Discovery potential for Higgs bosons beyond the SM

Gabriella Pásztor for the CMS Collaboration
University of California, Riverside, U.S.A.
KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Budapest, Hungary
E-mail: Gabriella.Pasztor@cern.ch

Abstract. The discovery potential of the CMS detector for the MSSM neutral and charged Higgs bosons at the LHC is presented based on studies with full detector simulation and event reconstruction of the principal discovery channels.

1. Higgs bosons in the MSSM

In the Minimal Supersymmetric Standard Model (MSSM) the electroweak symmetry is broken via the Higgs mechanism, leading to five physical scalars: three neutral (h, H, A) and two charged (H+, H−) Higgs bosons. At tree level, two parameters, usually chosen to be the mass of the pseudo scalar Higgs boson (mA) and the ratio of the vacuum expectation values of the two Higgs fields (tanβ), determine the masses and couplings in the Higgs sector. Radiative corrections, chiefly coming from the top-stop and, at large tanβ, from the bottom - sbottom sector, introduce further model parameters.

In the frequently studied decoupling limit (mA ≫ mZ), the lightest neutral Higgs boson is Standard Model-like, while H and A are close in mass and both couple with tanβ to down-type fermions and with cotβ to up-type fermions.

The dominant production mechanism for heavy neutral MSSM Higgs bosons at large tanβ is gg → b¯bH/A with negligible contributions from other processes. As the main decay mode H/A → b¯b suffers from high QCD background, the decay H/A → ττ, reaching about 10% rate for tanβ > 10, promises the most sensitivity.

Charged Higgs bosons couple to fermions as H±ud \sim m_d tan β + m_u cot β. They are produced in top quark decay, if m_{H^\pm} < m_t, or in association with a top quark, if m_{H^\pm} > m_t. Light charged Higgs bosons decay almost exclusively to a tau lepton and a neutrino for tan β \gtrsim 3. For m_{H^\pm} > m_t + m_\ell, the decay H^\pm → tb dominates with an important contribution of H^\pm → τν_τ at large tan β.

The following processes are considered here:
- associated bbH/A production followed by H/A → ττ with all possible ττ final states (jet jet, e jet, μ jet and e μ) [1];
- production of a light charged Higgs boson in t¯t → H^±bWb with subsequent H^± → τν_τ, τ → jet and W → ℓν_ℓ decays [2];
- associated H^±t(b) production of heavy charged Higgs boson with H^± → τν_τ, τ → jet and hadronic top quark decays [3];
- associated H^±t(b) production of heavy charged Higgs boson with H^± → tb and one of the top quarks decaying leptonically [4].
2. Experimental tools
The final states in the search for heavy MSSM Higgs bosons are complex: they typically contain leptons, b- and light-flavoured hadronic jets and missing transverse energy.

The selections rely on τ-jet or lepton (e, µ) triggers. τ-identification based on vertex reconstruction and impact parameter measurements is powerful against hadronic jets. A single b-tag is sufficient to suppress events from Drell-Yan, QCD multi-jet and W+jets processes. Against the difficult t ¯t background a central jet veto is applied. Missing transverse energy (E_T^{miss}) reconstruction is important to account for the neutrinos from the Higgs or the τ decays. Top quark and W boson mass reconstruction provides a further handle on the background. For example, in the bbH/A, H/A → ττ → ℓ + jet searches, it is instrumental in vetoing leptons from W decay by reconstructing the transverse mass of the [lepton, E_T^{miss}] system.

The main background comes from t ¯t events, with significant contribution from W+jets events in the H± → τντ searches and Drell-Yan processes in the H/A → ττ → ℓ + jet searches. A major exception is the H/A → ττ → jet jet analysis, where QCD events dominate the background. The typical selection efficiency is below 1%.

Higgs boson mass reconstruction does not only increases the sensitivity of the searches, but it will also play a crucial role in constraining the MSSM model parameters.

In the H/A → ττ selection the Higgs mass can be measured by the di-tau mass assuming that the τ decay products are collinearly emitted. While the procedure has large inefficiency, it achieves a mass resolution of about 20%.

In the heavy charged Higgs search: H±t → τν, the reconstruction of the top quark mass is instrumental in fully reconstructing the signal. The charged Higgs mass is then estimated by the transverse mass of the [τ, E_T^{miss}] system (M_T). By requiring M_T >100 GeV, an almost background-free selection is achieved.

3. Results
The results presented here are based on the full simulation of the CMS detector at low luminosity (L = 2·10^{33} cm^{-2}s^{-1}), assuming a total integrated luminosity of 30–60 fb^{-1}. Pythia is used as the main Monte Carlo generator with notable exceptions (e.g. matrix element generators for multi-parton or Toprex for t ¯t final states in some cases). Background cross-sections are normalized to NLO calculations where available. Tau decays are modeled by Tauola.

For the numerical results, the minimal supergravity inspired m_h-max benchmark scenario is used, which maximises the theoretical upper bound on m_h for a given tan β, m_t and M_{SUSY}, the SUSY mass scale. Higgs boson masses, cross-sections and branching ratios are calculated by FeynHiggs 2.3.2.

The estimated 5-sigma discovery reach is shown on Figure 1(a) for the pp → bbH/A searches and on Figure 1(b) for the H± → τντ searches [5]. In all cases the systematic uncertainties are included in the calculation of signal significance.

We also considered the extended m_h-max scenario, where the supersymmetric Higgs mass parameter can take different values: μ = ±200, ±500, ±1000. The cross-section is enhanced for large negative and reduced for large positive values of μ, but the change in the Higgs branching ratios due to decay modes to supersymmetric particles partially compensates this effect. In general, the default value of μ = 200 GeV gives the most conservative discovery reach. For a detailed discussion see [6].

Systematic uncertainties dominate these searches. Therefore, several methods are explored to measure them from collision data [7].

The main sources of uncertainty come from b-tagging, τ- and lepton identification, missing energy measurement and energy scale calibration. Together with the theoretical uncertainties on the background production cross-sections, we estimate typically 12% error on the main t ¯t...
background, 9% on Z/γ, 16% on bbZ/γ, 10–14% on W+jets and 15% on tW processes. The QCD background will be measured from data with a 5–20% statistical error.

The inclusion of systematic uncertainties has a significant impact on the expected sensitivities. For example, in the charged Higgs boson $H^\pm \to \tau \nu\tau$ search, the 5-sigma reach is decreased from about 125 to 110 GeV at the most difficult value of $\tan \beta \approx 10$. At values of $\tan \beta > 30$, the downward shift is even larger ranging from about 30 to 80 GeV.

In the search for $gg \to H^\pm tb$ with $H^\pm \to tb$ and $tt \to \ell \nu \ell b qqb$ requiring four b-tags, the main background comes from ttbb and mistagged tt + jets processes. With the simulation of the background processes by CompHEP (with the cross-section calculated by ALPGEN) and the inclusion of realistic experimental (about 5–5% on b-tagging efficiency and the mistag rate) and theory uncertainties, no discovery potential remains for this channel.

4. Light neutral Higgs search in MSSM

The searches presented above for heavy Higgs bosons lose their sensitivity for small and intermediate $\tan \beta$ and leave open the so-called LHC wedge region, where only a light neutral Higgs boson can be discovered. This is illustrated on figure 1(c), where the SM Higgs boson searches [5, 8] (for inclusive $pp \to h+X$ production with $h \to \gamma\gamma$ and for the vector boson fusion process $qq \to qqh/H$ with $h/H \to \tau\tau$) are reinterpreted in MSSM [5].

Acknowledgments

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References

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