Dark Matter Searches at LHC

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Wednesday 22nd October 2025



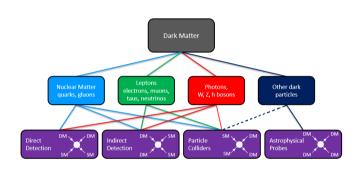
Outline

- Dark Matter and Collider Searches
- **Monojet** Jet(s)+ E_T^{miss}
- Dijet/dilepton searches
- Invisible Higgs decays
- Extended Higgs Sectors
- Oark sectors & light DM

Complementarity, signatures

Assumptions

- DM interacts non-gravitationally
- Has some effective hadron coupling
- Complementarity
- Direct/indirect detection, accelerators, light DM
- For what collider signatures to search?



(adapted from 1305.1605)

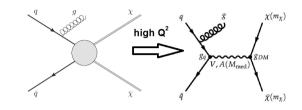






Anatomy of a collider DM signature

- LHC high-energy probe
- Allows characterisation of DM interaction
- Use/need model to guide phenomenology

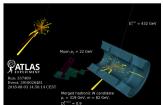


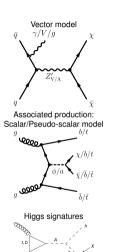
- DM pair-produced, non-interacting (in detector heavy neutrino-like).
- Include the DM interaction 'mediator' particle, critical sensitivity.
- Mediator searches complementary approach, resonance signatures.
- Use simplified models (with mediator), and specific complete models to explore.
- Signature-driven approach explore all DM signatures
- Sensitivity across wide range of DM mass: heavy/WIMP DM, dark sectors (ALPs, dark photons, dark showers).

Introduction to Collider DM searches - Summary

- Any WIMP DM produced at collider experiments will interact weakly and pass invisibly through detectors.
- Inferred through 'Missing E_T ' (E_T^{miss}) when event does not balance in plane transverse to beam.
- Visible radiation (photons, jets, vector bosons) from ISR or associated production can tag DM pair production.
- Consequently, collider searches focus on production of a SM particle(s) (X) with large E_T^{miss} .







What makes a good simplified/concrete DM model?

Necessary

- Compelling dark matter candidate, ability to satisfy relic density
- Tractable no. of parameters
- Evades existing constraints
- Important, generic signatures

Desirable

- Interesting phenomenology
- Wide range of possible signatures (illustrate breadth of programme w/o 100s of models)
- Synergies: e.g.
 - ▶ invisible vs. mediator resonance
 - prompt vs LLP vs invisible
 - ► interplay with (in)direct detection

Models

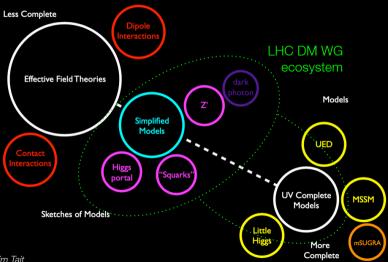
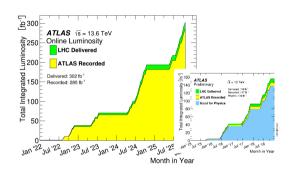


Figure: Tim Tait

LHC Datasets and Luminosity

- LHC Run-2 ended in late 2018.
- An unprecedentedly sensitive dataset.
- Many ATLAS and CMS results (~ 600 each) already published, and more being released regularly.
- And just the beginning...
- LHC Run-3 at 13.6 TeV has been progressing steadily since summer '22. Run 3 results coming soon!
 - Greater luminosity and greater collision energy
 - ► Already tripled our data (> 400 fb⁻¹) more until mid-2026.

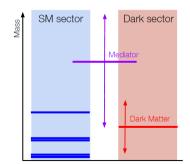


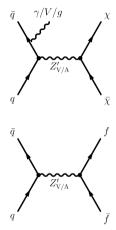
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S-channel Mediator Simplified Models - V/AV mediators

- Introduce mediator, talks to DM and SM sectors.
- Two complementary approaches:
 - Look for DM mono-X signature
 - ▶ Look for mediator resonance search





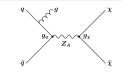
LHCDMWG White Paper (1507.00966)

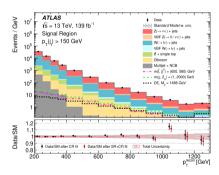
 Relic density: use to guide searches (simplified model useful, but incomplete)

Monojet Search - $Jet(s) + E_T^{miss}$

2102.10874

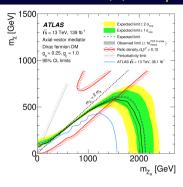
- Very general DM search!
- Selections:
 - ► Energetic jet pT > 150 GeV
 - ► *E*^{miss}₇ > 200 GeV
 - Up to 3 extra jets
 - ▶ Search for excess in E_T^{miss}
- Shape fit in 13 E_T^{miss} bins (p_T^{recoil})
- Backgrounds: Z+jets, W+jets, Diboson, tt̄
- Estimated in 1- and 2-lepton CRs
- High precision calculation (paper) of Z+jets/W+jets.
- O(1-2%) uncertainty on predicted background.

