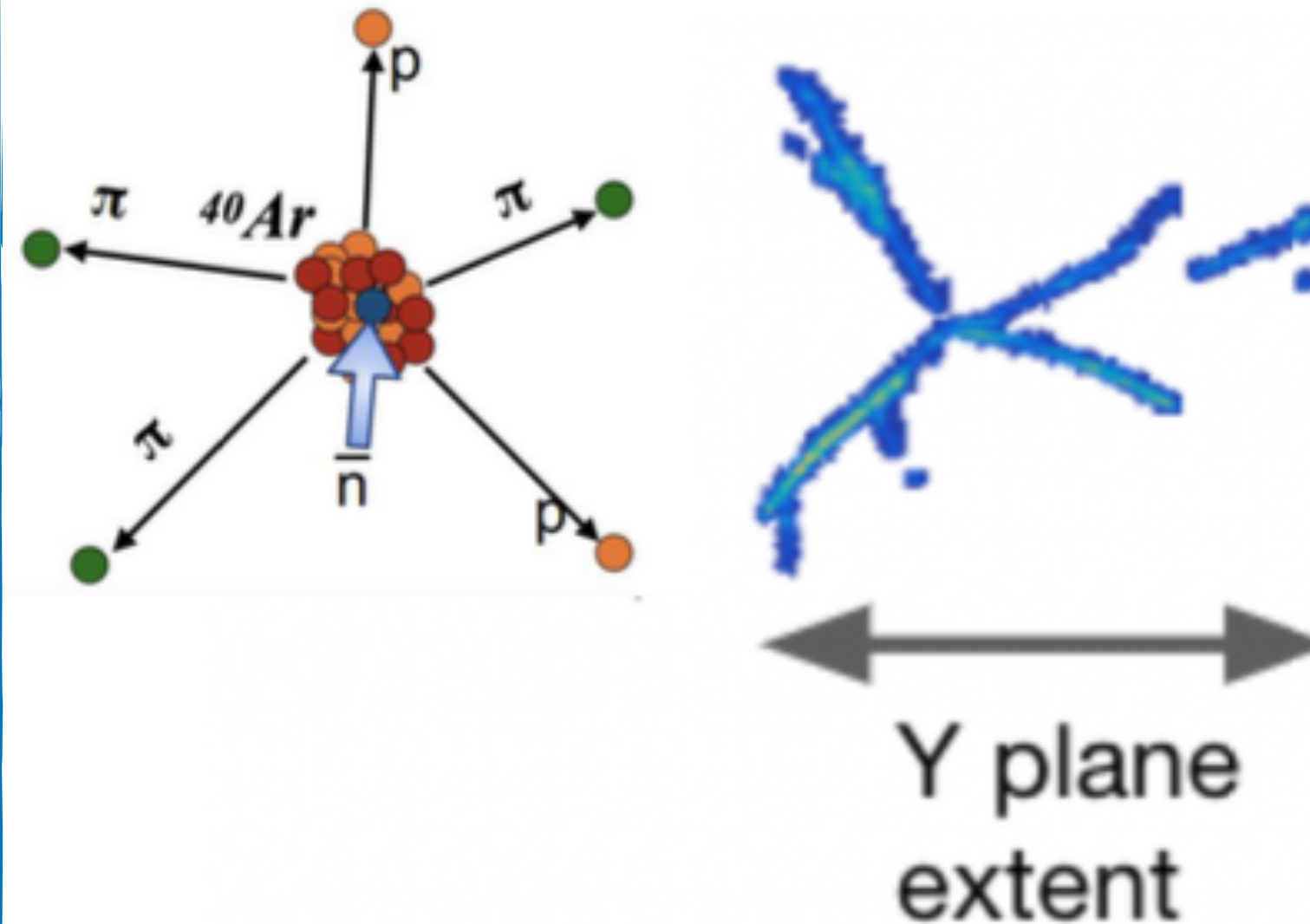
MicroBooNE

2.13×10^{20} POT

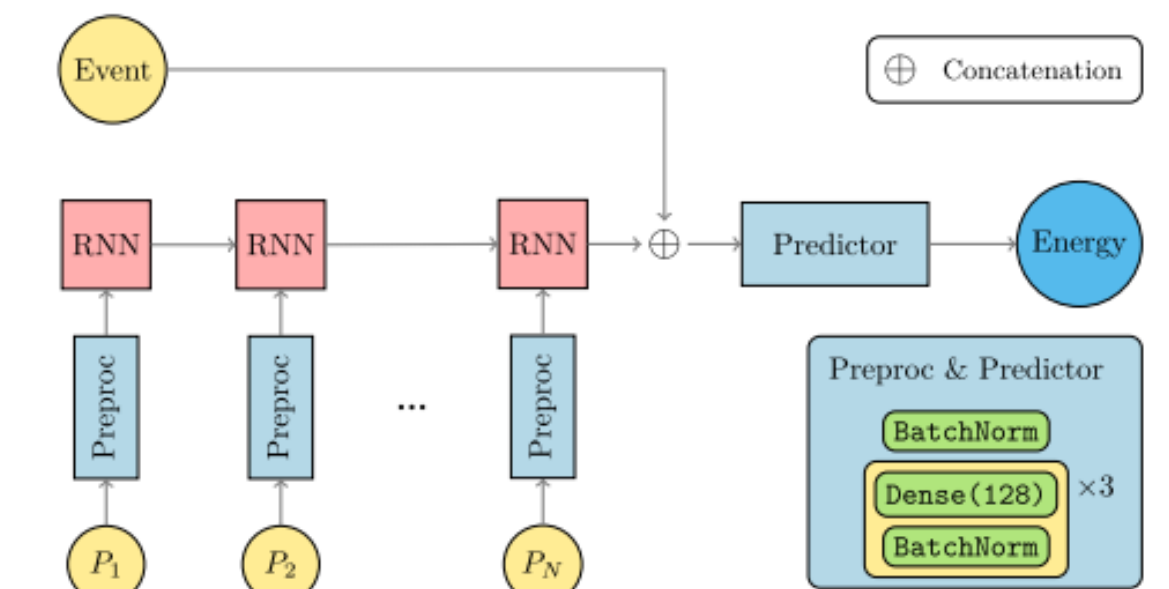
Cut Window



JINST (2024) 19 P07032



MICROBOONE-NOTE-23-PUB



PhysRevD.110.092010

- Use fine-timing from PMTs and beam spill to extract $O(1ns)$ -resolution
- Enables long-lived BSM particle searches, better cosmic rejection

- Demonstrate new LArTPC reconstruction techniques for exotic topologies, deep-learning based methods for 3D reconstruction, neutrino energy estimation etc.

Summary

- New pionless ν_e LEE analysis, consistent with past results, disfavors a ν_e -like MiniBooNE LEE, pointing to γ/e^+e^- sources
- No evidence of BSM e^+e^- signal observed
- $NC\Delta \rightarrow N\gamma$ and coherent single- γ analyses observed no excess
- Inclusive single- γ search shows a 2σ excess in the region with low hadronic activity and below 600 MeV shower energy
 - Further study, including adding remainder of MicroBooNE's dataset, are planned
- New results on Higgs Portal, HNLs, and Dark tridents
- Upcoming 3+1 light sterile neutrino search with unique two-beam approach
- Wealth of neutrino-argon cross section measurements have been carried out
 - Important inputs for oscillation experiments
- Significant advancements in detector technology, with valuable implications for DUNE and our future analysis



~180 collaborators, 39 institutions



Thank you!



