Revealing the flavor composition of astrophysical neutrinos: interplay of theory and experiment

Mauricio Bustamante

In collaboration with John Beacom and Walter Winter

Center for Cosmology and Astroparticle Physics (CCAPP)
The Ohio State University

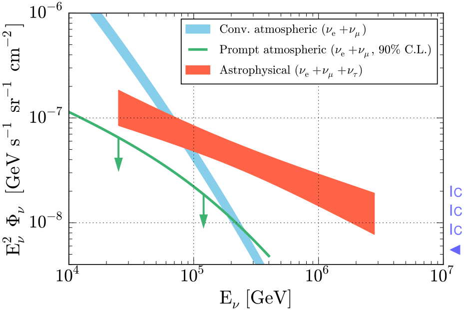
Crossroads of neutrino physics

MITP, August 04, 2015

High-energy astrophysical neutrinos: they exist!

The era of neutrino astronomy has begun!

– IceCube has reported 54 events with 30 TeV – 2 PeV in 4 years



IceCube, *PRL* **111**, 021103 (2013)
IceCube, *Science* **342**, 1242856 (2013)
IceCube, *PRL* **113**, 101101 (2014)
◀ IceCube, 1507.03991

Diffuse per-flavor astrophysical flux [IceCube, 1507.03991]:

$$\Phi_\nu = \left(6.7^{+1.1}_{-1.2} \cdot 10^{-18}\right) \left(\frac{E}{100\ \text{TeV}}\right)^{-(2.5\pm0.09)} \text{GeV}^{-1}\ \text{cm}^{-2}\ \text{s}^{-1}\ \text{sr}^{-1}$$

Flavor composition of neutrinos: an open question

What is the proportion of ν_e, ν_μ, ν_τ in the diffuse flux?

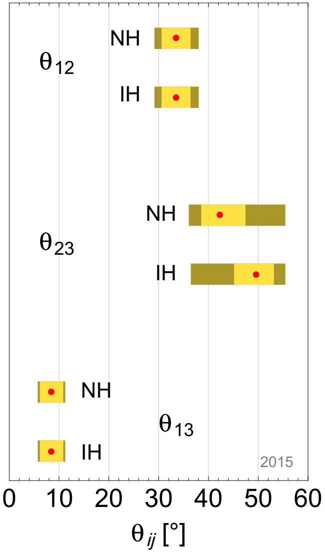
Knowing this can reveal two important pieces of information:

- the physical conditions at the neutrino sources; and
- whether there is new physics, and of what kind

So it will pay off to explore what to expect from theory

[Barenboim, Quigg, *PRD* **67**, 073024 (2003)]
[Winter, *PRD* **88**, 083007 (2013)]
[Mena, Palomares, Vincent, *PRL* **113**, 091103 (2014)]
[Palomares, Vincent, Mena, *PRD* **91**, 103008 (2015)]
[Palladino, Pagliaroli, Villante, Vissani, *PRL* **114**, 171101 (2015)]

Normal vs. inverted mass hierarchy



The neutrino mass hierarchy is unknown:

- Normal hierarchy (NH): ν_1 is lightest
- Inverted hierarchy (IH): ν_3 is lightest

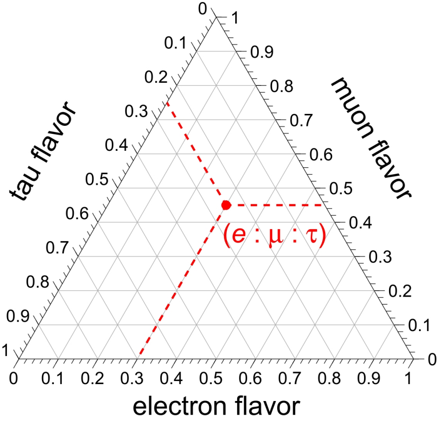
Using latest fits from GONZÁLEZ-GARCÍA *et al.*, *JHEP* **1411**, 052 (2014):

- θ_{12} and θ_{13} are well-determined
- Little NH/IH difference for θ_{12} and θ_{13}
- Large error and NH/IH difference for θ_{23}
- At 3σ, NH and IH regions are equal

“Flavor triangle” or Dalitz/Mandelstam plot

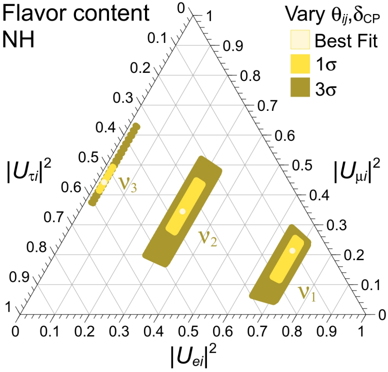
Assumes underlying unitarity: sum of projections on each axis is 1

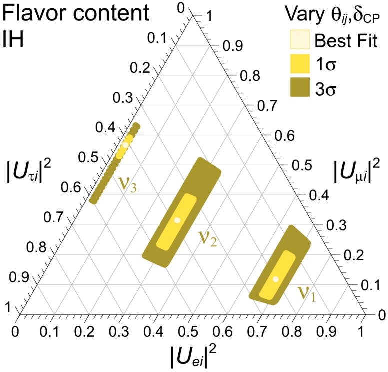
How to read it: follow the tilt of the tick marks, *e.g.*,



Flavor content of the mass eigenstates ν_1, ν_2, ν_3

Show the *e*, μ, and τ content of the ν_i via ternary plots:





Flavor mixing in high-energy astrophysical neutrinos

Probability of $\overleftrightarrow{\nu}_\alpha \to \overleftrightarrow{\nu}_\beta$ transition:

$$P_{\overleftrightarrow{\nu}_\alpha \to \overleftrightarrow{\nu}_\beta} = \delta_{\alpha\beta} - 4 \sum_{k>j} \mathrm{Re}\left(J_{\alpha\beta jk}\right) \sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta m_{kj}^2 L}{4E}\right) \pm 2 \sum_{k>j} \mathrm{Im}\left(J_{\alpha\beta jk}\right) \sin\left(\frac{\Delta m_{kj}^2 L}{2E}\right)$$

- For $E \sim 1$ PeV and $\Delta m_{kj}^2 \sim 10^{-4} - 10^{-3}$ eV^2, $L_{\text{osc}} \sim 10^{-10}$ Mpc
- Therefore, oscillations are very rapid
- They average out after only a few oscillations lengths:

$$\sin^2(\ldots) \to 1/2\,, \quad \sin(\ldots) \to 0$$

Hence, for astrophysical neutrinos:

$$P_{\overleftrightarrow{\nu}_\alpha \to \overleftrightarrow{\nu}_\beta} = \sum_{i=1}^{3} |U_{\alpha i}|^2 |U_{\beta i}|^2$$ ◀ incoherent mixture of mass eigenstates

Flavor ratios

- Neutrino production at the source via pion decay:

$$p\gamma \to \Delta^+(1232) \to \pi^+ n \qquad \pi^+ \to \mu^+ \nu_\mu \to e^+ \nu_e \bar{\nu}_\mu \nu_\mu$$

- Flavor ratios at the source: $(f_e : f_\mu : f_\tau)_S \approx (1/3 : 2/3 : 0)$
- At Earth, due to flavor mixing:

$$f_{\alpha,\oplus} = \sum_\beta P_{\beta\alpha} f_{\beta,S} = \sum_\beta \left(\sum_{i=1}^{3} |U_{\alpha i}|^2 |U_{\beta i}|^2 \right) f_{\beta,S}$$

$$(1/3 : 2/3 : 0)_S \xrightarrow{\text{flavor mixing, NH, best-fit}} (0.36 : 0.32 : 0.32)_\oplus$$

- Other compositions at the source:

$$(0 : 1 : 0)_S \longrightarrow (0.26 : 0.36 : 0.38)_\oplus \quad \text{("muon damped")}$$
$$(1 : 0 : 0)_S \longrightarrow (0.55 : 0.26 : 0.19)_\oplus \quad \text{("neutron decay")}$$
$$(1/2 : 1/2 : 0)_S \longrightarrow (0.40 : 0.31 : 0.29)_\oplus \quad \text{("charmed decays")}$$

How can IceCube identify flavor?

Below $E_\nu \sim 5$ PeV, there are two event topologies:

- Showers: generated by CC ν_e or ν_τ; or by NC ν_x
- Muon tracks: generated by CC ν_μ

(Some muon tracks can be mis-reconstructed as showers)

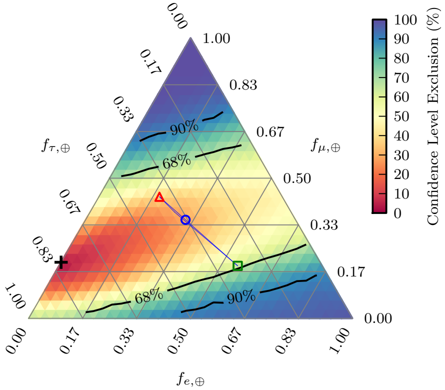
At $\gtrsim 5$ PeV (no events so far), all of the above, plus:

- Glashow resonance: CC $\bar{\nu}_e e$ interactions at 6.3 PeV
- Double bangs: CC $\nu_\tau \to \tau \to \nu_\tau$

Flavor ratios must be inferred from the number of showers and tracks

Using contained events only

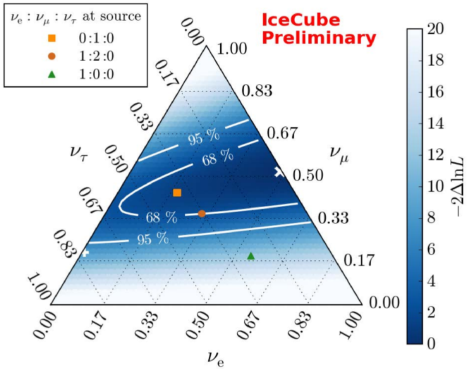
[IceCube Coll., *PRL* **114**, 171102 (2015)]



Best fit: $(0 : 0.2 : 0.8)_\oplus$

Using contained events + throughgoing muons

[IceCube Coll., 1507.03991]

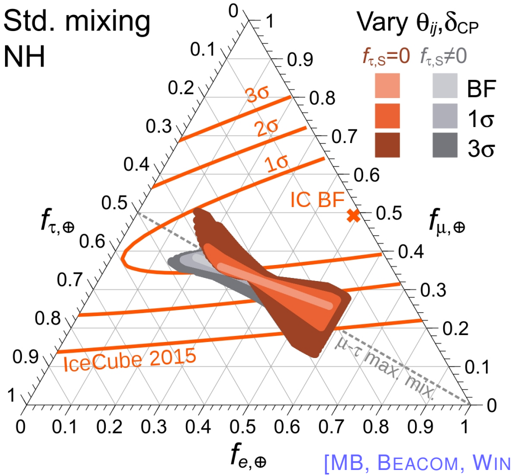


Best fit: $(0.49 : 0.51 : 0)_\oplus$

- Compatible with standard source compositions
- Bounds are weak – need more data and better flavor-tagging

Flavor combinations at Earth from std. mixing

Assume unconstrained flavor composition at source (with and w/o ν_τ):