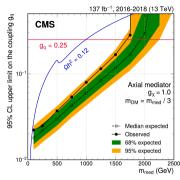




No significant excesses observed

Monojet Search - $Jet(s) + E_T^{miss}$ - Model Interpretations





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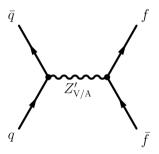
JHEP 11(2021)153

Many interpretations

- Simplified Models
 - ▶ Fix coupling, exclude $m_{DM} m_{med}$; fix ratio, exclude coupling
- T-channel models (LHCDMWG White Paper 2504.10597)
- Generic sensitivity e.g. SUSY, leptoquarks, extra dimensions

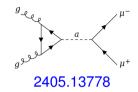
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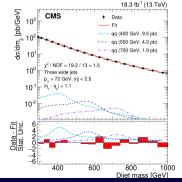
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- Invisible Higgs decays
- Extended Higgs Sectors (2hdm+a)
- Dark Sectors & Light DM

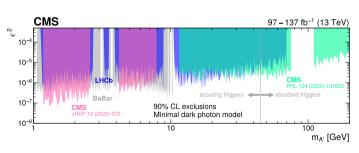


Mediator Resonance Searches - Dijets/dileptons

- General signature, dijet/dilepton resonances.
- Signal peak on falling background
- Dileptons if mediator couples
- Many techniques for low mass.

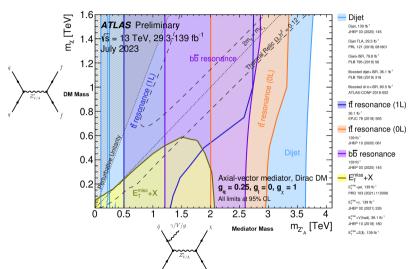






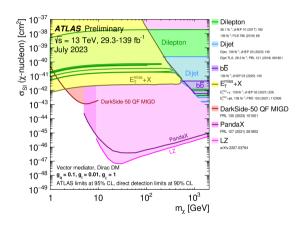
Putting it all together - Simplified Models I

- ATLAS DM Summaries
- Illustrate complementarity between mediator and invisible searches.



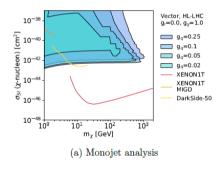
Comparisons with Detection Experiments

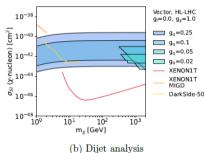
- Key message: complementarity
- LHCDMWG white paper on presentation (1603.04156)
- Assumptions: WIMP, local DM density, interaction type (model-dependence).
- Colliders insensitive to DM mass (all is E_T^{miss}), mediator more important.
- Explore couplings to illustrate variations (2203.12035, 2206.03456)



Comparisons with Detection Experiments II 2206.03456

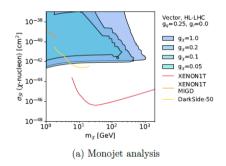
- Largely m_{χ} -independent
- Low dependence on coupling

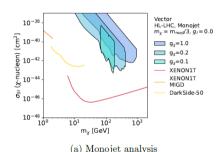




Comparisons with Detection Experiments III 2206.03456

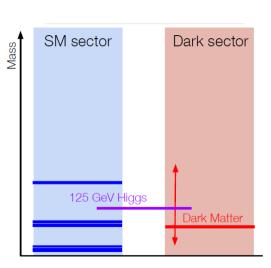
- Mediator mass important
- Connect to light DM experiments
- LHC unique for larger m_{med}/m_{χ}





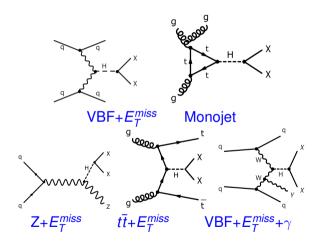
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- **Extended Higgs sectors**
- Dark Sectors & light DM



PLB 842 137963

- 'Vanilla' Higgs portal
- Higgs boson mediates the interactions with DM, decays to DM
- 'Invisible Higgs' anomalous BR (H \rightarrow inv = 0.12% in SM).
- Signatures: E_T^{miss} + X, each Higgs production mode.
- Sensitivity led by VBF+E_T^{miss} and Mono-Z signatures.

