Probing the absolute neutrino mass scale with ^{163}Ho: the HOLMES project.

M. De Gerone[1], B. Alpert[2], D. Becker[2], D. Bennett[2], M. Biasotti[1,3], V. Ceriale[1,3], R. Dressler[4], M. Faverzani[5,6], E. Ferri[5], J. Fowler[2], G. Gallucci[1], J. Gard[2], F. Gatti[1,3], A. Giachero[5], J. Hays-Wehle[2,5], S. Heinitz[4], G. Hilton[2], U. Koester[7], M. Lusignoli[8,9], J. Mates[2], A. Nucciotti[5,6], S. Nisi[10], A. Orlando[5], G. Pessina[5], A. Puiu[5,6], S.Ragazzi[5,6], C. Reintsema[2], M. Ribeiro-Gomes[11], D. Schmidt[2], D. Swetz[2], J. Ullom[2] and L. Vale[2].

1)INFN, Sezione di Genova, Genova 16146, IT 2)National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Boulder, Colorado 80305, USA 3)Dipartimento di Fisica, Università degli Studi di Genova, Genova 16146, IT 4)Paul Scherrer Institute, Villigen 5232, CH 5)INFN, Sezione di Milano Bicocca, Milano - 20126, IT 6)Dipartimento di Fisica, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Milano - 20126, IT 7)Institut Laue-Langevin, Grenoble 38000, FR 8) INFN, Sezione di Roma 1, Roma - 00185, IT 9)Dipartimento di Fisica, Università La Sapienza, Roma 00185, IT 10)INFN, Laboratori Nazionali del Gran Sasso, Assergi 67010, IT 11)CENTRA, Multidisciplinary Centre for Astrophysics, University of Lisbon, Lisbon 1049-001, PT

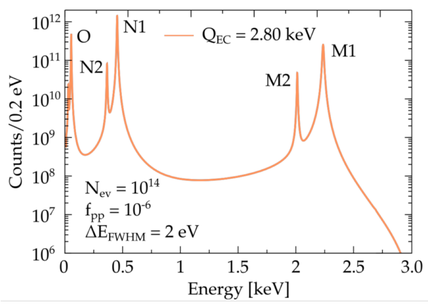
The HOLMES project aims to directly measure the neutrino mass using the e$^-$ capture decay (EC) of ^{163}Ho down to the eV scale. It will perform a precise measurement of the end-point of the Ho calorimetric energy spectrum to search for the deformation caused by a finite electron neutrino mass. The choice of ^{163}Ho as source is driven by the very low Q-value vof the EC reaction, which allows for high sensitivity with low activities (O(10^2)Hz/detector), thus reducing the pile-up probability. A large array made by thousands of TES based micro-calorimeters will be used. The calorimetric approach eliminates systematic uncertainties arising from the use of an external beta-source, and minimizes the effect of the atomic de-excitation process. The commissioning of the first implanted sub-array is scheduled for the end of 2018. It will provide useful data about the EC decay of ^{163}Ho together with a first limit on neutrino mass. In this presentation the current status of the main tasks will be summarized: the TES array design and engineering, the isotope preparation and embedding, and the development of a high speed multiplexed SQUID read-out system for the DAQ.

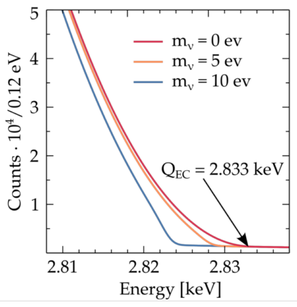
^{163}Ho decay via electron capture from shell ≥ M1, with Q_{EC} ~ 2.8 keV [1]:

$$^{163}\text{Ho} + e^- \rightarrow {}^{163}\text{Dy}^* + \nu_e$$

$$\frac{d\lambda_{EC}}{dE_c} = \frac{G_\beta^2}{4\pi^2}(Q-Ec)\sqrt{(Q-Ec)^2-m_\nu^2}\times\sum n_i c_i \beta_i^2 \frac{\Gamma_i}{2\pi}\frac{1}{(E_c-Ei)^2+\frac{\Gamma_i^2}{4}}$$

- **Calorimetric measurement** of Dy* de-excitation
- **m_ν sensitivity depends on Q-value and capture peak position** (roughly ~1/(Q-E_{M1})^3)
- τ ~ 4570y: few active nuclei needed to obtain reasonable activity (1 Bq = 2 x 10^{11} nuclei)