[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

Std. mixing can access *only* $\sim$ 10% of the possible combinations

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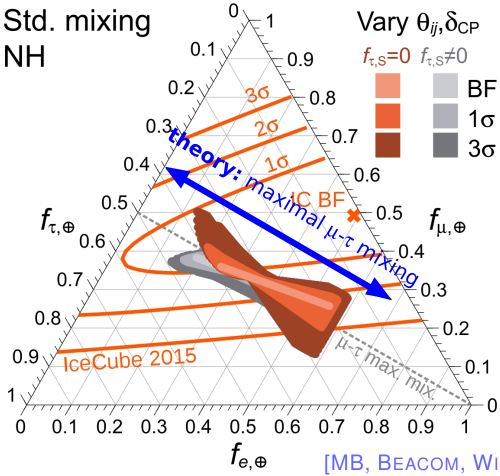

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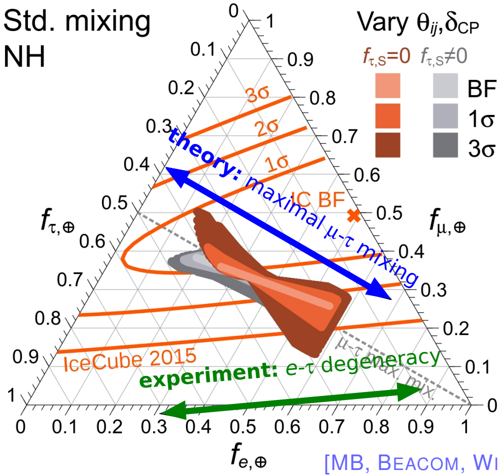

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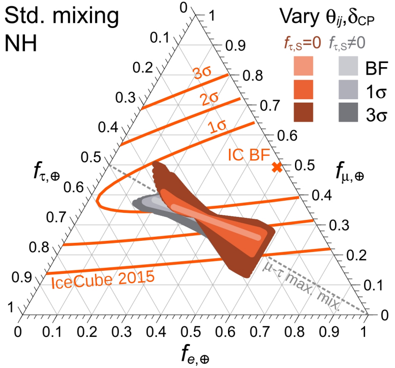
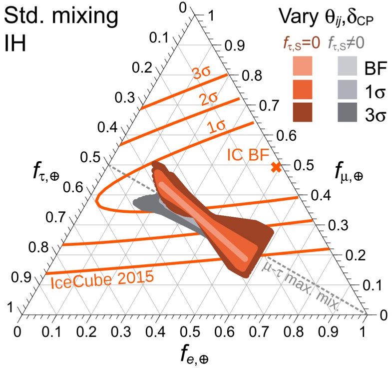
Std. mixing can access *only* $\sim$ 10% of the possible combinations

Flavor combinations from flavor mixing: NH vs. IH

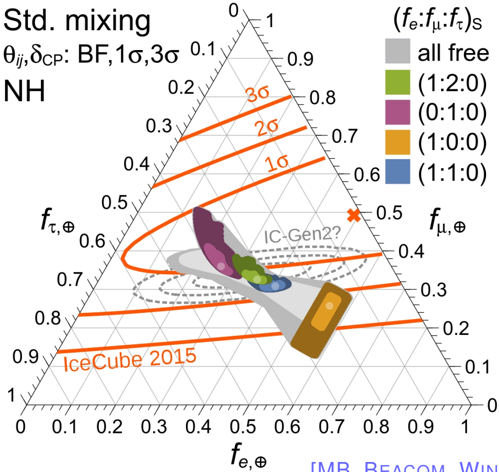




[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

Selected source compositions

We can look at results for particular choices of ratios at the source:

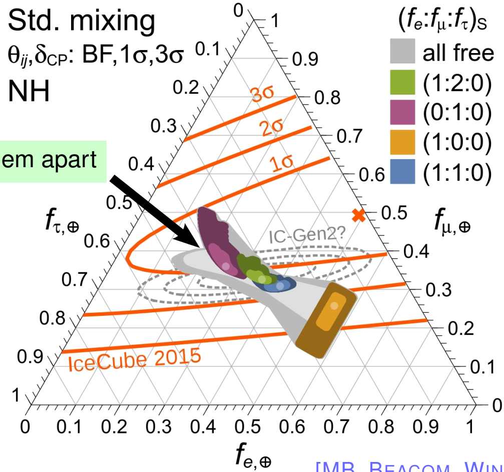


[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

Selected source compositions

We can look at results for particular choices of ratios at the source:

challenging to tell them apart



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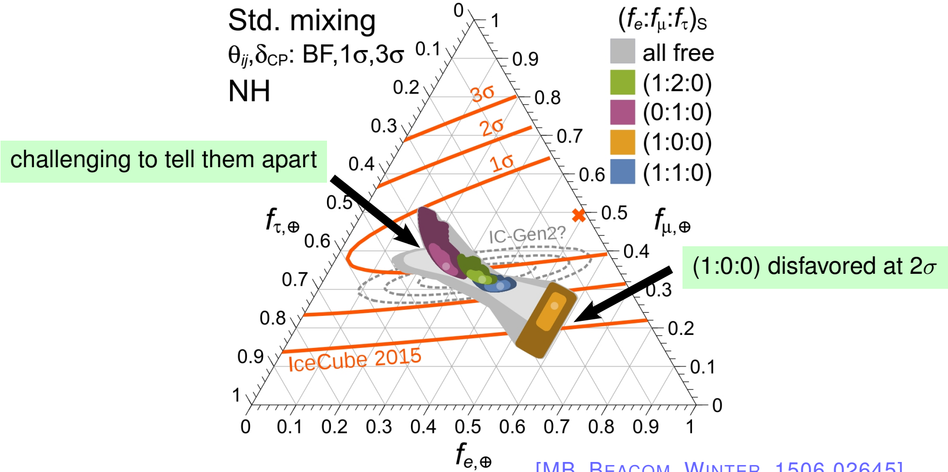
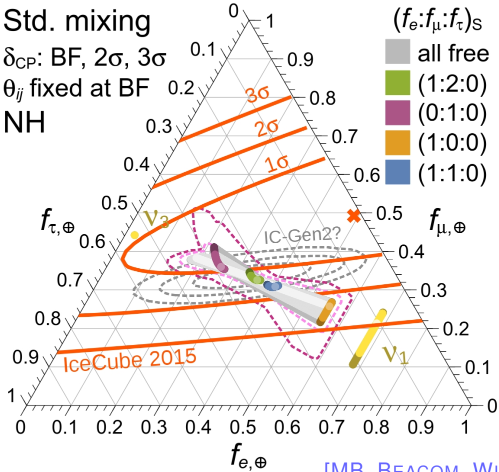