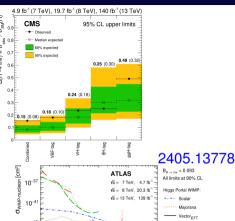


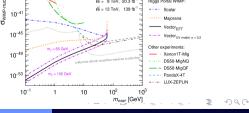
Invisible Higgs Searches - Combined

PLB 842 137963

- Run-2 combinations of 139 fb⁻¹ results, together with Run-1 analysis.
- VBF+ E_T^{miss} and Z+ E_T^{miss} most sensitive, Run-1 adds 4%.
- Already probing BR(H→ Inv) at the 10% level!
- Conversions to scattering cross-section (2107.01252)

Analysis	Best fit $\mathcal{B}_{H o ext{inv}}$	Observed 95% U.L.	Expected 95% U.L.
Run 2 Comb.	0.04 ± 0.04	0.113	$0.080^{+0.031}_{-0.022}$
Run 1 Comb.	$-0.02^{+0.14}_{-0.13}$	0.252	$0.265^{+0.105}_{-0.074}$
Run 1+2 Comb.	0.04 ± 0.04	0.107	$0.077^{+0.030}_{-0.022}$





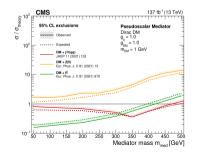
Outline

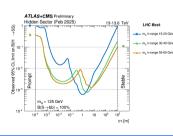
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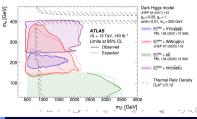
Scalar mediator models

- Wide range of models, increasing complexity: simplified scalar mediator/extended Higgs sector/SUSY (many others).
- Complementary to (in)direct detection at high-masses; lower masses/couplings connect to lightDM and LLP programmes.
- Simplified models: dominant signatures tt with E^{miss}_T, also t+E^{miss}_T, monojet. 4-top (resonance) at higher mass.

- More complete models broader/different signatures
- Dark higgs/scalar models: scalar S mixes with SM Higgs.
 - Colliders sensitive at high mass/mixing (hh resonance or h → ss, or low mixing plus second mediator.
 - ► Active LLP target (dark Higgs portal).

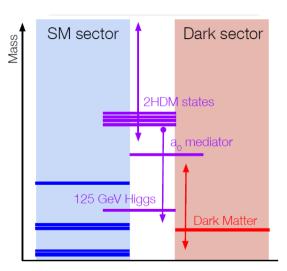




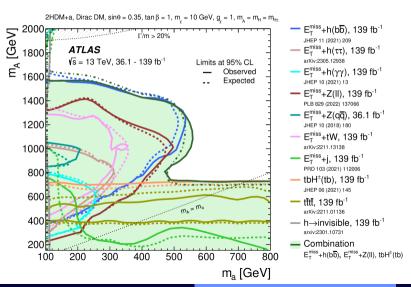


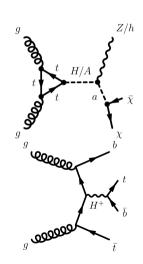
Extended Higgs sectors - 2hdm+a

- Higgs sector unique and unexplored
- Natural portal to dark matter
- LHC DM WG benchmark white paper (1810.09420)
- Postulate two-Higgs doublet (ext. Higgs sector)
- Pseudoscalar (a) portal to DM.
 Reduced constraint from DD.
- For heavier m_{DM}, target scalar sector mediators.
- Interesting physics from wide range of signatures and A-a mixing.



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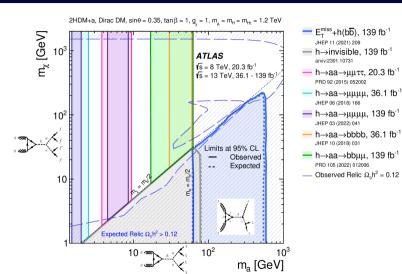




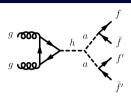
2HDM+a Light Pseudoscalars - What if a is light?

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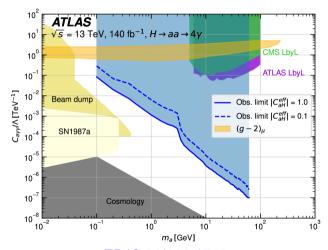
- Golden channel is $h \rightarrow aa \rightarrow 4f/4\chi$
- Complementary with lower-mass ALP searches for pseudoscalars (2202.12631).
- Light resonant searches powerful when a cannot decay to DM.
- Invisible signatures kick in for lower DM masses.



Aside: Axion-like particle (ALP) searches



- ALP searches for light pseudo-scalars (from U(1) SSB).
- Several final states, depending upon mass.
- Lowest masses probed by $a \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$
- Non-resonant diboson production also relevant at LHC.

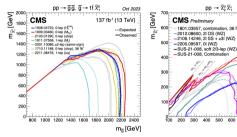


EPJC 84(2024)742

26/68

Phys. Rep. 1116 261-300 & CMS SUSY

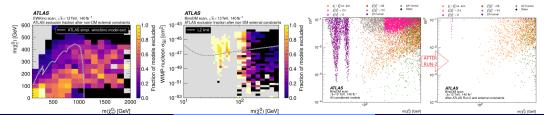
- Also a full SUSY programme, (long-standing DM search).
- Cover all signatures many final states and processes constrained.
- Also look to contextualise in model space.