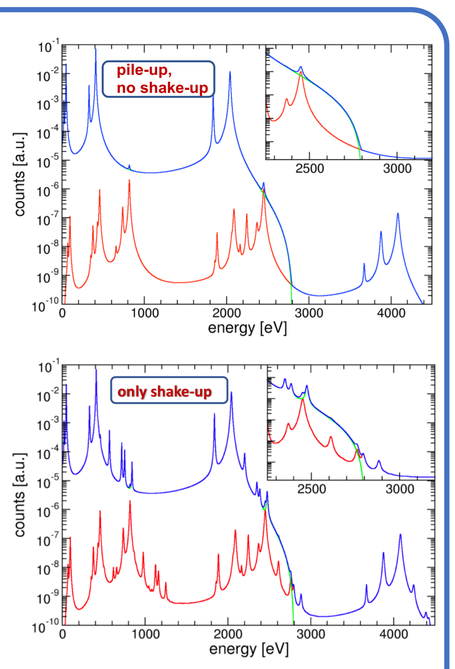




simulation with single hole excitation

Complex pile-up spectrum:
$N_{pp}(E) = f_{pp}N_{EC}(E)\otimes N_{EC}(E)$
with $f_{pp} = A_{EC} \times \tau_r$

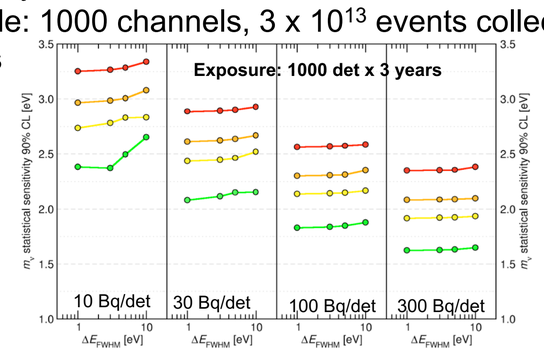
Shake-up and shake-off process due to 2-holes excitation are possible:
- n-holes with much lower probability;
- energy and probabilities are still uncertain;
- Spectrum could be even more complicated.



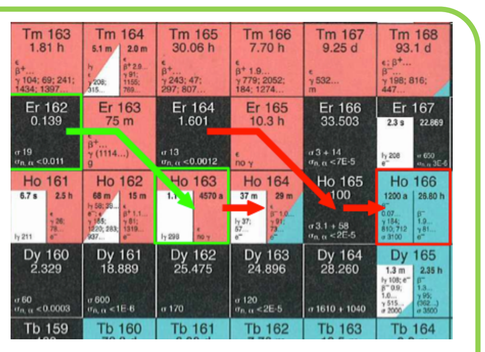
Pile-up implies:
- tradeoff between detector activity and statistics;
- needs of detector with fast resolving time
- dedicated resolving algorithm.

Direct m_ν measurement with statistical sensitivity around 1 eV **using Transition Edge Sensors based microcalorimeters** with **^{163}Ho implanted Au absorber [2]**:
- 6.5 x 10^{13} nuclei/det, A_{EC} ~ 300 Bq/det
- Energy resolution O(eV), τ ~ 1μs
- 1000 channels array → 6.5 x 10^{16} total nuclei

Should prove the tecnique potential and scalability by: assessing EC spectral shape and systematic errors. Two steps approach:
- 64 channels mid-term prototype, t_M = 1 month, m_ν sensitivity ~ 10 eV
- full scale: 1000 channels, 3 x 10^{13} events collected in 3 years

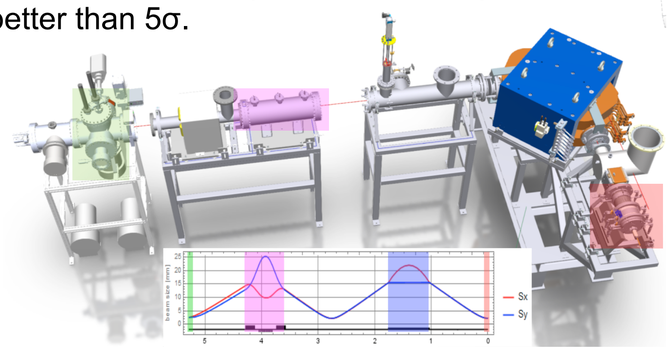


Holmium production and embedding chain:
^{163}Ho is produced by n-activation of ^{162}Er sample:
- ^{162}Er(n,γ)^{163}Er, ^{163}Er + e$^-$ → ^{163}Ho + ν_e ($\tau_{1/2}$ ~ 75min)
- High yield (σ_{th}~ 20b), but contaminations from other species:
- ^{165}Ho(n,γ)^{166m}Ho (β, $\tau_{1/2}$ ~ 1200y)
- ^{166m}Ho is the main source of background.
- Could come from Ho contaminations or ^{164}Er(n,γ)
- 2 steps purification procedure has been developed:

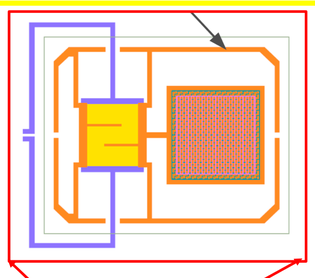


1) **Radiochemical purification pre and post irradiation**, based on ion exchange chromatography: eliminates all species other than Ho, leaves a 166:163 ratio better than 1:1000

2) **Mass separation based on ion implanter** (E = 30 – 50 keV) **equipped with magnetic dipole + electrostatic quadrupole** produces a 163Ho beam with 4mm FWHM spot and mass separation 163/166 better than 5σ.