[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

Perfect knowledge of mixing angles

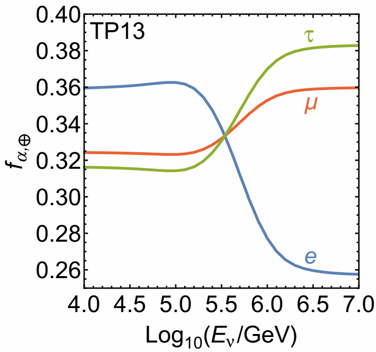
In a few years, we might know all the mixing parameters except δ_{CP}:

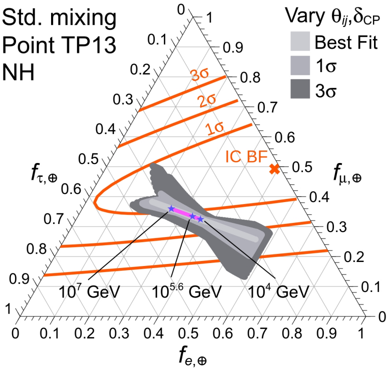


[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

Energy dependence of the composition at the source

Different ν production channels are accessible at different energies





[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

- TP13: $p\gamma$ model, target photons from co-accelerated electrons
  [Hümmer *et al.*, *Astropart. Phys.* **34**, 205 (2010)]
- Equivalent to different sources types contributing to the diffuse flux
- Will be difficult to resolve
  [Kashti, Waxman, *PRL* **95**, 181101 (2005)] [Lipari, Lusignoli, Meloni, *PRD* **75**, 123005 (2007)]

New physics: effect on the flavor composition

- New physics in the neutrino sector could affect the
  - production; and/or
  - propagation; and/or
  - detection

- Detection: probe NP in the ν interaction length via the angular dependence of the flux [MARFATIA, MCKAY, WEILER, 1502.06337]

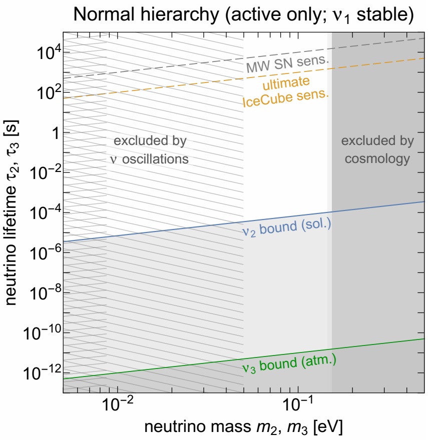
- NP at production and propagation could modify the incoherent mixture of ν_1, ν_2, ν_3

- Example: neutrino decay ►

[BARENBOIM, QUIGG, *PRD* **67**, 073024 (2003)]
[BEACOM, BELL, HOOPER, PAKVASA, WEILER, *PRL* **90**, 181301 (2003)]
[MALTONI, WINTER, *JHEP* **07**, 064 (2008)]
[BAERWALD, MB, WINTER, *JCAP* **1210**, 020 (2012)]
[PAGLIAROLI, PALLADINO, VISSANI, VILLANTE 1506.02624]

Neutrino decay

- SM: ν lifetimes are $> 10^{36}$ yr
- Via new-physics decay modes, they could be shorter
- Consider two possibilities:
  - NH: $\nu_2, \nu_3 \to \nu_1$
  - IH: $\nu_1, \nu_2 \to \nu_3$
- There are experimental bounds on the lifetime τ_i / m_i



[MB, Beacom, Murase, in prep.]

Decay: effect on flavor ratios

$$f_{\alpha,\oplus}\left(E_0, z, \kappa_j^{-1}\right) = |U_{\alpha l}|^2 + \sum_{j \neq l} \left(|U_{\alpha j}|^2 - |U_{\alpha l}|^2\right) f_{j,S}\, D\left(E_0, z, \kappa_j^{-1}\right)$$

$l = 1$ (NH), 3 (IH)