Back up

Short-Baseline Anomalies

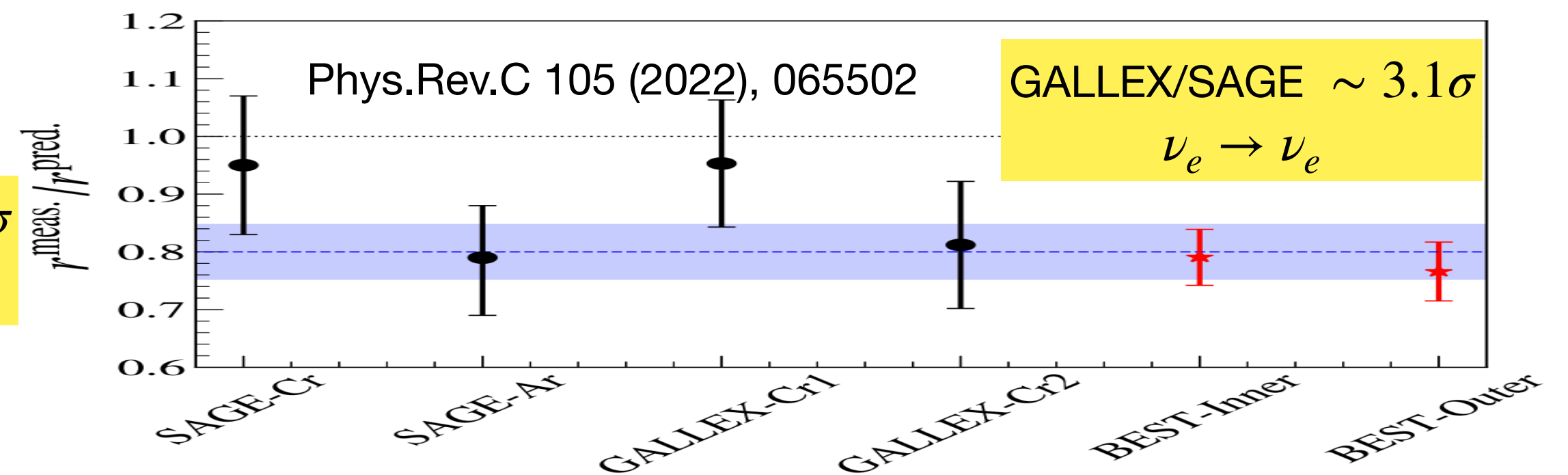
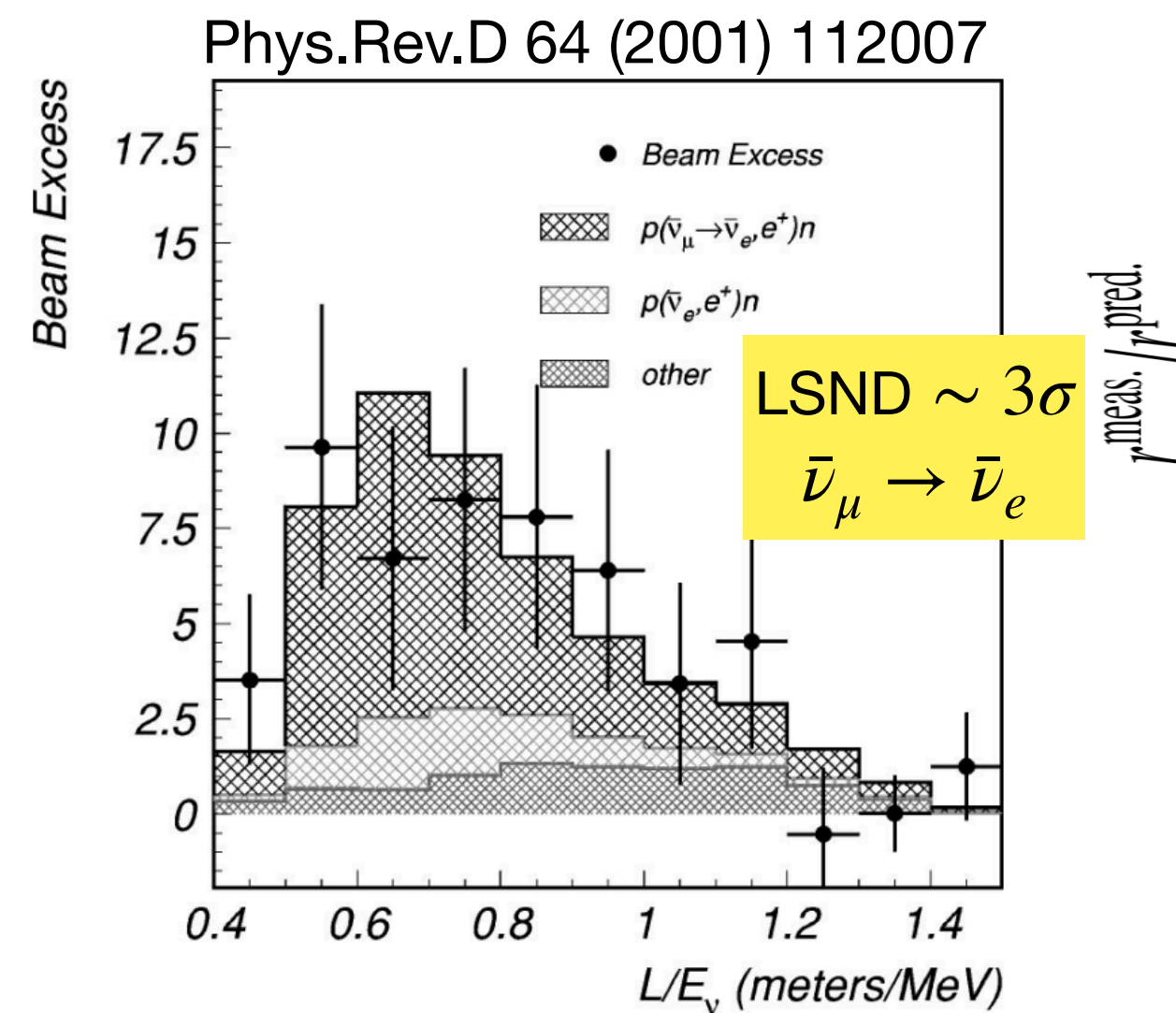
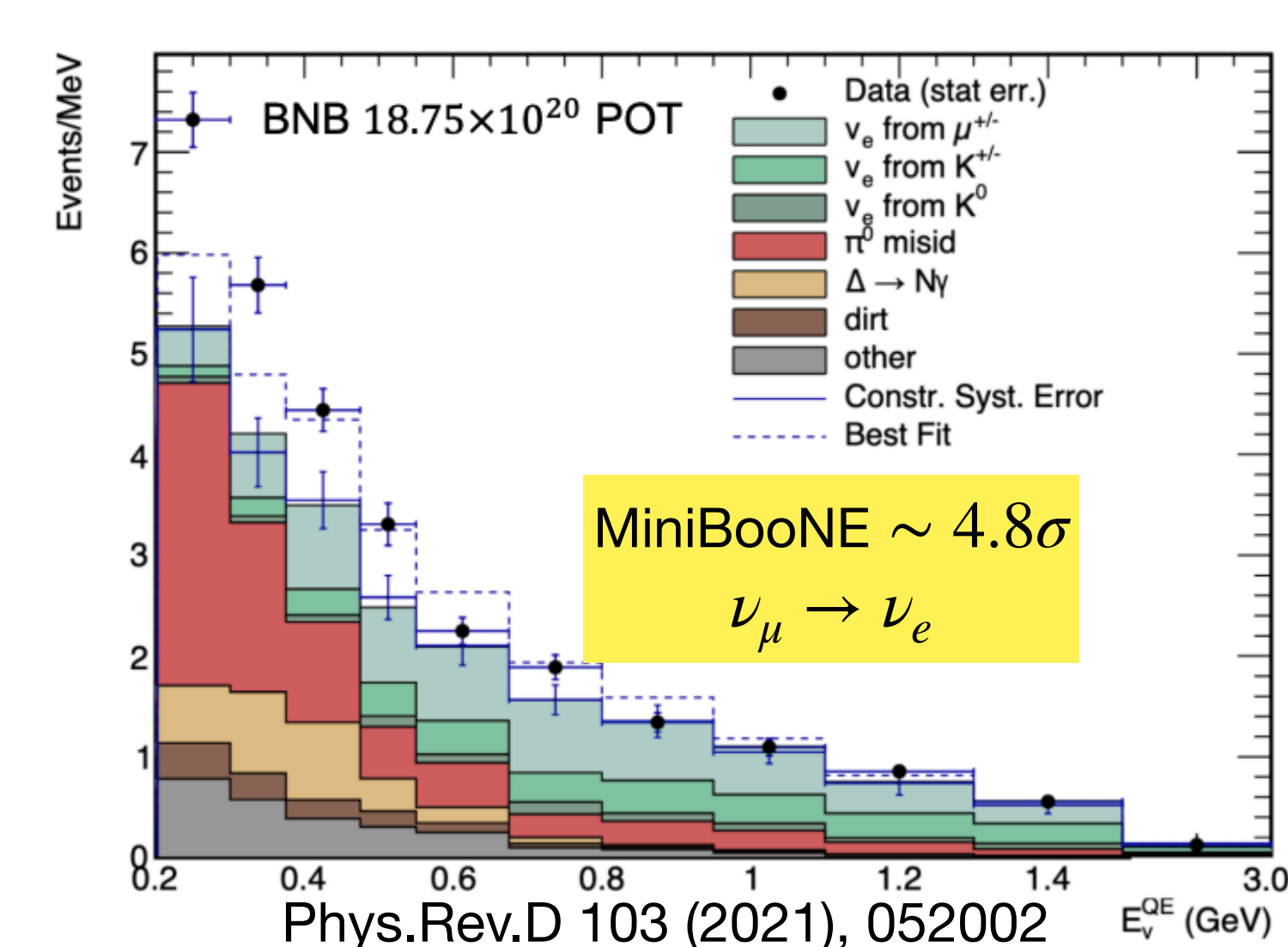
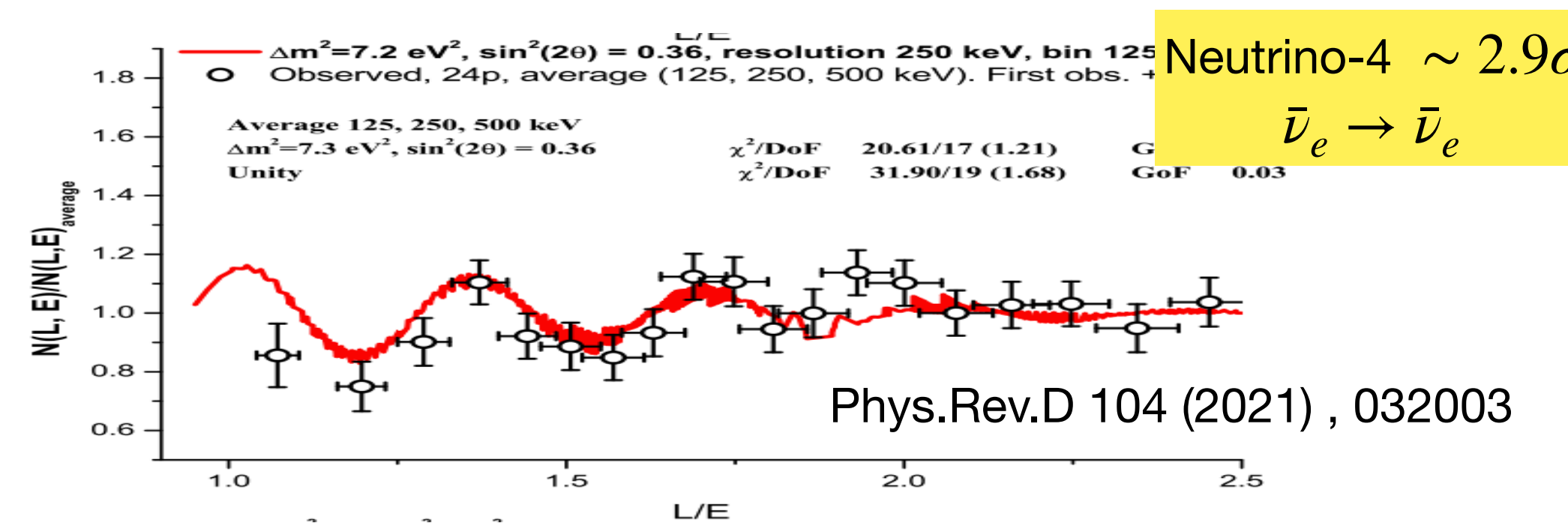
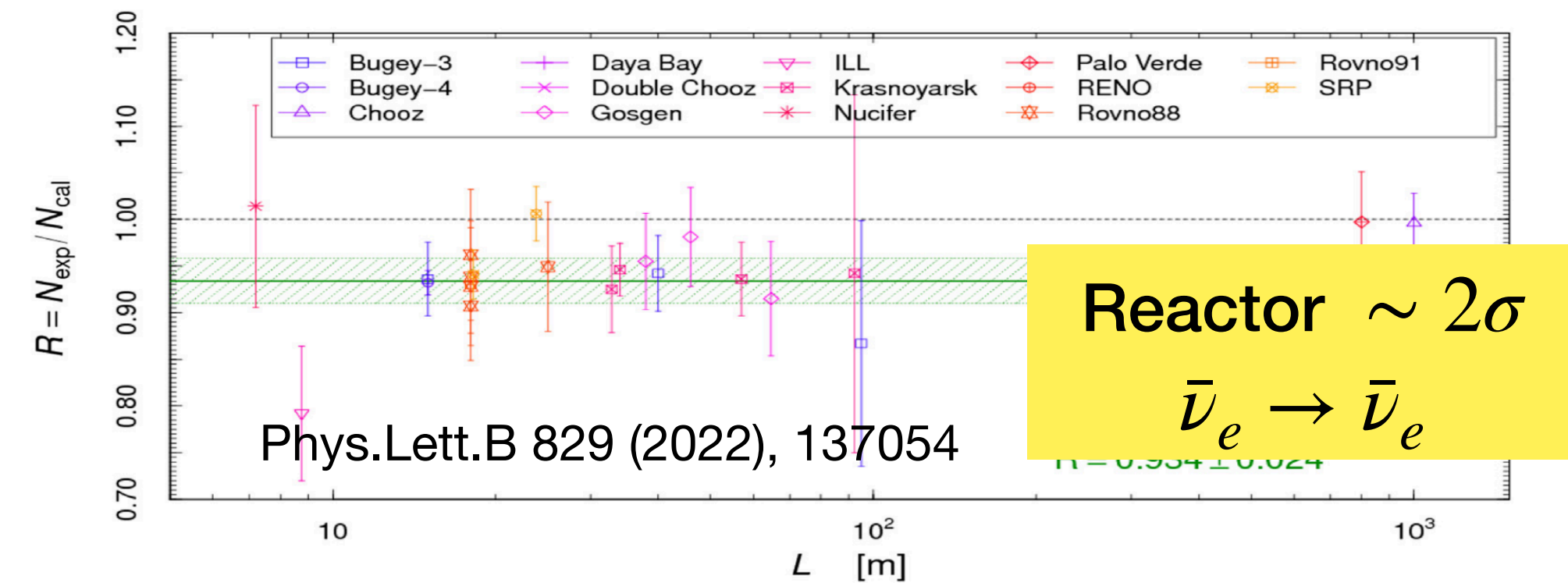
☑ **Reactor Neutrino Flux** → Initially found issue of theory by Daya Bay experiment / Resolved with new input data to flux calculation