Stop searches

Electroweakinos

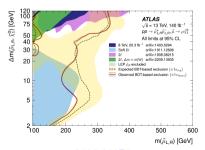
 $m_{\bar{z}^0} = m_{\bar{z}^1}$ [GeV]

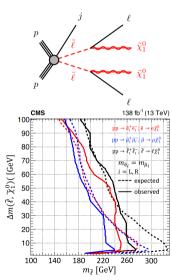


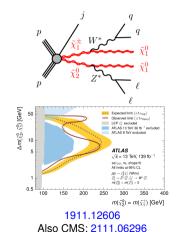
HEP Forum, 2025

SUSY Strikes Back?

- Recent interest in results looking for different (and thus less well constrained) 'compressed EWK scenarios'.
- Small δmass between SUSY partners of electroweak bosons, low p_T signatures.
- Multiple ($\sim 2\sigma$) excesses Run-3 data needed!





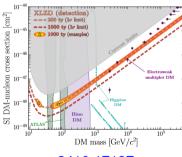


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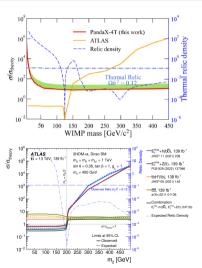
Wednesday 22nd October 2025

Complementarity II

Lovely to see cross-fertilisation!

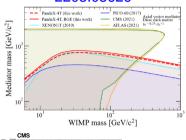


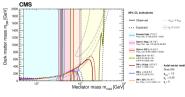
2410.17137



2306.00641







2405.13778

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- \bigcirc Monojet Jet(s)+ E_T^{miss}
- Invisible Higgs decays
- Extended Higgs sectors
- Dark sectors & light DM

Light DM and Dark Sectors

- Have some hidden sector which (usually) includes a DM candidate
- Postulate a portal that communicates between SM and dark sectors, i.e. have some dark sector states decay back to SM with small coupling.
- Common in very weakly/feebly interacting models
- Dark sector need not be thermal freeze-in via heavy particle decays.

Portal

Dark Photon, A_{μ}

Dark Higgs, S

Axion, a

Sterile Neutrino, N

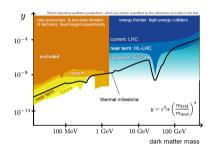
PBC Report

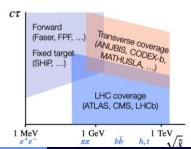
Dark Photons

Massive new dark gauge boson γ_D from U(1) extension Mixes with SM photon (ϵ parameter) Strategies for prompt and LLP signatures.

New, light/weakly coupled DM experiments

- New generation of experiments designed which complement existing LHC experiments.
 - ► Forward experiments
 - ▶ Transverse coverage
 - Fixed target
- Cover very weakly interacting light particles, may exploit LHC as source (e.g. neutrino beam).
- Focussing on DM but motivations are much wider than this!
 - collider neutrino physics, low-x QCD, astro-/cosmic ray physics, dark matter, new exotica,

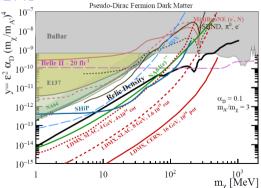


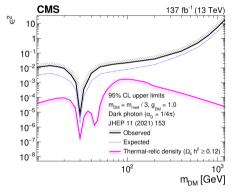


Monojet and the dark photon portal

- Can also recast limits into PBC portals to connect to light DM.
- Full m_{DM} picture.
- Note colliders cover full m_{DM}/m_{med} range.

2102.12143



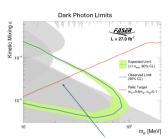


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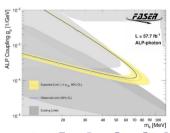
FASER

- Detector far forward of ATLAS sensitive to light LLP (e.g. dark sector mediators) and collider neutrinos.
- Sensitive to dark photons with small couplings, and esp. $2m_e < m_{A'} < 2m_{\mu}$.
- Also ALPs, with $a \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$.
- ullet All FASER papers, e.g. first observation of collider u
- New for 2025: Preshower detector (near-by $\gamma\gamma$)
- Over 200 fb⁻¹ of data, 5-10x existing results. Run-4 approved = \sim 680 fb⁻¹.