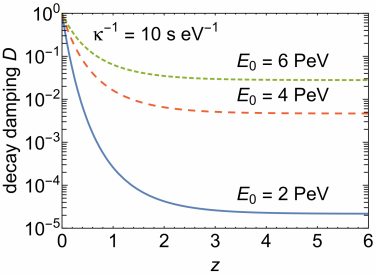
$\nu_{1,2,3}$ ratios at source

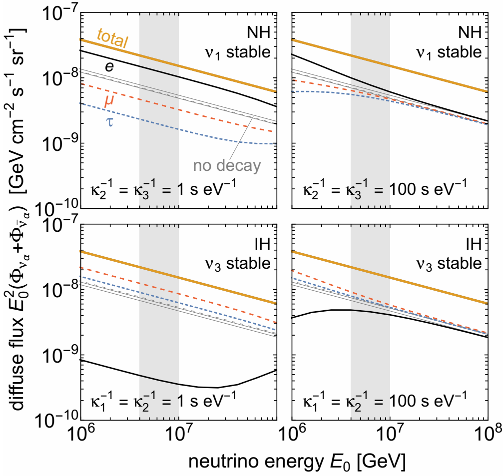
- Damping due to decay:

$$0 < D < 1$$

- Complete decay:

$$D \to 0 \Rightarrow f_{\alpha,\oplus} = |U_{\alpha l}|^2$$

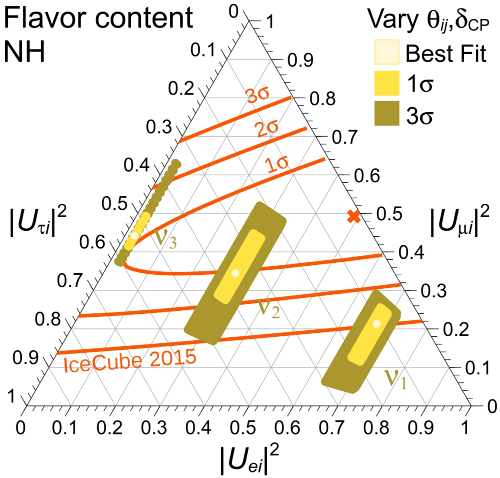




[MB, Beacom, Murase, in prep.]

Decay: using the flavor ratios

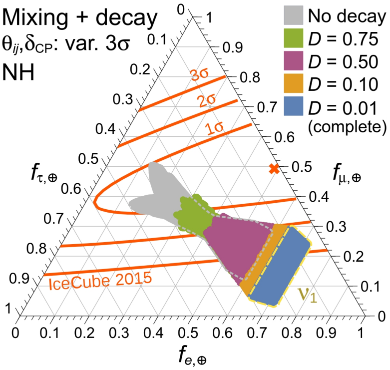
Flavor ratios are currently more sensitive to complete decay in the NH than in the IH:

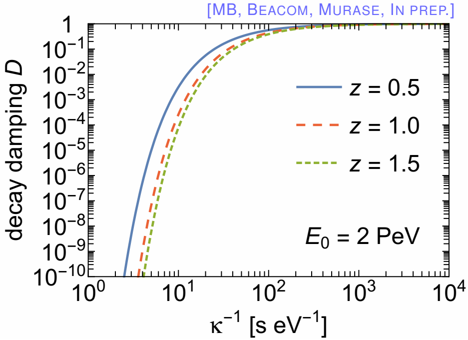


Decay: lifetime bounds with current IceCube data

Flavor ratios with decay in the NH ($\nu_2, \nu_3 \to \nu_1$):

$$f_{\alpha,\oplus}\left(E_0, z, \kappa_j^{-1}\right) = |U_{\alpha 1}|^2 + \sum_{j=2,3} \left(|U_{\alpha j}|^2 - |U_{\alpha 1}|^2\right) f_{j,S}\, D\left(E_0, z, \kappa_j^{-1}\right)$$





$D \lesssim 0.01$ implies a bound of $\kappa_{2,3}^{-1} \gtrsim 10$ s eV^{-1} at $\gtrsim 2\sigma$

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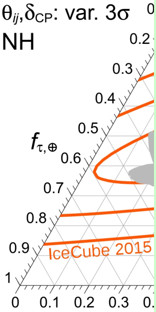
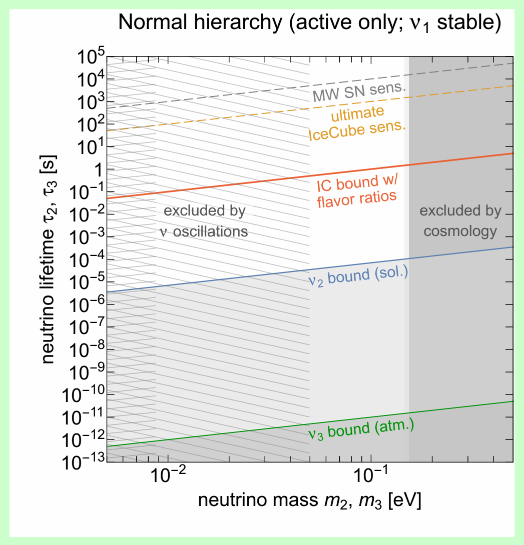
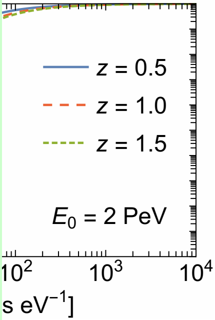
$$f_{\alpha,\oplus}\left(E_0, z, \ldots\right) \ldots D\left(E_0, z, \kappa_j^{-1}\right)$$

Mixing + decay
θ_{ij}, δ_{CP}: var. 3σ
NH





…BEACOM, MURASE, IN PREP.]



