Left-Right Symmetry: from LHC to Neutrinoless Double Beta Decay

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The Large Hadron Collider has a potential to probe the scale of left-right symmetry restoration and the associated lepton number violation. Moreover, it offers hope of measuring the right-handed leptonic mixing matrix. We show how this, together with constraints from lepton flavor violating processes, can be used to make predictions for neutrinoless double beta decay. We illustrate this connection in the case of the type-II seesaw.

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More than 70 years ago Majorana [1] raised the question whether neutrinos are “real” particles. If true, this would allow for neutrinoless double beta decay (0ν2β) [2], a violation of lepton number with two electrons created out of “nothing”. The transition amplitude is proportional to

$$\mathcal{A}_\nu \propto G_F^2 \frac{m_{ee}^\nu}{p^2}, \quad (1)$$

where $m_{ee}^\nu$ is the 1-1 element of the neutrino mass matrix $m_\nu$ and $p \approx 100$ MeV a measure of the neutrino virtuality. Present-day neutrinoless double beta experiments are probing the sub-eV region for $m_{ee}^\nu$. There is even a claim of this process being seen, corresponding to $m_{ee}^\nu \approx 0.4$ eV [3]. On the other hand, the upper limits on the sum of neutrino masses from cosmology are rapidly progressing and recently, it was argued that the two are incompatible [4]. Whether or not such a conclusion is premature today, we should consider seriously the possibility that this minimal picture will be contradicted by the next round of experiments [5].

This would imply new physics doing the job [6], whose contribution to the transition amplitude can be cast in the natural form

$$\mathcal{A}_{NP} \propto G_F^2 \frac{M_{\nu W}^4}{\Lambda^5}, \quad (2)$$

where $\Lambda$ is the scale of new physics. The new physics enters the game at $\Lambda \sim$ TeV, tailor-made for the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), which provides a strong motivation to pursue this line of thought.

A natural candidate for new physics is the right-handed charged current, as argued [7] in the context of left-right (LR) symmetric theories [8]. It was precisely LR symmetry that led to neutrino masses and, on top, connected them [9] to the scale of parity restoration in the context of the seesaw mechanism [9, 10]. This leads to a remarkable signature of lepton number violation in the form of same sign lepton pairs at colliders [11] in complete analogy with 0ν2β. Furthermore, with such a low scale one expects sizable rates for lepton flavor violating (LFV) processes, which are being vigorously pursued in the ongoing and planned experiments, yet another encouragement to follow the road of new physics.

Motivated by these considerations, we have performed a detailed study of the relation between LHC, 0ν2β and LFV, in the context of the minimal LR model with type II seesaw. Our main point is shown in Fig. 1, where the new physics contribution is contrasted with the usual one, due to neutrino mass [12]. Since the standard contribution entails $m_{ee}^\nu$, we use a combination of new physics parameters with the same dimension, denoted hereafter as $M_{NP}^\nu$. It depends on the mass of the right-handed charged gauge boson and on masses and mixings of the heavy right-handed neutrinos as displayed below in Eq. (12).

The striking feature which emerges is the reversed role of neutrino mass hierarchies. While in the case of neutrino mass behind neutrinoless double beta decay the normal hierarchy matters less and degeneracy is most promising, in the case of new physics it is normal hierarchy that dominates and degeneracy matters less. This conclusion is true when the scale of new physics lies within the LHC reach [13]. In other words, the discovery of LR symmetry at LHC would provide an additional boost for neutrinoless double beta decay searches. This is the main message of our Letter. In the following we describe the model and analyze its predictions.
The Model. The minimal LR symmetric theory is based on the gauge group $G_{LR} = SU(2)_L \times SU(2)_R \times U(1)_{B-L}$ and a symmetry between the left and right sectors [8], which can be taken to be charge conjugation $C$ (for the advantages of this choice, see [14]). Fermions are LR symmetric, $q_{L,R} = (u, d)_{L,R}$ and $\ell_{L,R} = (\nu, e)_{L,R}$, with $f_L \leftrightarrow (f_R)^c$ under $C$, and the gauge couplings are $g_L = g_R \equiv g$.