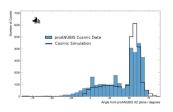


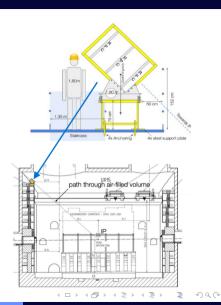
Red line is region motivated by DM thermal relic density



ANUBIS

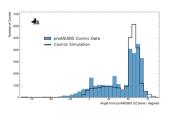
- Transverse detector heavy FIPs at ≥EWK scale.
- Sensitivity to LLPs (>1 GeV) with $c\tau > O(10^2 m)$.
- Use ATLAS cavern as particle decay volume.
- Exploit ATLAS detector to veto collision products.
- Current focus: proANUBIS prototype detector.
- Installed March '23 160 fb⁻¹ recorded to date.
- Validate detector tech., ATLAS synch., reco



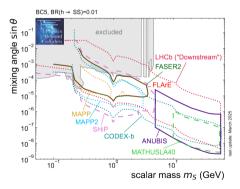


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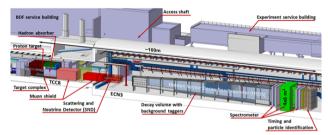
ANUBIS complementary to FASER/FPF & SHiP



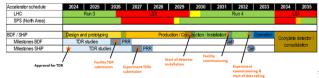
PBC report 2025 for ESPPU

BDF/SHiP

- Great sensitivity for feebly-interacting particles in hidden sector models. SM neutrino measurements.
- UK leadership/initiation.
- Beam dump experiment approved for construction in the North Area ECN3 facility -SPS 400 GeV proton beam.
- Data-taking to start prior to LS4 (2033, const. 2029) upgrades for Run-5, operation throughout 2040s.

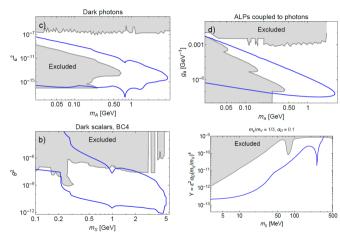






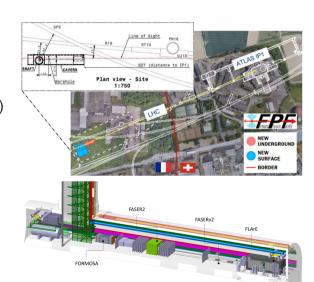
SHiP Physics

- Intense SPS proton beam (400 GeV) onto a heavy target produces FIPs.
- Identify decays in isolated volume, isolated vertex from target.
- SPS delivery of 4 × 10¹⁹ PoT annually.
- Design for < 1 background event up to lifetime 6×10^{20} PoT.
- 90% CL exclusions shown leading sensitivity to many models
- Also other aims: neutrino programme (esp. HNLs, ν_{τ}).



Forward Physics Facility

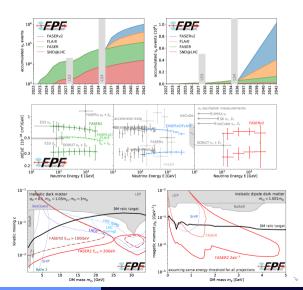
- Rich physics potential motivates dedicated forward facility for HL-LHC
- Exploit lumi with longer/wider detectors (target volume, flavour production) and new detectors (complementary physics)
- FPF LoI submitted to CERN last week
- Site selected west of ATLAS, investigations complete.
- Four experiments designed for FFP layout under optimisation
 - FORMOSA (milli-charged particles),
 FASER2 & FASERν2 (both enlargened), FLArE (LAr TPC for DM & ν)



FPF Physics

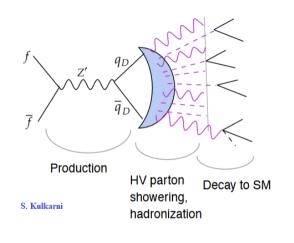
- Physics sensitivity from huge collider neutrino production
- Strong sensitivity across dark sectors.
- Particular strengths: LLPs from compressed spectra (soft photons), heavy exotica (LHC energies)





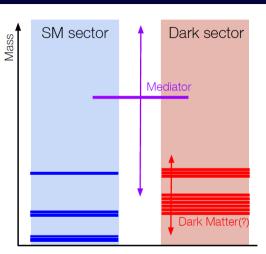
Strongly-interacting dark sectors - dark QCD/showers

- What if dark sector confined?
- Simple mediator, but complex dark sector/matter phenomena.
- Generate dark quarks, hadronise into dark hadrons
- Dark hadrons: stable $\rightarrow E_T^{miss}$, unstable \rightarrow decay to SM. Invisible fraction r_{inv}
- Unusual hadronic signatures.
- Prompt dark hadron decay →
 Semi-visible jet signature: SM jet aligned with E_T^{miss} (ATLAS, CMS).
- Unstable dark hadrons dark jets; dark meson search



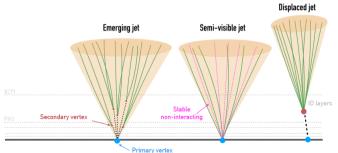
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Semi-Visible, Emerging and Displaced Jets

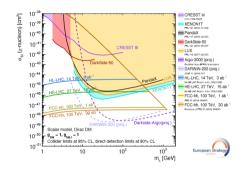
- For dark hadron lifetimes O(10⁻³−1), expect multiple displaced vertices in a jet → emerging jet (ATLAS, ATLAS R3,CMS)
- Greater lifetimes yield a displaced jet, with jet constituents pointing to a common displaced/secondary vertex.
- Important to cover the signature space, not leave holes between topologies.
- Theoretical modelling questions also pertinent (benchmark effort + workshop).