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Decay: cascade rate probes the IH

- Around 6.3 PeV, the Glashow resonance is accessible:

$$\bar{\nu}_e + e \to W \to \text{ hadronic shower (BR} = 67\%)$$

- Three scenarios:
  - Neutrinos are stable: we see the GR as a bump in the cascade rate
  - Neutrinos decay in the NH: the bump is larger ($|U_{e1}|^2$ is large)
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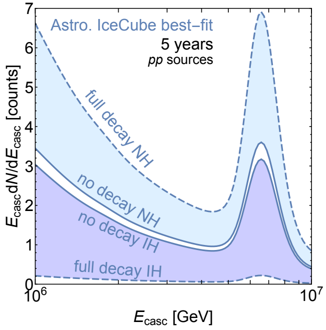

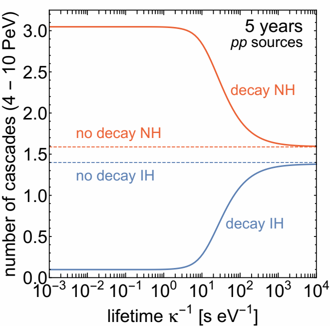

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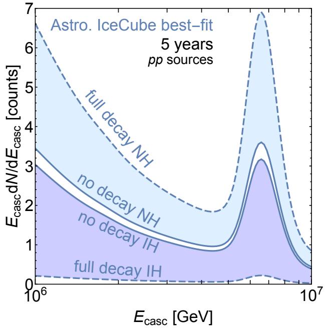

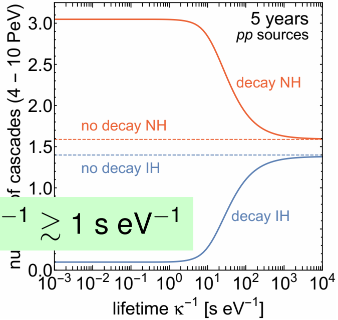

$$\kappa^{-1} \gtrsim 1 \text{ s eV}^{-1}$$

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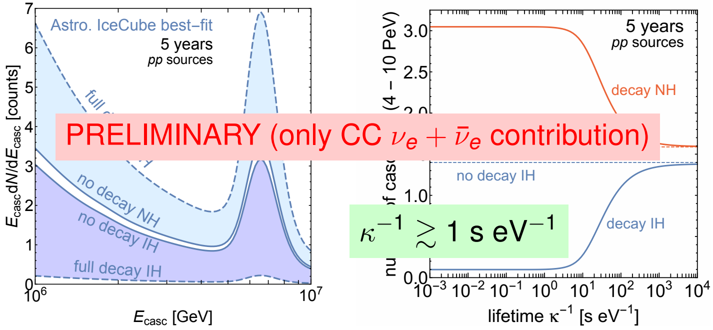

PRELIMINARY (only CC $\nu_e + \bar{\nu}_e$ contribution)

$\kappa^{-1} \gtrsim 1$ s eV^{-1}

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  $\bar{\nu}$ … 67%)

- Three scen…
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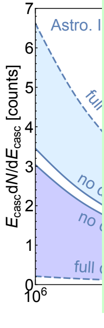
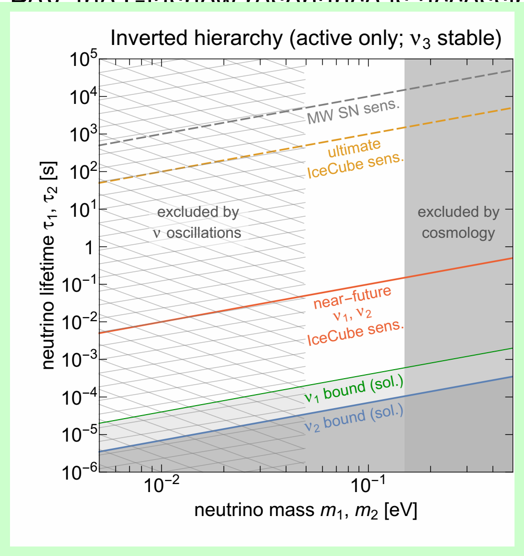
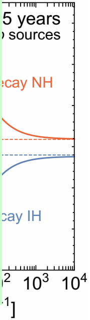


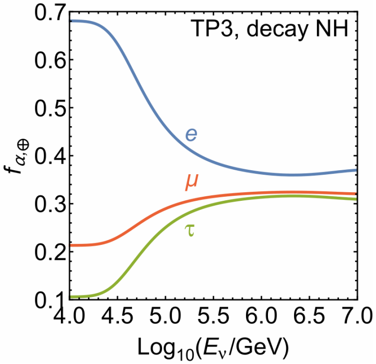


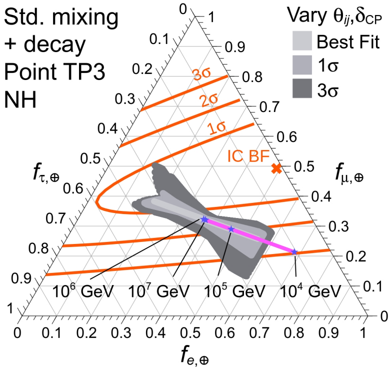


[MB, BEACOM, MURASE, IN PREP.]

Decay: seeing the energy dependence?

- The effect of decay shows up at low energies
- *e.g.*, for a model of AGN cores [HÜMMER *et al.*, *Astropart. Phys.* **34**, 205 (2010)],

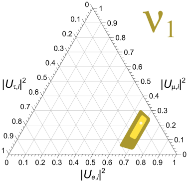




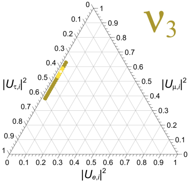
[MB, BEACOM, WINTER, 1506.02645]

Decay: complete vs. incomplete

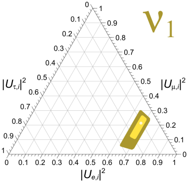
- Complete decay: only ν_1 (ν_3) reach Earth assuming NH (IH)