☐ **Neutrino-4 Reactor Spectra** → In tension with other VSBL reactor ν experiments

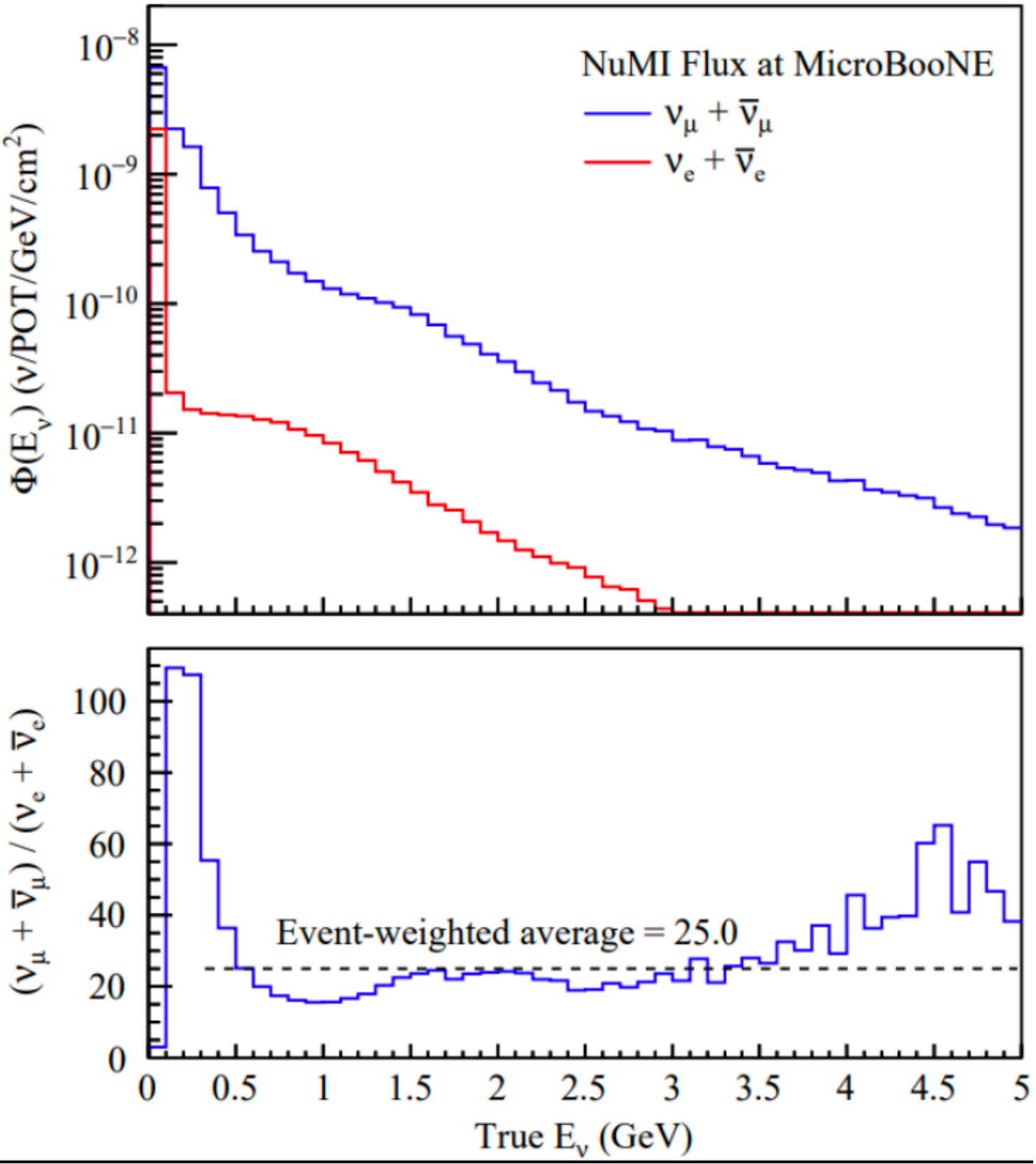
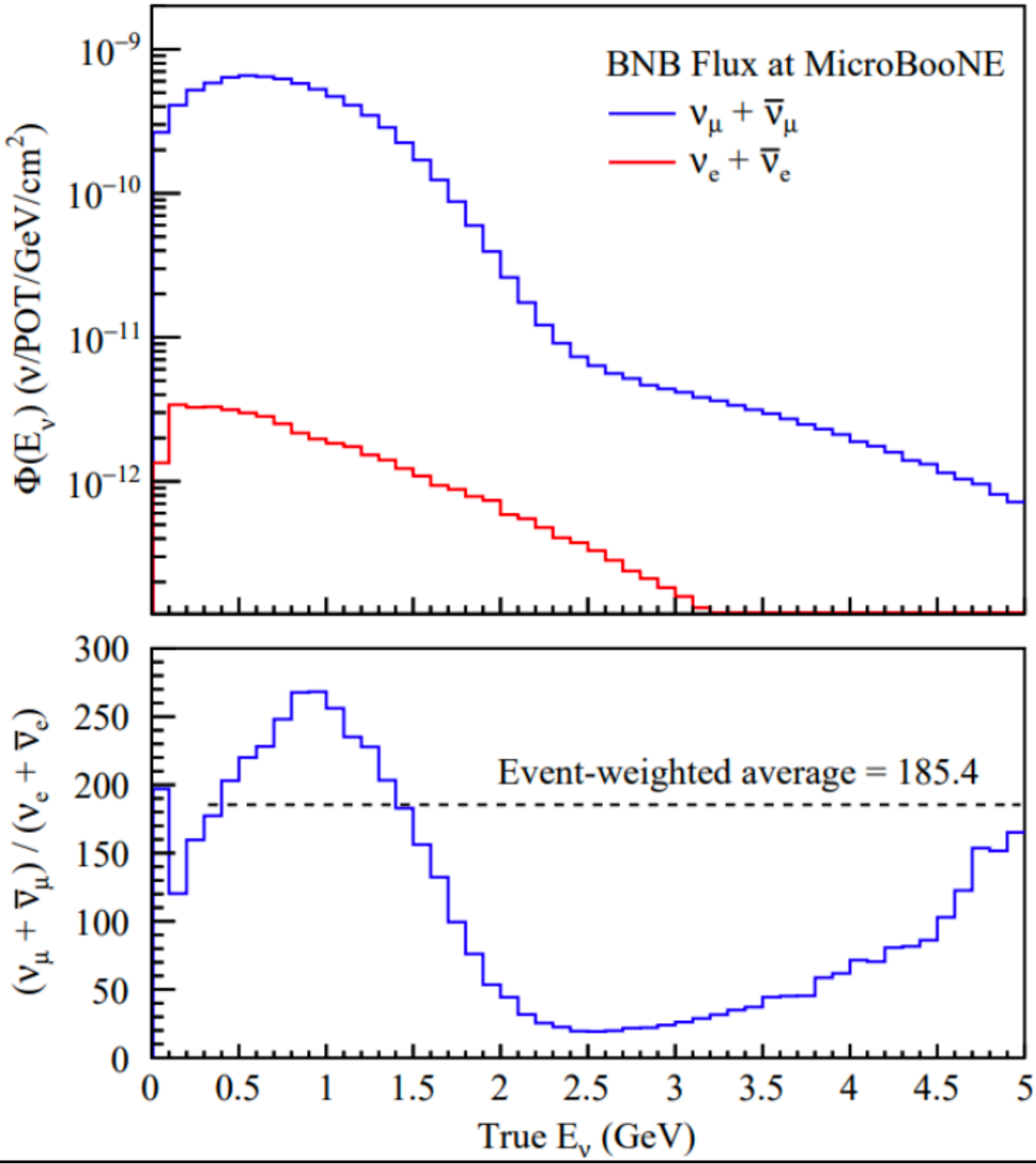
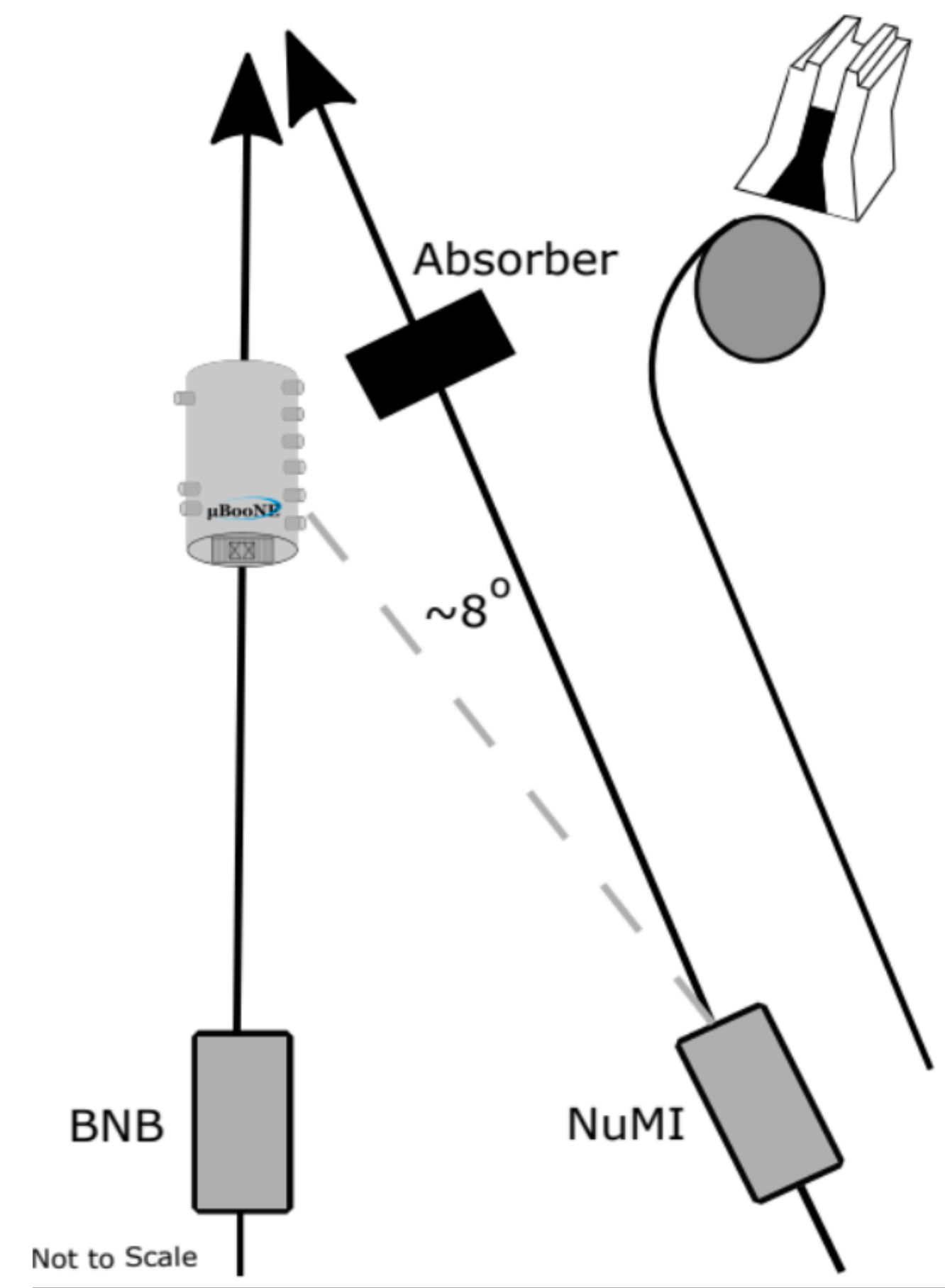
☐ **The Gallium Anomaly** → BEST observed similar results