Outlook deeper into Run-3 and HL-LHC

Links

- Community Review LHCDMWG WS, May '24
- Run-3: New sensitivity dedicated triggers, improved techniques (incl. LLP), all signatures.
- HL-LHC (2030-) will bring ultimate sensitivity (3 ab⁻¹)
- Current and future DD experiments strengthening.
- Good time to ask complementary questions:
 - ► If ID/DD sees something, can we target it at colliders? If we see something?
 - Do we have model coverage? That translate between areas?
 - What counts as gold-standard DM discovery?



CMS DM Summary Paper ATLAS Simplified Model Paper ATLAS 2hdm+a Paper Web portals: ATLAS Searches CMS Publications

Conclusions

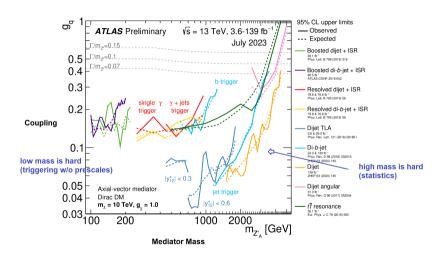
- Colliders are an interesting place to look for dark matter.
- Some unique advantages (high energy, probe interaction, DM candidate range).
- Some challenges (model guide, insensitivity to DM itself).
- LHC Run-2 dataset powerful, huge broadening of programme.
- ullet WIMP hypotheses \to + dark photons, ALPs, dark sectors.
- Run-3 and beyond: vital to continue to look widely, to ensure no missing opportunities.
- Investigate any hints from other sources (DD, lightDM, forward exp., LLP exp.). Smooth interfacing/translation critical.
- (Me) v. interested in developing this for HL-LHC/XLZD era!
- \bullet Still only ${\sim}10\%$ of the final HL-LHC dataset recorded, much yet unexplored!



Backup

Putting it all together - Simplified Models I

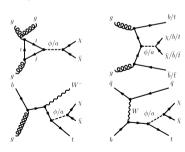
- ATLAS DM Summaries
- How do our mediator resonance searches do?



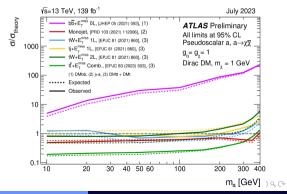
Spin-0 Simplified Models

- Consider scalar/pseudo-scalar mediators
- Yukawa-type couplings → heavy quark (b/t)-associated searches dominate.

Relevant Signatures:

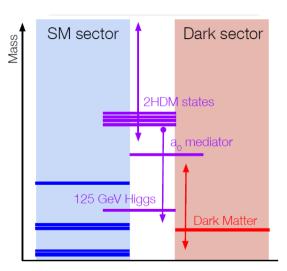


- $tt+E_T^{miss}$ combination
- $tW+E_T^{miss}$
- $bb+E_T^{miss}$
- monojet



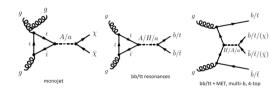
Extended Higgs sectors - 2hdm+a

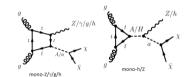
- Higgs sector unique and unexplored
- Natural portal to dark matter
- LHC DM WG benchmark white paper (1810.09420)
- Postulate two-Higgs doublet (ext. Higgs sector)
- Pseudoscalar (a) portal to DM.
 Reduced constraint from DD.
- For heavier m_{DM}, target scalar sector mediators.
- Interesting physics from wide range of signatures and A-a mixing.

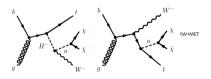


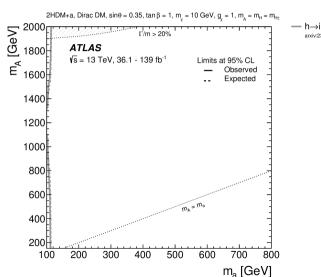
2HDM+a - Overview

- UV complete model: pseudoscalar mediator with Extended Higgs sector.
- Rich phenomenology with great signature interplay.
- Complex model LHC DM WG white paper defines several benchmarks.
- Incorporates analyses from across ATLAS search programme.
- New addition single top (tW/tq) +E_T^{miss} search (2211.13138).