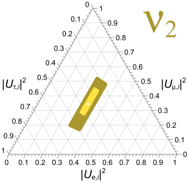


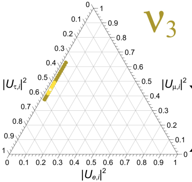
or



- Incomplete decay: incoherent mixture of ν_1, ν_2, ν_3 reaches Earth

$\alpha\Big($ 

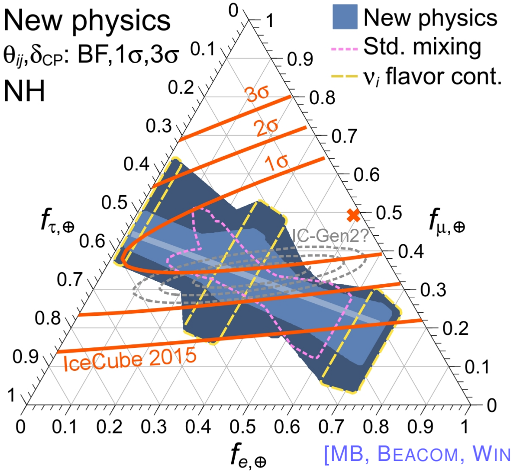
$\Big) + \beta\Big($ 

$\Big) + \gamma\Big($ 

$\Big)$

New physics that changes the ν_i mixture

Region of all linear combinations of ν_1, ν_2, ν_3:



[MB, BEACOM, WINTER, 1506.02645]

This class of NP can access *only* $\sim$ 25% of the possible combinations

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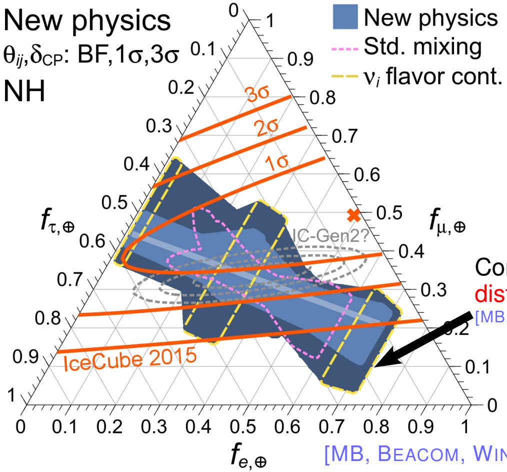

Complete decay in NH
disfavored at $> 2\sigma$
[MB, Beacom, Murase, In prep.]

[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

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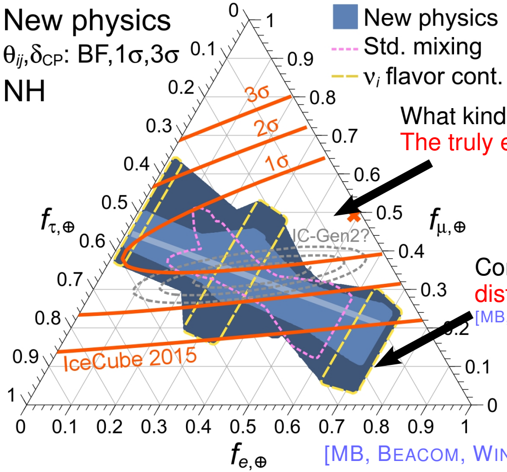

What kind of NP lives outside?
The truly exotic kind!

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[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

This class of NP can access *only* $\sim$ 25% of the possible combinations

New physics — of the *truly exotic* kind (I)

What kind of NP lives outside the blue region?

- NP that changes the values of the mixing parameters, *e.g.*,
  - violation of Lorentz and CPT invariance

    [Barenboim, Quigg, *PRD* **67**, 073024 (2003)] [MB, Gago, Peña-Garay, *JHEP* **1004**, 005 (2010)]
  - violation of equivalence principle

    [Gasperini, *PRD* **39**, 3606 (1989)] [Glashow *et al.*, *PRD* **56**, 2433 (1997)]
  - coupling to a torsion field

    [De Sabbata, Gasperini, *Nuovo. Cim.* **A65**, 479 (1981)]
  - renormalization-group running of mixing parameters

    [MB, Gago, Jones, *JHEP* **1105**, 133 (2011)]
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- flavor-violating physics
- ν–$\bar{\nu}$ mixing (if ν, $\bar{\nu}$ flavor ratios are considered separately)

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- ν–$\bar{\nu}$ mixing (if ν, $\bar{\nu}$ flavor ratios are considered separately)

New physics — of the *truly exotic* kind (II)

Add a new-physics term to the standard oscillation Hamiltonian:

$$H_{\text{tot}} = H_{\text{std}} + H_{\text{NP}}$$

$$H_{\text{std}} = \frac{1}{2E} U^\dagger_{\text{PMNS}} \, \text{diag}\left(0, \Delta m^2_{21}, \Delta m^2_{31}\right) U_{\text{PMNS}}$$

$$H_{\text{NP}} = \sum_n \left(\frac{E}{\Lambda_n}\right)^n U^\dagger_n \, \text{diag}\left(O_{n,1}, O_{n,2}, O_{n,3}\right) U_n$$

$n = 0$

- coupling to a torsion field
- CPT-odd Lorentz violation

$n = 1$

- equivalence principle violation
- CPT-even Lorentz violation

Experimental upper bounds from atmospheric ν's:

$O_0 \lesssim 10^{-23}$ GeV $\quad$ $O_1/\Lambda_1 \lesssim 10^{-27}$ GeV

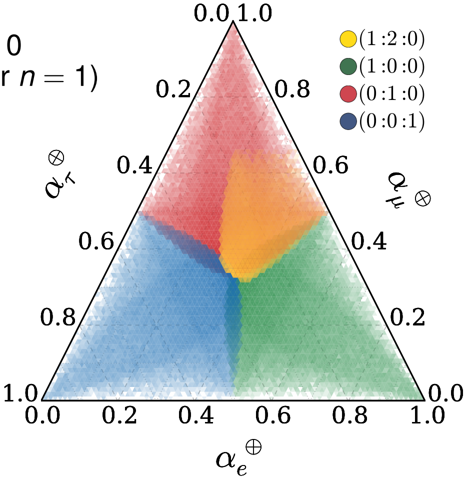
[MB, Gago, Peña-Garay, *JHEP* **1004**, 005 (2010)]
[Argüelles, Katori, Salvadó, 1506.02043]
[IceCube Coll., *PRD* **82**, 112003 (2010)]
[Super-K Coll., *PRD* **91**, 052003 (2015)]