☐ **The LSND Anomaly** → JSNS² will perform direct test

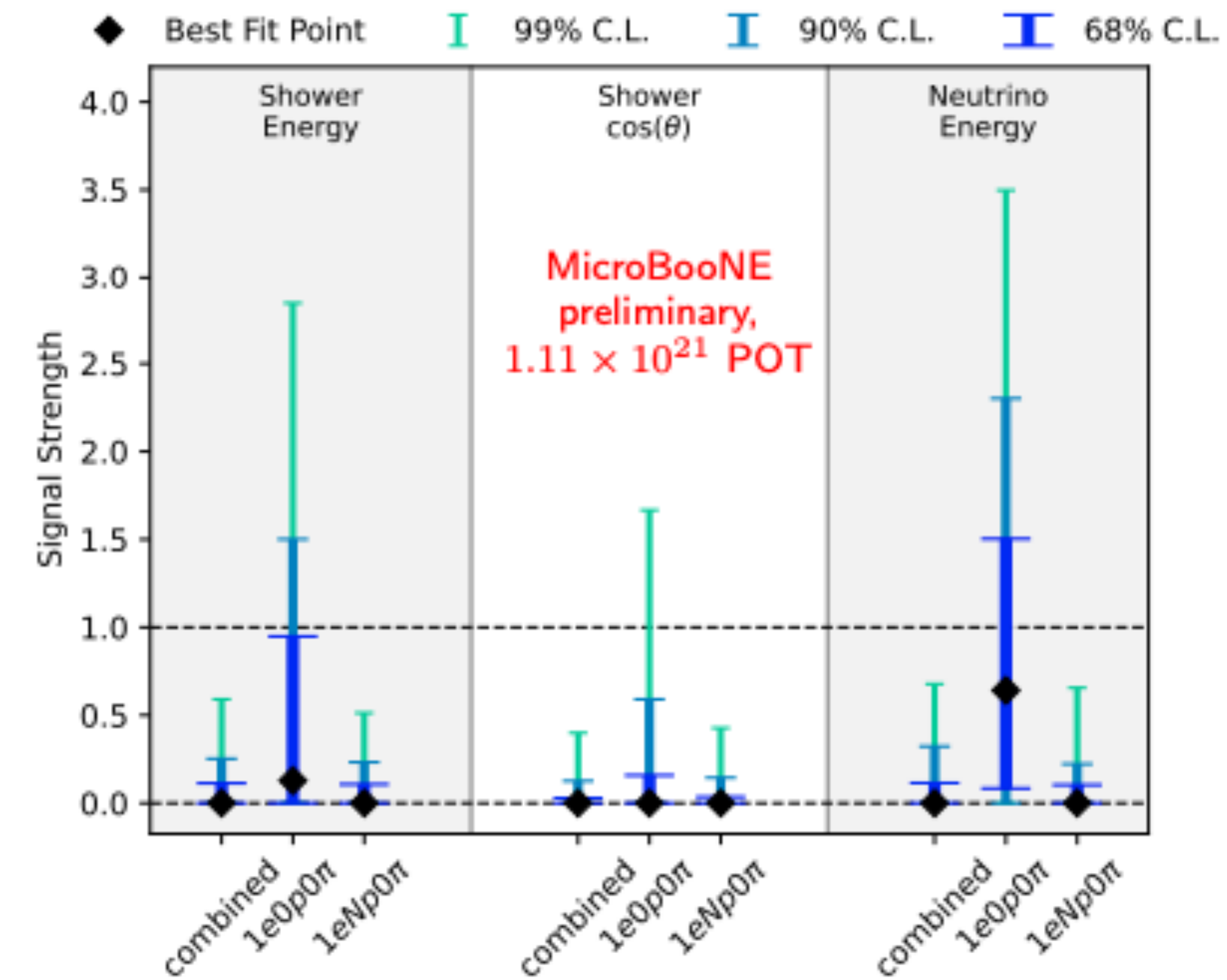
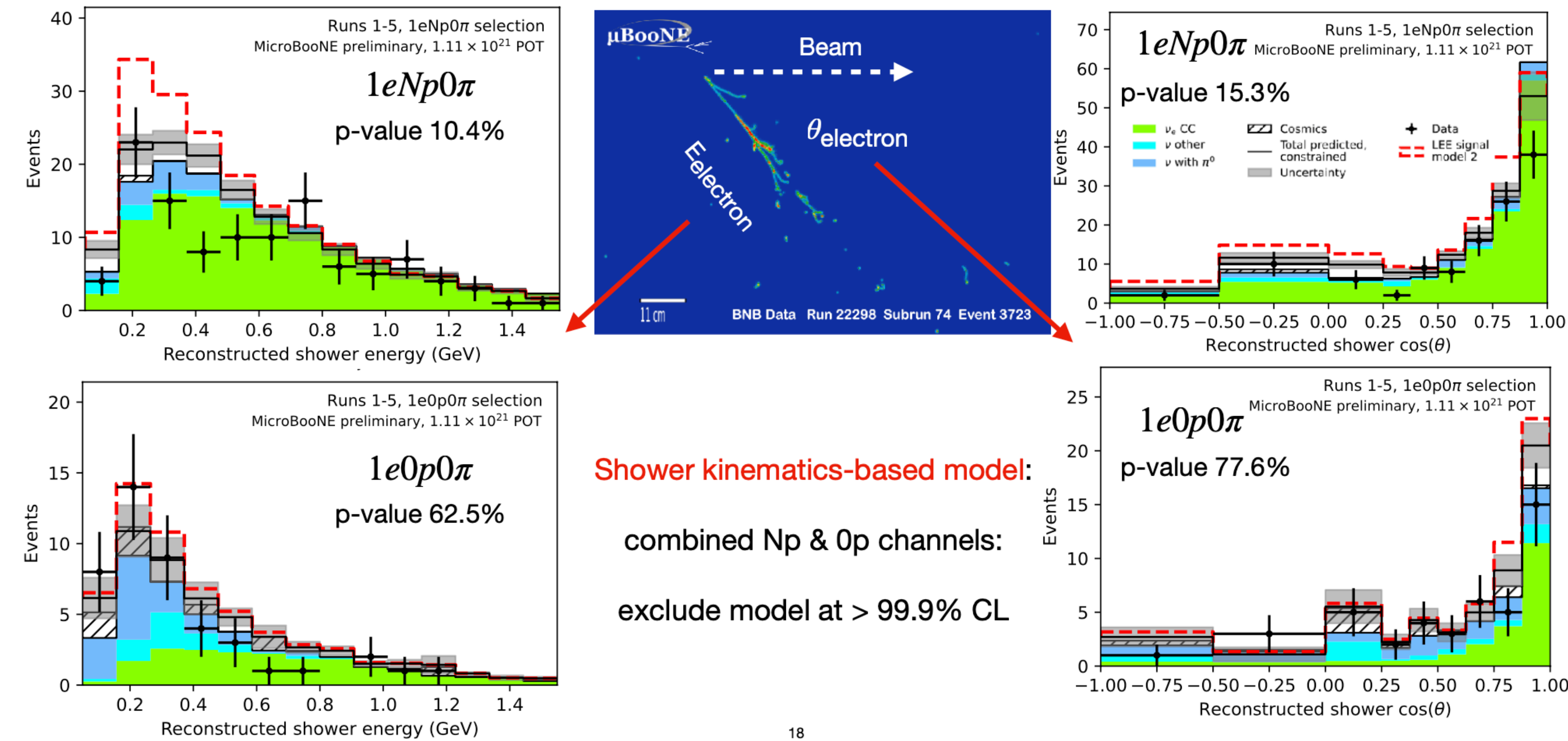
☐ **MiniBooNE LEE** → Tested with MicroBooNE