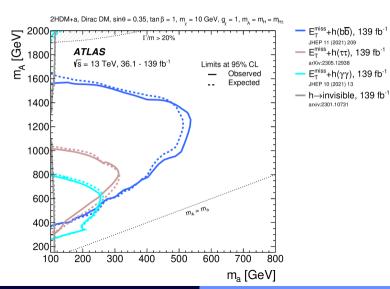


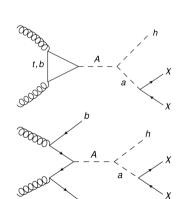


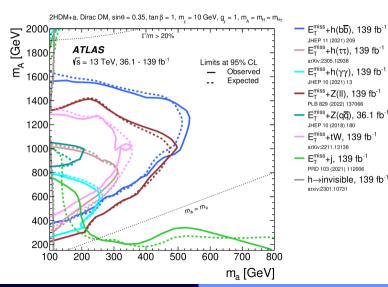


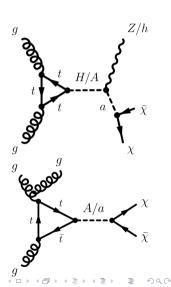


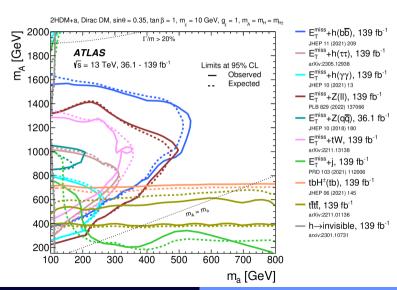
— h→invisible, 139 fb⁻¹ arxiv:2301.10731

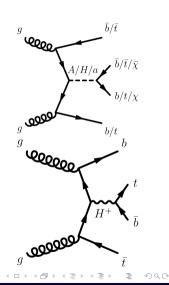


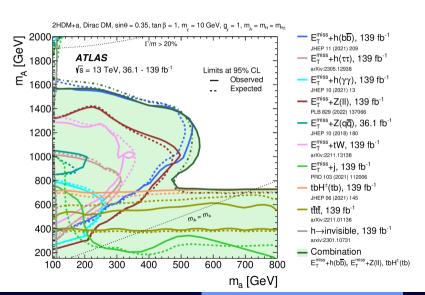


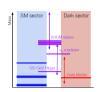




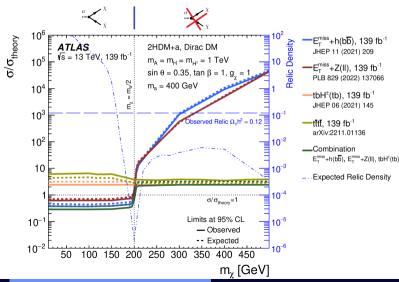






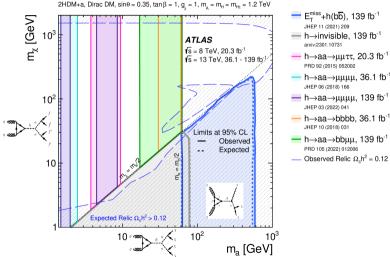


- Insensitivity to DM mass allows R.D. satisfaction.
- But can vary the DM mass to show dependence.
- Heavy Higgs/Mediator searches constrain higher m_{χ} .



2HDM+a Light Pseudoscalars - What if a is light?

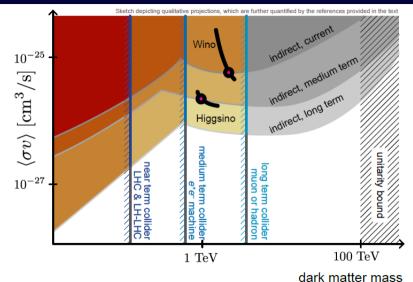
- Complementary with lower-mass ALP searches for pseudoscalars (2202.12631).
- Light resonant searches powerful when a cannot decay to DM.
- Invisible signatures kick in for lower DM masses.



- $E_{T}^{miss} + h(b\overline{b}), 139 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ JHEP 11 (2021) 209
- h→invisible, 139 fb⁻¹ arviv:2301 10731 — h→aa→μμττ. 20.3 fb⁻¹
- PRD 92 (2015) 052002 h→aa→µµµµ, 36.1 fb⁻¹
- h→aa→μμμμ, 139 fb⁻¹ JHEP 03 (2022) 041
- JHEP 10 (2018) 031 — h→aa→bbuu, 139 fb⁻¹
- PRD 105 (2022) 012006 Observed Relic $\Omega_c h^2 = 0.12$

Snowmass complementarity 2206.03456

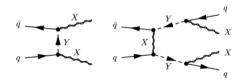
- DM in Dirac fermion doublet (Higgsino) or of a Majorana fermion triplet (Wino)
- Very minimal/predictive model
- RD + cosmology + freezeout gives mass.
- Wino at edge of ν fog, Higgsino foggy.



