

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUASI-ELASTIC KNOCKOUT OF MESONS FROM THE NUCLEON.
DEVELOPMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

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The electroproduction of pions and kaons at the kinematics of quasi-elastic knockout is a powerful tool for investigation of mesonic cloud. A model of scalar $q\bar{q}$ (3P_0) fluctuation in the non-trivial QCD vacuum is used to calculate pion and kaon momentum distributions in the channels $N \rightarrow B + \pi$, $B = N, \Delta, N^*, N^{**}$, and $N \rightarrow Y + K$, $Y = \Lambda, \Sigma_0$.

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Investigation of structure of a composite system by means of quasi-elastic knockout of its constituents has been playing a very important role in microphysics. In a broad sense, the term “quasi-elastic knockout” means that a high-energy projectile (electron, proton, etc.) instantaneously knocks out a constituent – an electron from an atom, a nucleon or a few-nucleon cluster from a nucleus, or a meson from a nucleon – transferring a high momentum in an “almost free” binary collision to the knocked-out particle and leading to controllable changes in the internal state of the target. Exclusive quasi-elastic knockout experiments resolve individual states of the final system. By varying kinematics, one can directly measure the momentum distribution (MD) of a constituent in different channels. The formal description of the quasi-elastic knockout of composite particles (clusters) from atomic nuclei is a well-developed procedure [1]. In a channel of virtual decay $A_i \rightarrow (A-4)_f + \alpha_n$, the wave function of mutual motion $(A-4)_f - \alpha_n$ can be defined as $\Psi_1^{f\alpha_n}(\mathbf{R}) = c \langle (A-4)_f \alpha_n | A_i \rangle$, where c is a constant factor. The integration is carried out over the internal variables of the subsystems $(A-4)_f$ and α_n and the nondiagonal amplitudes $p + \alpha_n \rightarrow p + \alpha_0$ should be taken into account [2]. The observable MD of the virtual α -particles in the mentioned channel is, in fact,

a squared sum of a few different comparable components $\Psi_i^{\alpha_n}(\mathbf{q})$ taken for each n with its own amplitudes of $\alpha_n \rightarrow \alpha_0$ deexcitation. The MDs for various final states f may differ greatly from each other.

The physical content of the “microscopic” hadron theory corresponds, in general, to this concept. It is true, at least, for QCD-motivated quark models taking into account the $q\bar{q}$ pair creation, the flux-tube breaking model [3] or merely the “naive” 3P_0 model [4]. At relatively low energies, the physical nucleon can be described in terms of a Fock column of “bare” nucleons and mesons. The “bare” hadrons in its turn are composed of constituent quarks:

$$|N \rangle = \begin{pmatrix} N \\ N + \pi \\ N + \rho \\ \Delta + \pi \\ \Lambda + K \\ \dots \end{pmatrix} \longleftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} (3q)_N \\ (3q)_N + (q\bar{q})_\pi \\ (3q)_N + (q\bar{q})_\rho \\ (3q)_\Delta + (q\bar{q})_\pi \\ (2qs)_\Lambda + (q\bar{s})_K \\ \dots \end{pmatrix}.$$

These effective degrees of freedom could be tested in exclusive experiments on quasi-elastic pion (kaon) knockout, $p(e, e'\pi^+)B$, $B=n, \Delta, N^*, N^{**}$, and $p(e, e'K^+)Y$, $Y=\Lambda, \Sigma^0$, by few-GeV electrons.

In this work, the results of calculations performed on the basis of two approaches, meson-baryon and constituent quark model (CQM), are compared with the data [5] on longitudinal and transverse differential cross sections at specific kinematics of quasi-elastic knockout: a high-momentum ($|\mathbf{k}'| \gtrsim 1-2 \text{ GeV}/c$) final pion (kaon) at forward angles and a nucleon(baryon)-spectator with small recoil momenta ($|\mathbf{k}| \lesssim 0.3-0.5 \text{ GeV}/c$). The quantitative evaluations performed earlier for the $p(e, e'\pi^+)n$ reaction on the basis of light-cone wave functions [7] and in terms of non-covariant formalism [8] have demonstrated that both pion and ρ -meson MD can be separately measured in coincidence (missing mass) experiments at quasi-elastic kinematics. The meson pole diagrams (Fig. 1) dominate in this region, and contributions of π and $\rho(\omega)$ poles can be separately measured if the cross section is separated into longitudinal and transverse parts

$$d^3\sigma/dQ^2dWdt = 2\pi\Gamma[\epsilon d\sigma_L/dt + d\sigma_T/dt].$$

In the meson-pole region the cross section is factorized on electro-magnetic (e.-m.)