The Higgs sector consists [9] of the $SU(2)_L \times SU(2)_R$ triplets $\Delta_{L,R} = (\Delta^{++}, \Delta^+, \Delta^0)_{L,R}$. $\Delta_L \in (3,1,2)$ and $\Delta_R \in (1,3,2)$, which under $C$ transform as $\Delta_L \leftrightarrow \Delta_R^c$. The group $G_{LR}$ is broken down to the Standard Model (SM) gauge group by $\langle \Delta_R \rangle \gg M_W$ and after the SM symmetry breaking, the left-handed triplet develops a tiny $\langle \Delta_L \rangle \ll M_W$. $\langle \Delta_R \rangle$ gives masses not only to the $W_R$ and $Z_R$ gauge bosons but also to the right-handed neutrinos.

The symmetric Yukawa couplings of the triplets relevant for our discussion are

$$\mathcal{L}_Y = \frac{1}{2} \ell_L \bar{\Delta}_L \ell_R + \frac{1}{2} \ell_R \bar{\Delta}_R \ell_L + \frac{1}{2} \nu_L \bar{\Delta}_L \nu_R + \frac{1}{2} \nu_R \bar{\Delta}_R \nu_L + h.c.,$$

where $M_{\nu_L}$ and $M_{\nu_R}$ are Majorana mass matrices of light and heavy neutrinos. In principle, there are also Dirac Yukawa couplings connecting the two. When these tiny couplings play a negligible role, the resulting seesaw is called type II [15]. Purely for reasons of illustration, the rest of this Letter will be devoted to this appealing case. Due to $C$, its main characteristic is the connection between the two neutrino mass matrices $M_{\nu_R}/\langle \Delta_R \rangle = M_{\nu_L}/\langle \Delta_L \rangle^*$. An immediate consequence is the proportionality of the two mass spectra

$$m_N \propto m_\nu,$$

where $m_N$ stands for the masses of the three heavy right-handed neutrinos $N_i$ and $m_\nu$ for those of the three light left-handed neutrinos $\nu_i$.

In this theory, there are both left and right-handed charged gauge bosons with their corresponding leptonic interactions in the mass eigenstate basis:

$$\mathcal{L}_W = \frac{g}{\sqrt{2}} \left( \bar{\nu}_L V_L^L W_L e_L + \bar{N}_R V_R^R W_R \ell_R \right) + h.c. \label{eq:lw}$$

Since the charged fermion mass matrices are symmetric (due to the symmetry under $C$), one readily obtains a connection (up to complex phases, irrelevant to our discussion) between the right-handed and the left-handed (PMNS) leptonic mixings matrices

$$V_R = V_L^T.$$

LHC signatures or How to check type II. LHC offers an exciting possibility of seeing directly both LR symmetry restoration and lepton number violation. The point is that once produced, $W_R$ can decay into a charged lepton and a right-handed neutrino which in turn decays into a second charged lepton and two jets. Being Majorana particles, they decay into both leptons and anti-leptons, hence one obtains same sign lepton pairs, signaling the violation of lepton number [11]. It turns out that in this way, LHC running at 14 TeV can reach $M_{W_R} \lesssim 2.1(4)$ TeV with a luminosity of $0.1(30) \text{ fb}^{-1}$ [13]. Since in the minimal model there is a rough bound of about $M_{W_R} \gtrsim 2.5$ TeV [14], in order to be conservative in our analysis we choose a representative point $M_{W_R} = 3.5$ TeV together with $m_{N_{\text{heaviest}}} = 0.5$ TeV.