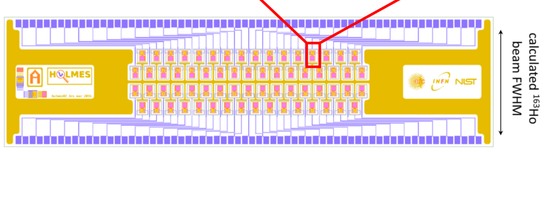


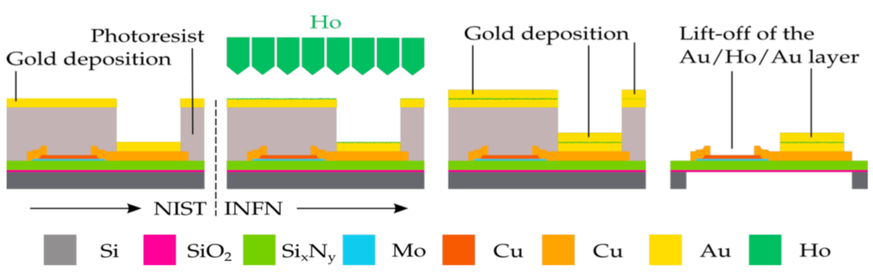
TES design and production:
2 μm Au absorber for full e$^-$/γ absorption, usage of «sidecar» configuration to avoid TES proximization and allow G engineering for τ control.
Desing optimized to obtain best compromise between energy resolution and time response: ΔE O(eV), τ ~ 1μs



Multistep production:
1. TES array is produced up to first 1μm Au layer;
2. ^{163}Ho implantation
3. 1μm Au final layer deposition
4. Membrane release with KOH or DRIE process.

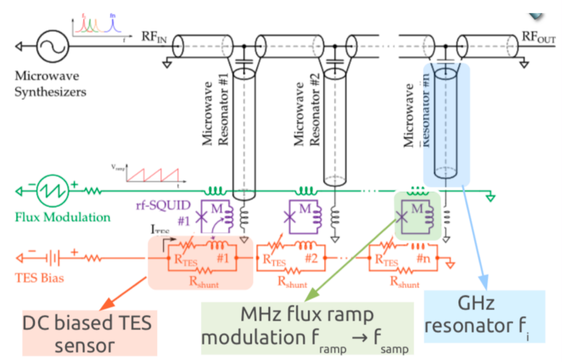
- 4 x 16 linear array for low parasitic L and high implant efficiency

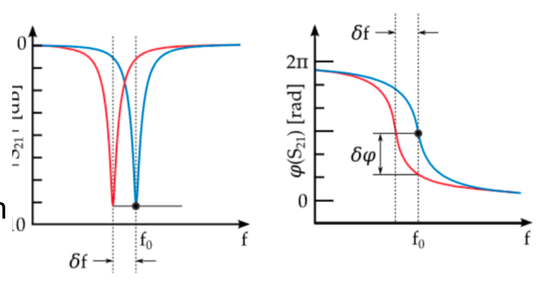




RF SQUID readout with microwave multiplexing: SQUID coupled with DC biased TES and a λ/4-wave resonant circuit:
- readout with flux ramp demodulation (common flux line inductively coupled to all SQUIDs);
- signal reconstructed by Software defined Radio Technique (ROACH2, ADC bandwidth 550MHz).

1. Energy deposit in the absorber increases the temperature and therefore the TES resistance.
2. Change in TES current ⇒ change in the input flux to the SQUID;
3. The RF-SQUID transduces a change in input flux into a variation of resonant frequency;
4. The ramp induces a controlled flux variation in the RF-SQUID, which is crucial for linearizing the response.



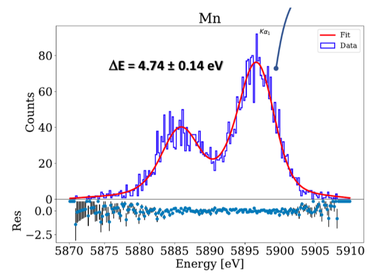


Status and perspectives:

Source production: 3 batches have been already irradiated at ILL (Grenoble, FR), for a total of 140MBq of ^{163}Ho. The radiochemical separation process has been prvoed to work with an efficiency ≥ 79%

Ion implanter: the setup of the machine is on going in Genova's INFN laboratory. All devices have been separately tested (source, acceleration process, magnet).

Microcalorimeter test: several geometries were tested using ^{55}Fe (5.9 keV) and fluorescence source (Mn - 5.9 keV, Ca - 3.7 keV, Cl – 2.6 keV, Al – 1.7 keV). A 3.5 to 5 eV energy resolution have been evaluated on those lines.



[1] A. De Rujula, M. Lusignoli Phys. Lett. B 118 (1982) 429
[2] B. Alpert et al., Eur. Phys. J. C (2015) 75:112