BNB/NuMI fluxes



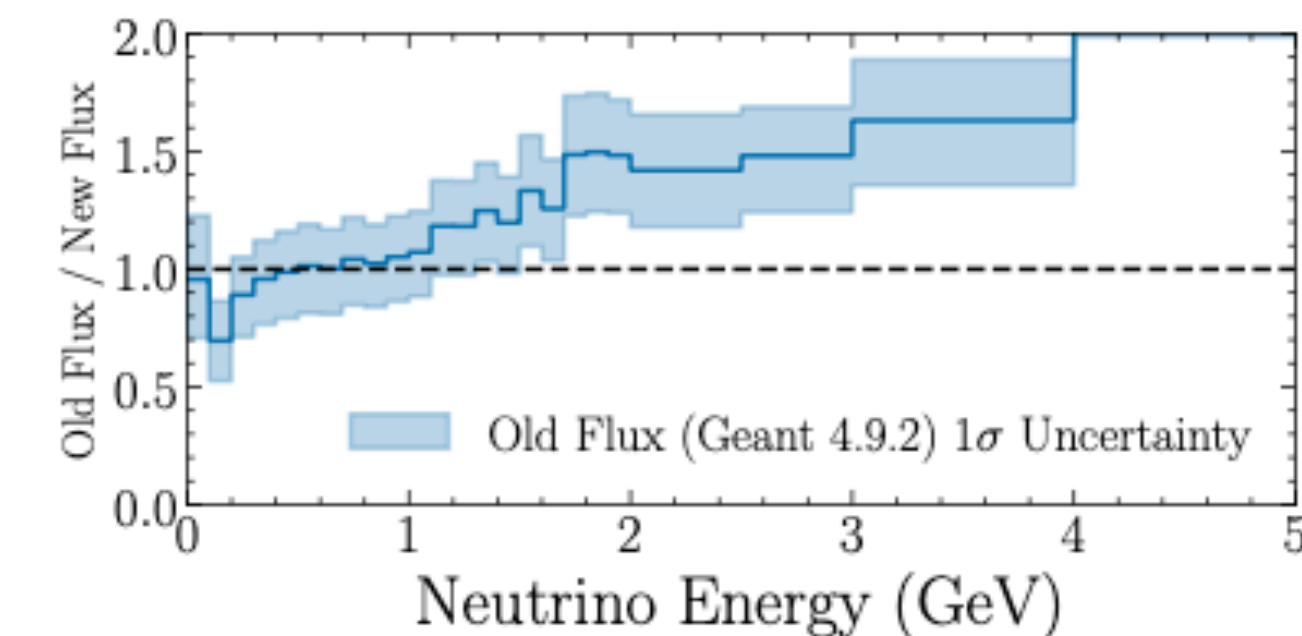
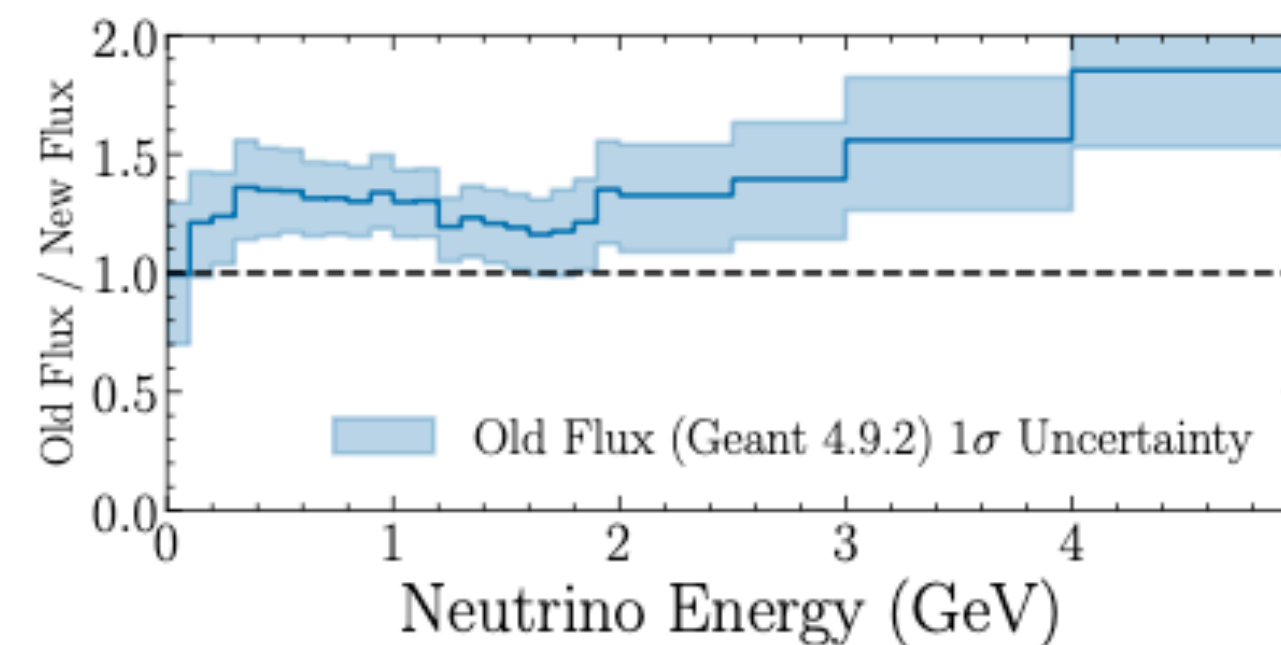
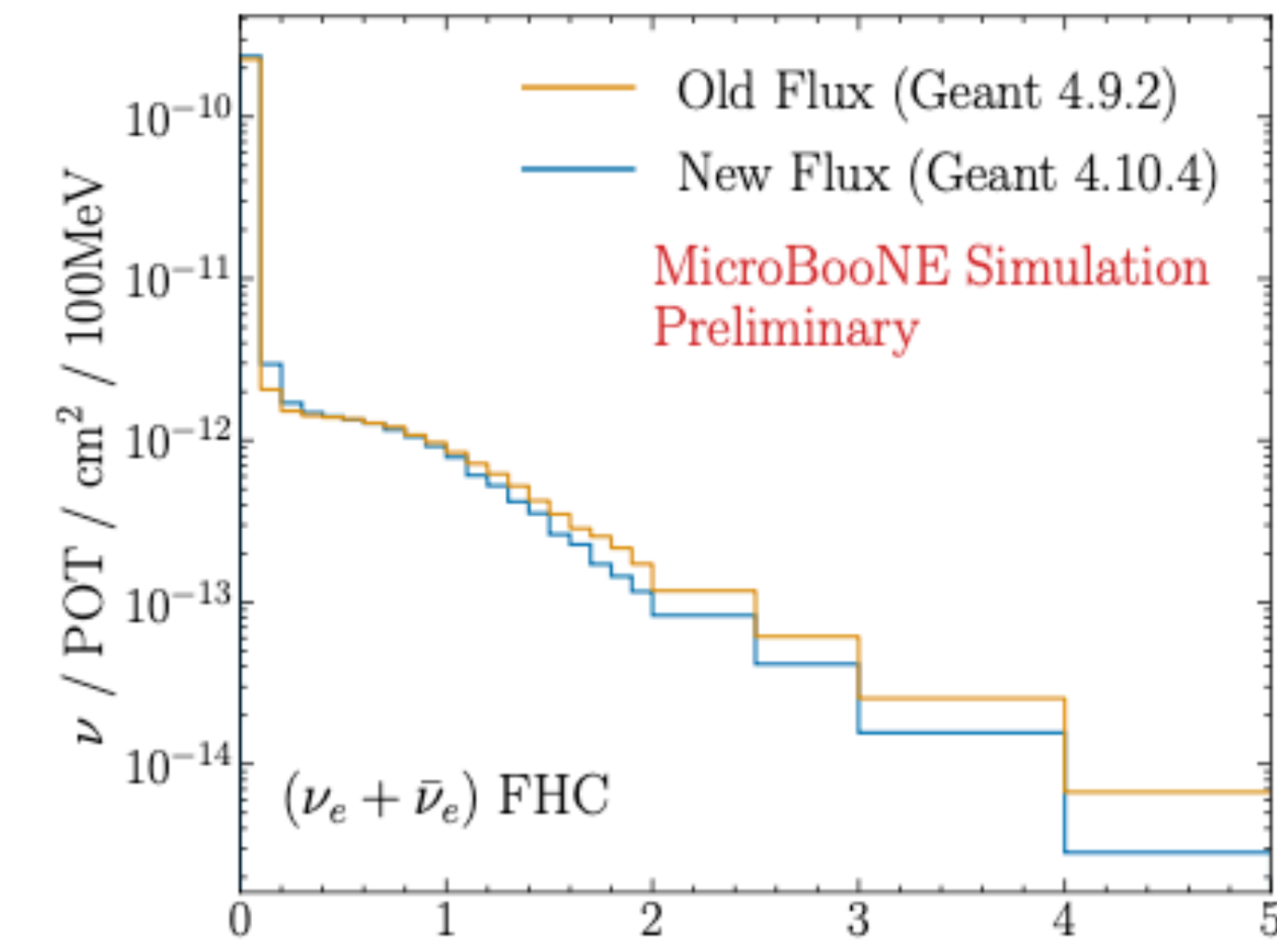
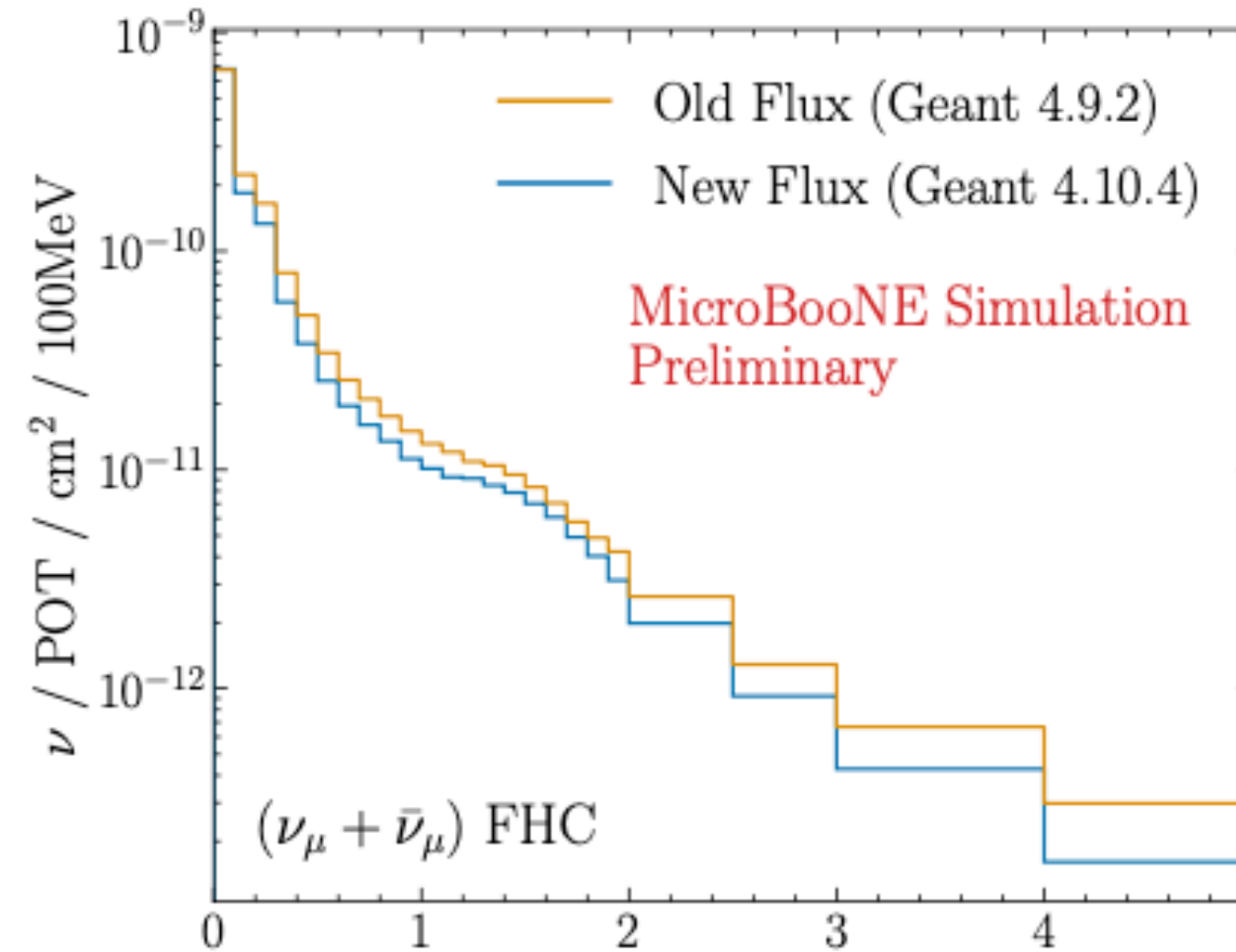
ν_e - like LEE Search New