The flavor dependence of $V_R$ can be determined precisely through these same sign lepton pair channels; thus, Eq. (6) may be falsified in the near future. Furthermore, if LHC will measure the heavy right-handed masses in the same process, one could perform crucial consistency checks of type II seesaw, such as

$$m_{N_1}^2 - m_{N_2}^2 = m_{N_2}^2 - m_{N_3}^2 \approx \pm 0.03.$$  

Here, the right-hand side is determined by oscillation data and the ± signs correspond to normal/inverted hierarchy case. Another eloquent relation among the mass scales probed in cosmology, atmospheric neutrino oscillations and LHC is:

$$m_{\text{cosm}} = m_{\nu_i} \approx 50 \text{ meV} \times \frac{\sum_i m_{N_i}}{\sqrt{m_{N_3}^2 - m_{N_2}^2}}.$$

The bottom line is that the LHC can determine the right-handed neutrino masses and mixings and allow one to make predictions studied below. The type II seesaw chosen here is only a transparent illustration of how these connections take place.

Lepton Flavor Violation. Lepton flavor violation in LR symmetric theories has been studied in the past [16]. What is new in our analysis is the connection with LHC and especially the quantitative implications for 0νββ.

There are various LFV processes providing constraints on the masses of right-handed neutrinos and doubly charged scalars illustrated in Fig. 2. It turns out that $\mu \rightarrow 3e$, induced by the doubly charged bosons $\Delta^+_L$ and $\Delta^+_R$, provides the most relevant constraint and so we give the corresponding branching ratio

$$\text{BR}_{\mu \rightarrow 3e} = \frac{1}{2} \left( \frac{M_W}{M_{W_R}} \right)^4 \left| V_{L}^{m_N} V_{L}^{V_L} \right|^2 \left| V_{L}^{m_N} V_{L}^{V_L} \right|_{ee}^2,$$

where $1/m_{\Delta}^2 \equiv 1/m_{\Delta_L}^2 + 1/m_{\Delta_R}^2$. The current experimental limit is $\text{BR}(\mu \rightarrow 3e) < 1.0 \times 10^{-12}$ [17].

The LFV transition rates become negligible when the masses $M_{W_R}$ and $m_\Delta$ become larger than about 100 TeV. We are interested in LHC accessible energies, in which case the smallness of the LFV is governed by the ratio $m_{N}/m_{\Delta}$, in addition to mixing angles and phases. In Fig. 2, we plot the upper bound on this quantity varying the mixing angles and phases (LFV plots also take into account $\mu \rightarrow e$ conversion in Au nuclei, $\mu \rightarrow e\gamma$ and

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1 There is also a bidoublet, which takes the usual role of the SM Higgs doublet, and we do not discuss it here. For a recent detailed analysis of its phenomenology and limits on its spectrum, see [14].
rare $\tau$ decays such as $\tau \rightarrow 3\mu$, etc. [18]). An immediate rough consequence is that $m_N^\text{heaviest}/m_\Delta < 0.1$ in most of the parameter space. However, the strong dependence on angles and phases allows this mass ratio up to about one in the case of hierarchical neutrino spectra, thus allowing both $N$ and $\Delta_{L,R}$ to be light. This serves as an additional test at colliders of type II seesaw used here. For degenerate neutrinos, unfortunately, no strict constraint arises: see again Fig. 2.

**Neutrinoless double beta decay.** We neglect the $\nu$ contribution and write the total decay rate as

$$\Gamma_{0\nu2\beta} = G \cdot \left| \frac{M_{\nu}}{m_\nu} \right|^2 \left( |m_{\nu}^{ee}|^2 + |p^2 M_W^4 V_{\mbox{Rej}}^2 M_{WR}^{-1} m_N|^2 \right),$$

where $J_{R\nu}$ is the right-handed hadronic current. Making use of the LFV constraint $m_N/m_\Delta \ll 1$ one can neglect the $\Delta_{++}$ contribution and write the total decay rate as

$$\frac{\Gamma_{0\nu2\beta}}{\ln 2} = G \cdot \left| \frac{M_{\nu}}{m_\nu} \right|^2 \left( |m_{\nu}^{ee}|^2 + |p^2 M_W^4 V_{\mbox{Rej}}^2 M_{WR}^{-1} m_N|^2 \right),$$

where $G$ is a phase space factor, $M_\nu$ is the nuclear matrix element relevant for the light neutrino exchange, while $p$ measures the neutrino virtuality and accounts also for the ratio of matrix elements of heavy and light neutrinos. These quantities have been calculated and reported in Table I for some interesting nuclei.

