MEASURING THE ELECTRON ELECTRIC DIPOLE MOMENT USING YTTERBIUM FLUORIDE MOLECULES

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It is well known that the existence of an electron electric dipole moment (eEDM) would violate time reversal symmetry. The Standard Model predicts an eEDM less than 10^{-38}e.cm, however many popular extensions predict values in the range $10^{-29} - 10^{-24}$e.cm. Our experiment currently has the potential to measure eEDMs down to approximately 10^{-29}e.cm, making it a precise probe for T-violation and physics beyond the Standard Model.

We measure the eEDM by performing a type of separated oscillating field interferometry on a pulsed beam of YbF. The molecules are prepared such that the molecular spin is oriented perpendicular to an applied strong (10kV/cm) electric field. The spin is then allowed to precess about the electric field axis over a 0.5ms interaction period. We measure this angle of rotation, which is directly proportional to the eEDM. In order to measure the eEDM precisely and without error we use a complex switching technique wherein certain parameters, including the applied electric and magnetic fields, are reversed between individual molecular pulses. I will present our current technique and our most recent world leading result.