3+1 Oscillation Analysis : Updated NuMI Flux

- MicroBooNE sits highly off-axis ($\sim 8^0$ degrees) to the NuMI beam:
- flux dominated by hadron re-interactions with target hall material
- phase space for hadron production not fully covered by world data
- Flux simulation upgrade:
 - Beam line geometry
 - Updated to a modern G4 version (4.10) for a better base model
 - Constraints from NA49 and others similar to NOvA, MINERvA
 - Conservative treatment of uncertainties outside data coverage

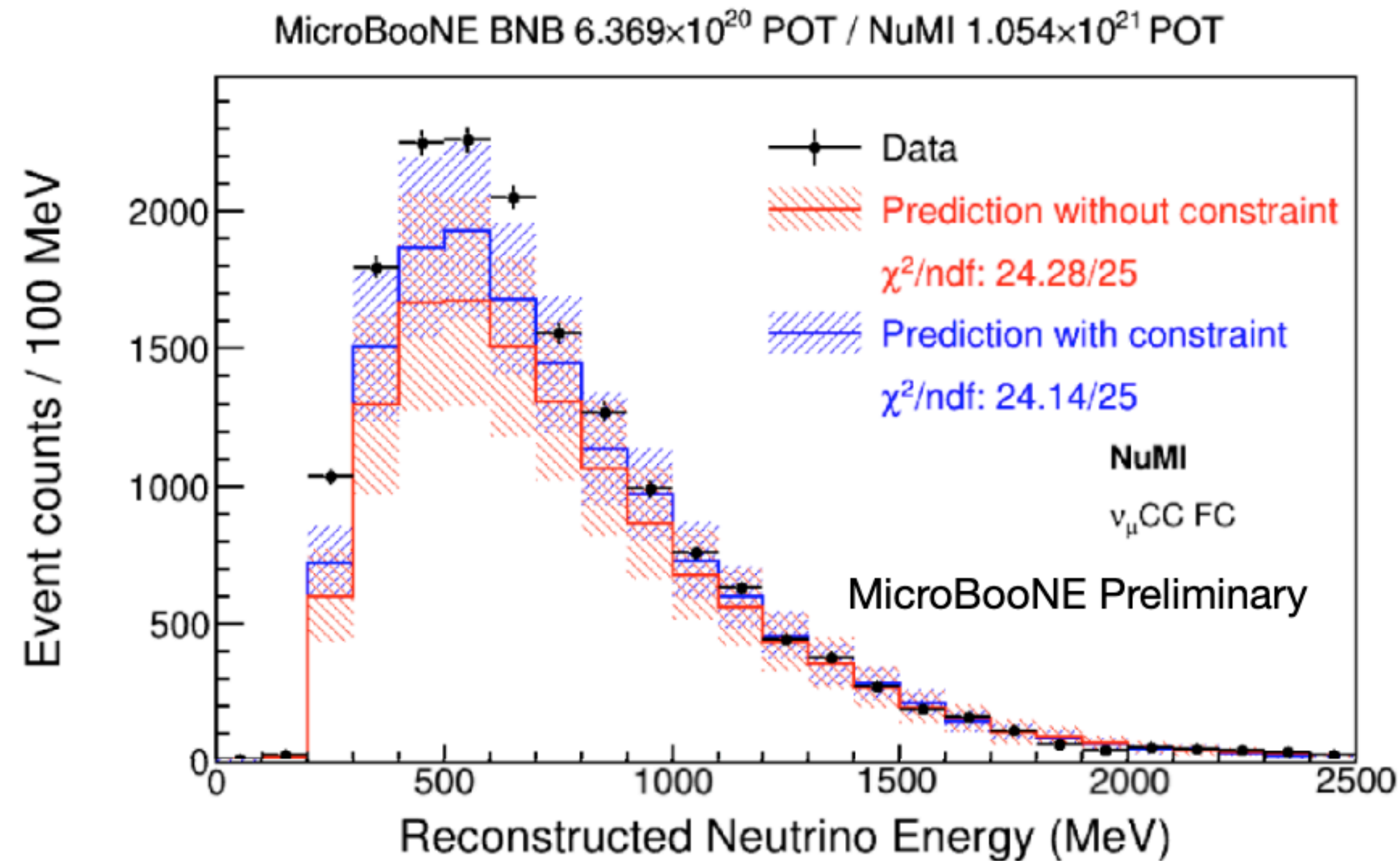
MICROBOONE-NOTE-1129-PUB



3+1 Oscillation Analysis : Updated NuMI Flux

MICROBOONE-NOTE-1132-PUB

- MicroBooNE's updated NuMI flux prediction vs. ν_μ data
- Good data/MC agreement. Blue histogram shows NuMI ν_μ prediction constrained by BNB ν_μ which largely cancels out cross section and detector systematics.