To illustrate the impact of the Dirac and Majorana phases on the total decay rate, we plot in the left frame of Fig. 1 the well known absolute value of $m_{\nu}^{ee}$, while the corresponding effective right-handed counterpart for the type II seesaw used here,

$$M_{N}^{ee} = p^2 \frac{M_W^4 V_{\mbox{Rej}}^2}{M_{WR}^{-1} m_N},$$

is shown in the right frame. The plot was made using Eqs. (4), (6), with $p = 190\,\text{MeV}$ and taking the entire range of $V_L$ to be allowed by LFV, see Fig. 2.

The total $0\nu2\beta$ rate is governed by the effective mass parameter

$$|m_{\nu}^{ee}|^2 + |M_N^{ee}|^2)^{1/2},$$

that supersedes the standard matrix element $m_{\nu}^{ee}$ in the parameter space accessible to LHC. In Fig. 3, we show $|m_{\nu}^{ee}|$ as a function of the lightest neutrino mass. We have already stressed in the introduction the reversed role of the neutrino mass hierarchies. In the case of the right-handed contribution, the normal hierarchy prevails over the inverted in wide regions of the parameter space; for both hierarchies, new physics can win over the neutrino mass as the source of $0\nu2\beta$. Moreover, Fig. 3 shows that there is no more room for a vanishing transition rate, as in Fig. 1. On the upper horizontal axis of Fig. 3 we also display the lightest of the heavy neutrinos. As one can see, the range of $m_N^{\text{lightest}}$ is easily below 100 GeV which would lead to interesting displaced vertices at LHC [14].

In short, $0\nu2\beta$ may be naturally governed by new physics and thus be disjoint from light neutrino masses. This is only in apparent contradiction with the often stated result [21], according to which a non vanishing $0\nu2\beta$ implies a nonvanishing neutrino Majorana mass. Although true as a generic statement, on a quantitative level it has no practical purpose, as the case exposed here demonstrates explicitly. Another example was provided by the minimal supersymmetric standard model [22].

**Discussion and outlook.** In this Letter we have shown how the minimal LR symmetric theory offers a deep connection between high energy collider physics and low energy processes such as neutrinoless double beta decay and lepton flavor violation. The crucial point is lepton number violation which at LHC would reveal itself through
same sign di-leptons produced from the decay of a heavy right-handed neutrino. The different flavor channels will be a probe of the right-handed mixing matrix, allowing to test the type-II seesaw hypothesis in the near future.

At the same time, the low scale of LR symmetry implies a sizable contribution to the neutrinoless double beta decay rate. The standard hypothesis that this transition is dominated by the Majorana mass of light neutrinos may lead to a tension between oscillations and measurements of the absolute neutrino mass. The alternative hypothesis does not only permit wider possibilities, such as small neutrino masses with normal hierarchy ordering and large rate for the neutrinoless double beta decay, but much more interestingly, it has a real chance of being tested at the LHC.

Measurements of heavy neutrinos at the LHC can easily invalidate the specific version of the model, requiring e.g., to abandon $\mathcal{C}$ symmetry and/or type II seesaw, and to replace our hypotheses on $m_N$ and $V_{R}$, Eqs. (4) and (6), with the experimental results. Whereas this would imply quantitative changes of our results, it would not change our main conclusion that the possible LHC findings will be crucial for the interpretation of the neutrinoless double beta decay.

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