Wednesday 22nd October 2025

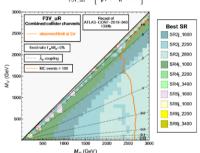
Ongoing Efforts - T-channel models

- T-channel process often exists in DM models.
- Often same final state as e.g. SUSY searches
- e.g. disquark/monojet signatures



- LHCDMWG-inspired UFO with range of t-channel models
- Extend SM with DM (X) and mediator (Y)

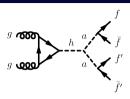




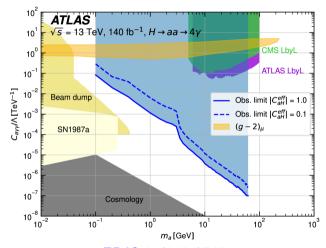
2010.07559 (using strong 0L)

White paper studies ongoing, incl. leptophilic and long-lived models.

Aside: Axion-like particle (ALP) searches



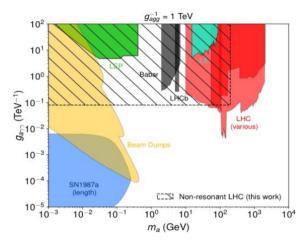
- ALP searches for light pseudo-scalars (from U(1) SSB).
- Several final states, depending upon mass.
- Lowest masses probed by $a \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$
- Non-resonant diboson production also relevant at LHC.



EPJC 84(2024)742

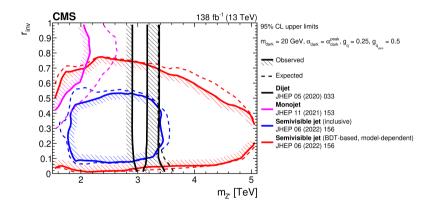
Lighter DM - Non-resonant ALP searches

- Recent interest in non-resonant and loop-induced ALP searches at LHC.
- e.g. high mass tails of diboson production (paper)
- Also VBS VV of interest (indep. of gluon coupling).
- Electroweak ALPs accessible via t̄t resonances.
- Clear complementarity with other experiments
- Also with our light-by-light, $h \rightarrow aa \rightarrow 4\gamma$



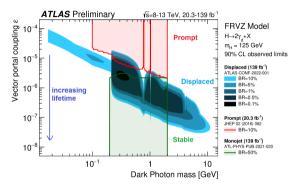
1905.12953, re-interpreting CMS ZZ/ $\gamma\gamma$ searches

Snowmass complementarity 2206.03456



Summaries for prompt & LL signatures

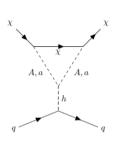
- LLP, or phase spaces with them, are ubiquitous in many DM models.
- Important complementarity with prompt searches. (Cf. visible/invisible, low-/high-mass).
- Also the very long-lived extreme e.g. monojet, h→lnv (for e.g. h→ss).



• Encountered for $h \to aa$, dark photon models. Will appear for darkjets, ALPs, 2hdm+a/dark higgs.

Beyond Collider Reinterpretations / Colliders as data consumers

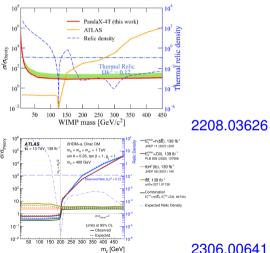
- Great to increase interaction with detection results.
- Challenges
 - ▶ We have varied models, interactions not necessarily pure SI/SD.
 - ▶ Would our events always show up in the WIMP search region?
 - ► Sensitivity to DM is indirect (once mediator decays invisibly) m_{DM} /couplings set as benchmark or left to allow R.D. satisfaction.
- Wishlist for moving to more complete models, or exploration of wider model spaces (e.g. pMSSM, 2hdm+a)
 - would like translation from HEP model set (masses, interactions) to DD/ID cross-section and constraints? (MadDM)
 - or translation from detection limit to limits on a given interaction/set of effective interactions.
 - e.g. DD not sensitive to our 2hdm+a benchmarks ($m_{DM} = 10$ GeV). But enforcing R.D. may require $m_{DM} \sim m_a/2$ then is DD important? Or if we scan m_{DM} ?
 - e.g. We scan pMSSM (20-D) space, imposing R.D. not exceeded, where do these lie on WIMP exclusion curve?

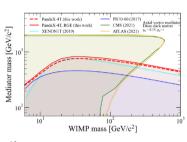


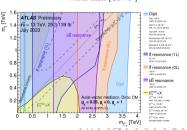
SI detection signal from loop-level in 2hdm+a

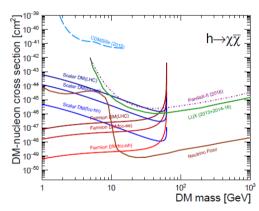
Interfacing/Translation

• If we or DD saw a signal, how could the other focus/confirm it?



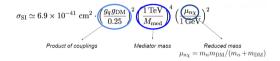


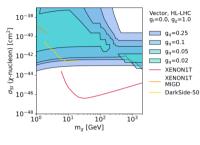


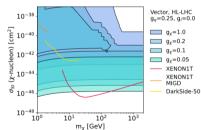


(b) Higgs portal model

- Multi-D space.
- Usually we fix 2 of these, scan 1.







Spare slide