Measurements with π^0

$NC\pi^0 Xp$

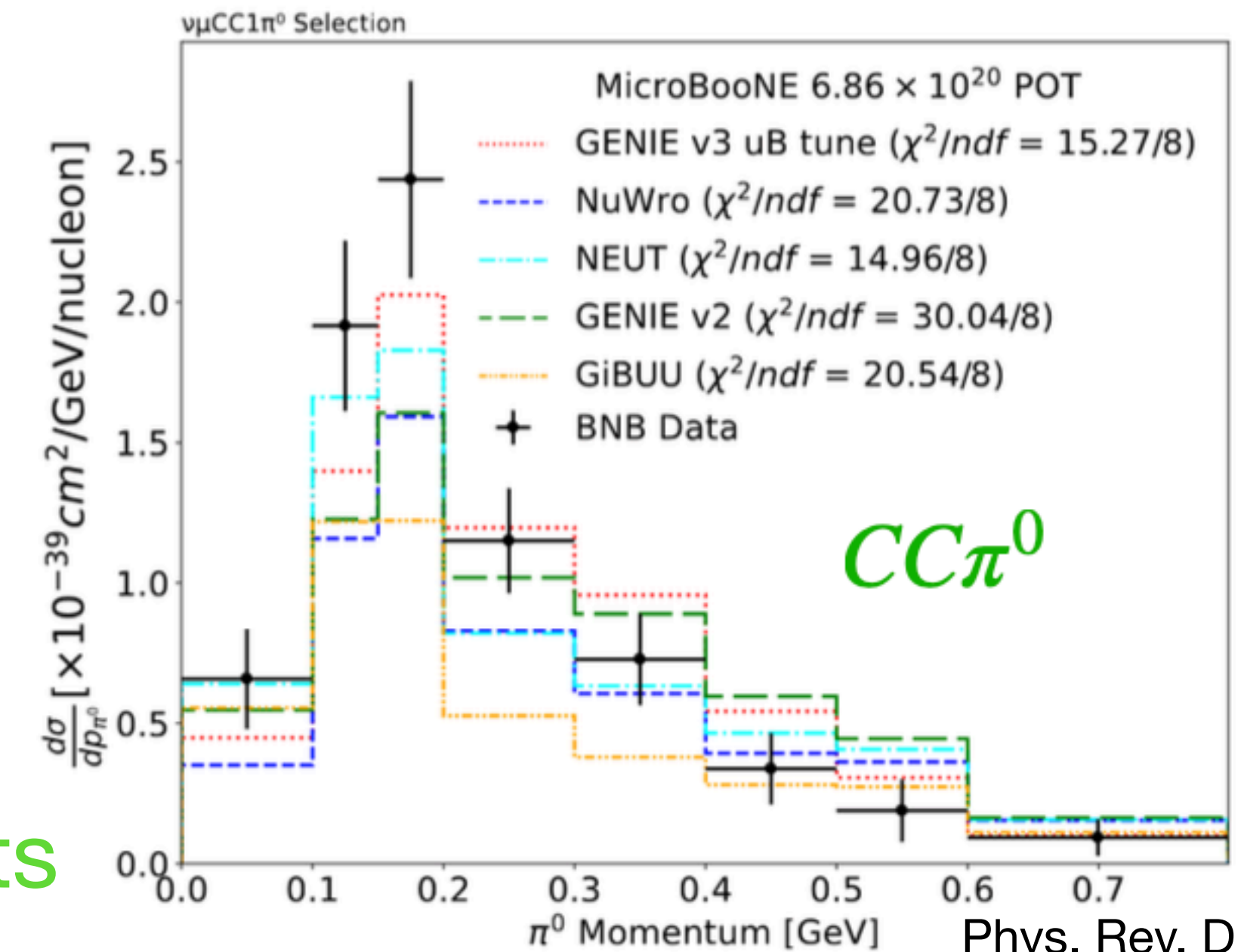
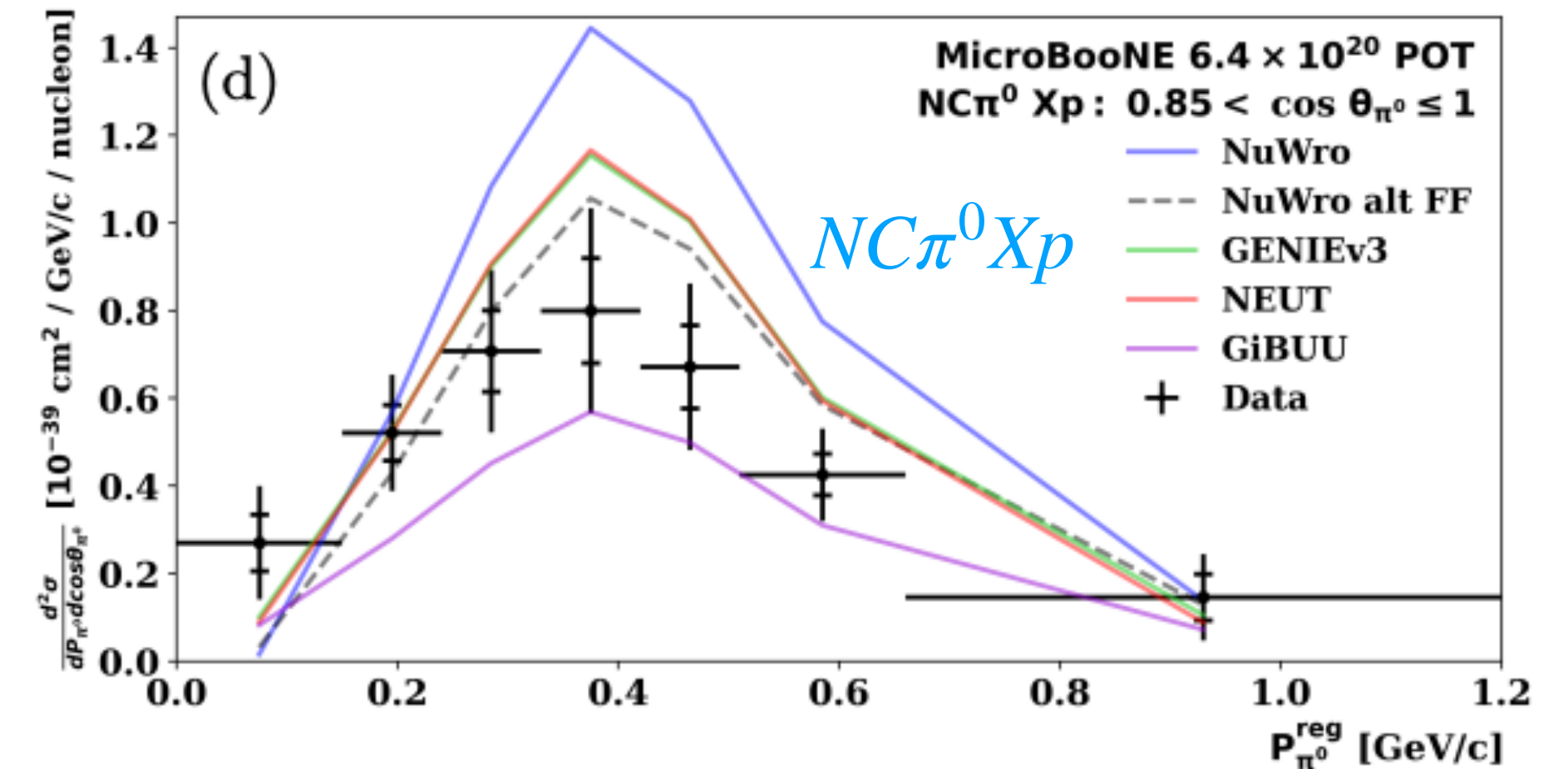
- First Double Differential cross section in $\cos\theta_{\pi^0}$ and P_{π^0} simultaneously
- Systematic over-prediction when compared to data
- Demonstrated sensitivity to form factor modeling and hadron reinteractions

$CC\pi^0$

- Detailed description over π^0 kinematics
- Mismodeling identified in π^0 momentum and muon forward angles
- Shortcomings associated with low momentum transfer, consistent with observations on other targets