Truly exotic new physics is indeed able to populate the white region:

- use current bounds on $O_{n,i}$
- sample the unknown NP mixing angles

[ARGÜELLES, KATORI, SALVADÓ 1506.02043]

$n = 0$
(similar for $n = 1$)

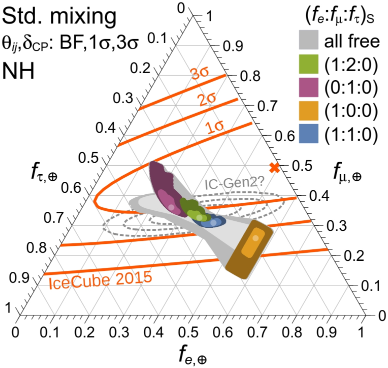


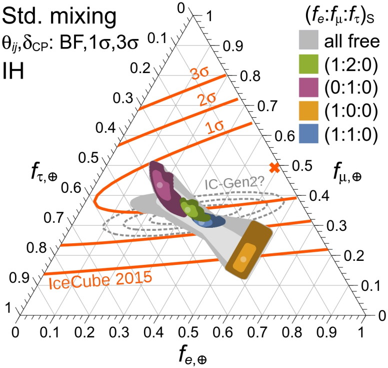
Conclusions . . . and the future

- The flavor composition is arguably the second-most interesting unknown after the identification of sources
- The space of allowed flavor compositions is surprisingly small:
  - Standard mixing: $\sim$ 10% of all possibilities
  - ν_i-mixing new physics: $\sim$ 25% (*e.g.*, decay)
- Only a broader class of new physics (*e.g.*, CPT violation) can access all compositions
- IceCube can improve the lifetime bounds in the NH (now!) and IH (soon!) by several orders of magnitude
- More, better data on the particle-physics *and* astrophysics fronts are needed (*e.g.*, IceCube-Gen2, DUNE)

Backup slides

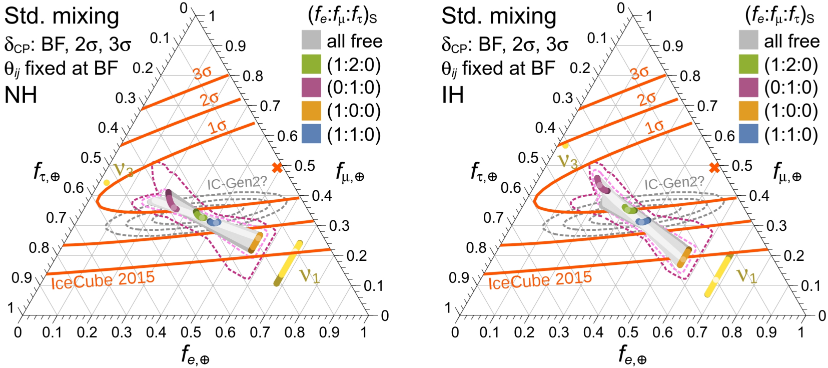
Selected source compositions: NH vs. IH





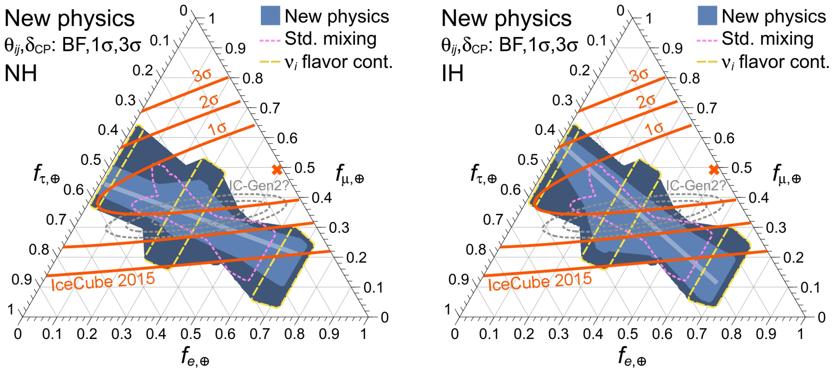
[MB, BEACOM, WINTER, 1506.02645]

Perfect knowledge of mixing angles: NH vs. IH



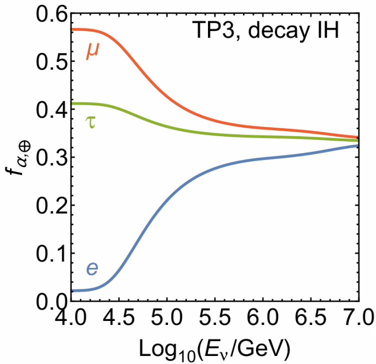
[MB, BEACOM, WINTER, 1506.02645]

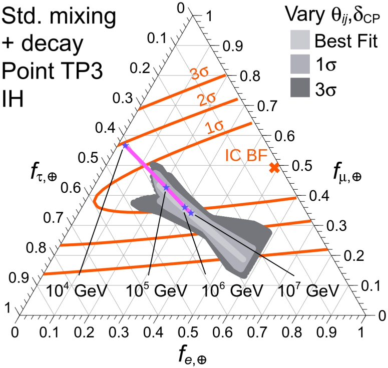
New physics: NH vs. IH



[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]

New physics: decay in the IH





[MB, Beacom, Winter, 1506.02645]