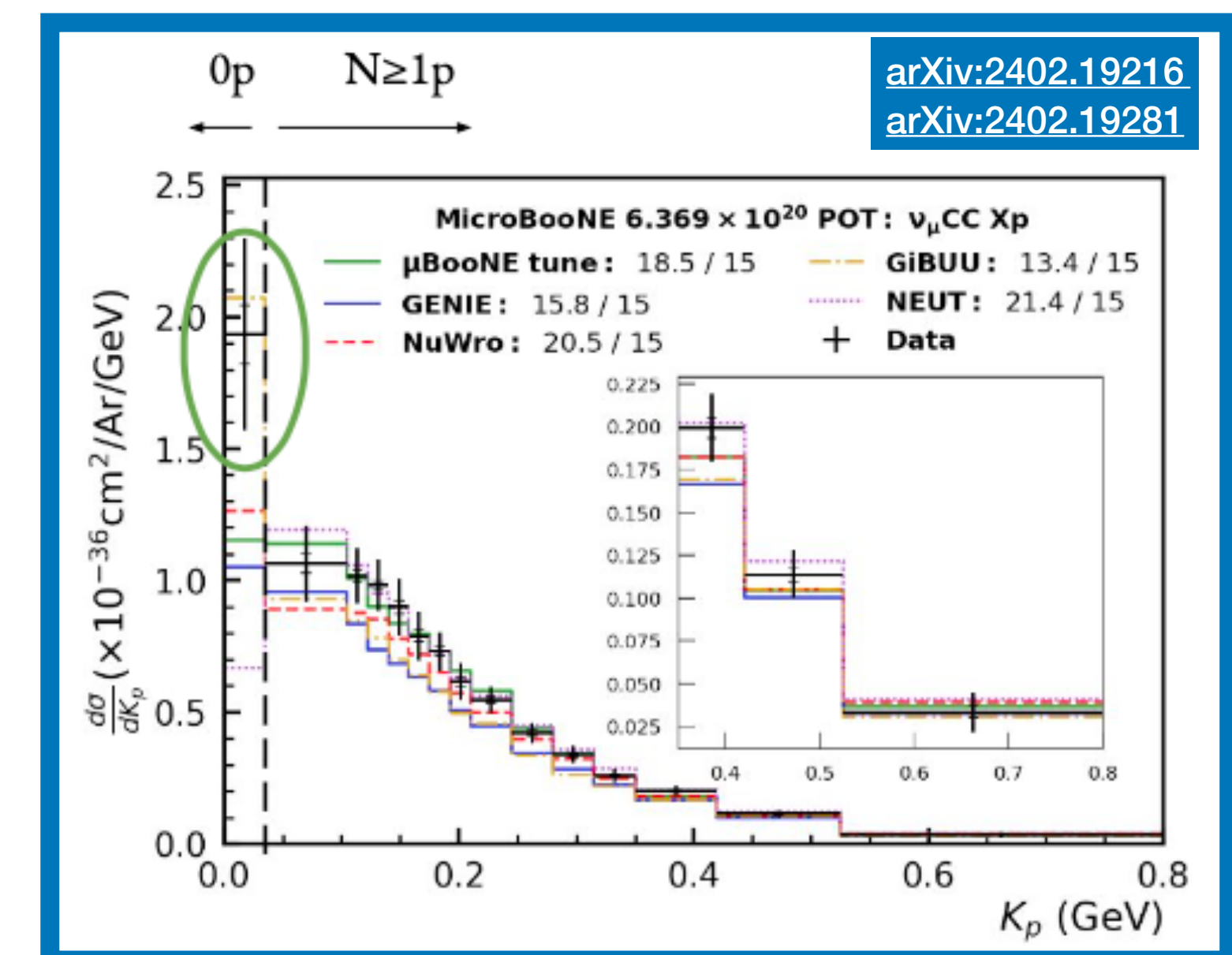
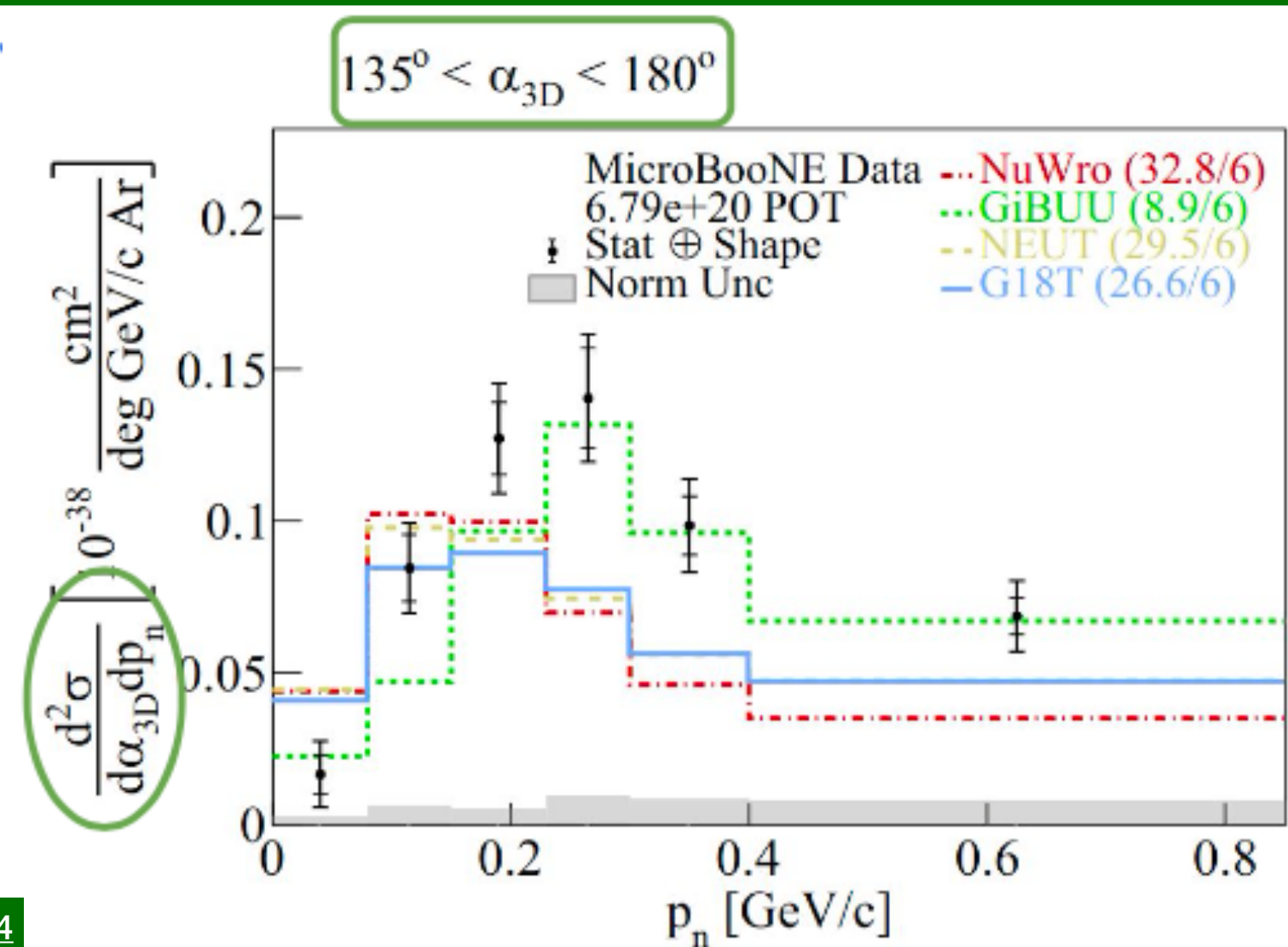
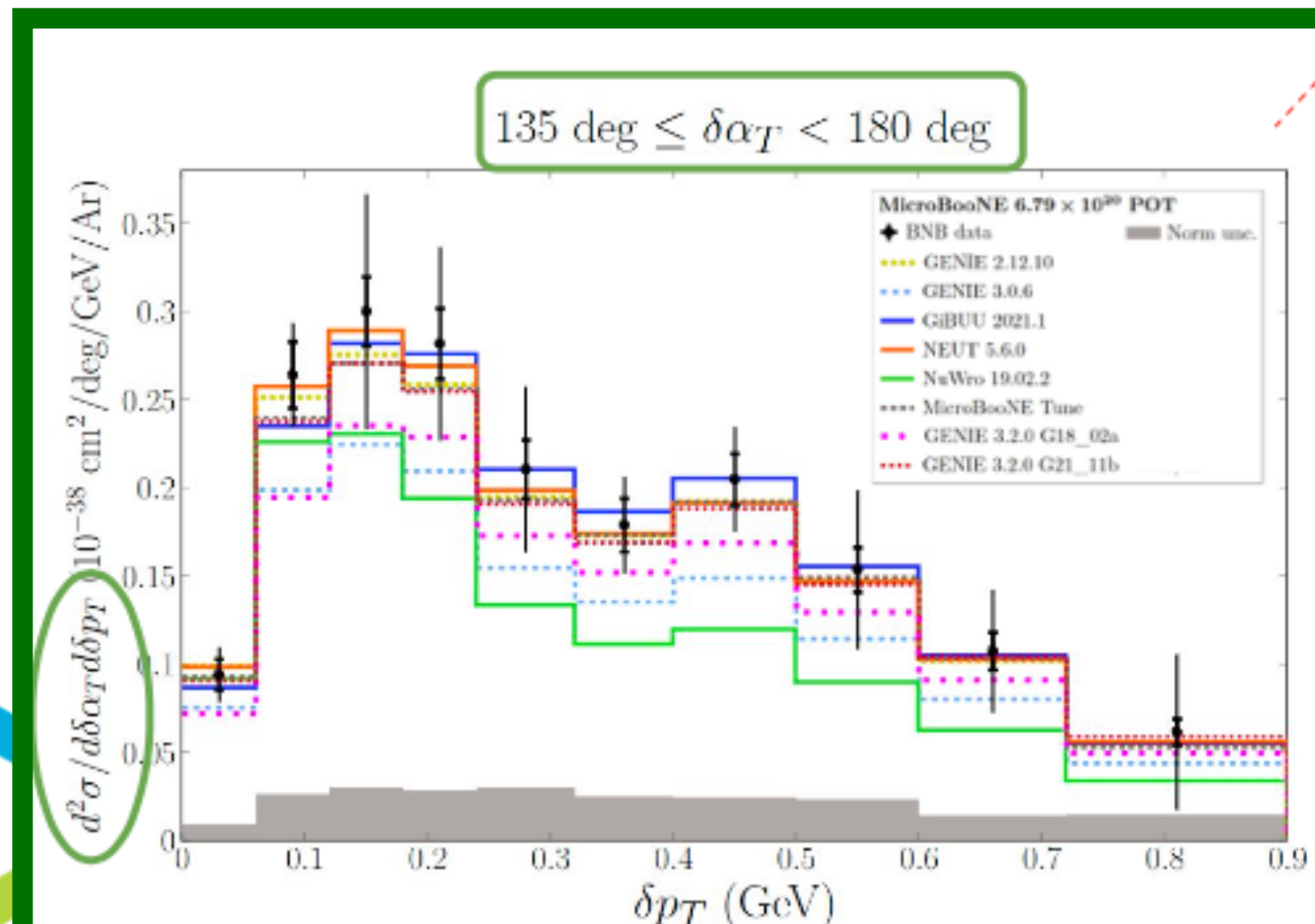
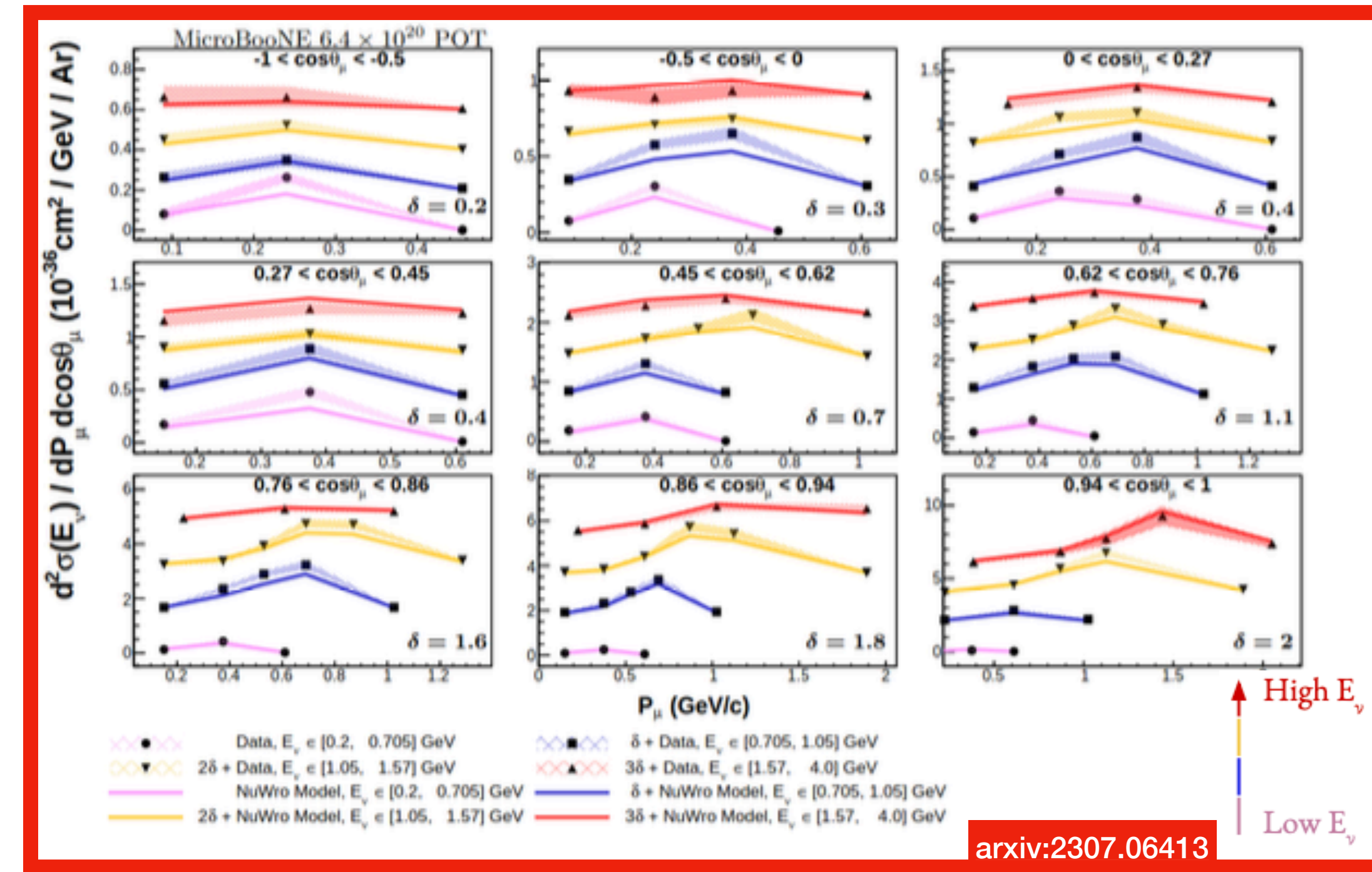
- Significant role in ν_e appearance studies
- π^0 events are the dominant background for single photon and BSM e^+e^- searches

arXiv:2404.10948



Inclusive $\nu_\mu CC + 0\pi$

- First 3D cross-section result on argon $\sigma(E_\nu, P_\mu, \cos\theta_\mu) \rightarrow$ New paradigm of cross sections as a function of the neutrino energy
- Pioneered data-driven model validation techniques! [arXiv:2411.03280]
- Leveraging low proton detection threshold to investigate $0p/Np$ topologies [Important for single- γ analysis!]
- Measurement in kinematic imbalance variables (missing momentum etc.) to get sensitive probe into final-state interactions and other nuclear effects
- Achieving significant model discrimination power \rightarrow Will inform next generation improvements in interaction model



Neutron identification

- Significant source of missing energy in neutrino interactions
- Infer existence of neutron through interaction producing proton knockout