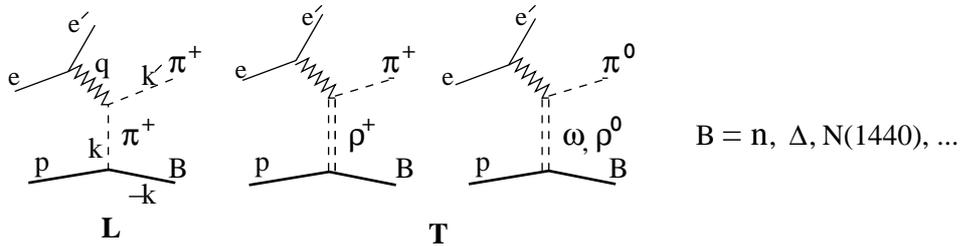


Fig. 1. Meson pole diagrams dominating in the pion quasi-elastic knockout.

and strong (str) parts

$$\frac{d\sigma_{L,T}}{dt} = \frac{1}{16W^2} \frac{1}{|\mathbf{q}^*||\mathbf{q}_r^*|} \frac{|\overline{\mathcal{M}_{str}}|^2}{(t - m_M^2)^2} \times \begin{cases} \alpha F_\pi^2(Q^2) |k + k'|_{L,T}^2 & (\text{pion pole}) \\ (g_{\rho\pi\gamma}^2/4\pi) F_{\rho\pi\gamma}^2(Q^2) |\hat{\rho} \times \mathbf{q}|_T^2 & (\rho\text{-meson pole}), \end{cases}$$

$$\text{where } |\overline{\mathcal{M}_{str}}|^2 = \begin{cases} |\overline{\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow \pi + N)}|^2 = 2g_{\pi NN}^2 \mathbf{k}^2 F_{\pi NN}^2(\mathbf{k}^2) \\ |\overline{\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow \rho + N)}|^2 = 2(1 + \kappa_\rho)^2 g_{\rho NN}^2 \mathbf{k}^2 F_{\rho NN}^2(\mathbf{k}^2). \end{cases}$$

that allows to introduce the “wave function” (w.f.) of meson M (= π, ρ, K) in the nucleon

$$\frac{|\overline{\Psi_N^{BM}}(k)|^2}{\omega_M^2(k)} = \frac{|\overline{\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow M + B)}|^2}{(t - m_M)^2}$$

with an invariant normalization on “a spectroscopic factor” (the number of mesons in the nucleon)¹

$$S_N^{BM} = \int \frac{d^3k}{(2\pi)^3} \frac{4|\overline{\Psi_N^{BM}}(k)|^2}{2E_N(p)2E_B(p')2\omega_M(k)}.$$

In principle, all components of Fock column can be studied in knock-out experiments, but really the w.f. defined with a measured cross section includes contributions from all intermediate virtual states of a given process. For example, at forward angles the longitudinal part of the p(e,e' π^+)n cross section is only determined by the pion pole

$$\frac{d\sigma_L}{dt} \sim \frac{|R_p^{n\pi^+}(k)|^2}{4\pi} = \frac{4|\overline{\Psi_p^{n\pi^+}}(k)|^2}{(2\pi)^3 2M_N 2E_N(k) 2\omega_\pi(k)},$$

while the transverse part at large $Q^2 \gtrsim 2-4 \text{ GeV}^2/c^2$ is determined by the ρ -meson pole $d\sigma_T/dt \sim |R_p^{n\rho^+}(k)|^2/(4\pi)$, because of a large contribution of the e.-m. M1 transition²

$$\rho^+ + \gamma_T^* \rightarrow \pi^+, \quad \rho^0 + \gamma_T^* \rightarrow \pi^0, \quad \omega + \gamma_T^* \rightarrow \pi^0.$$

for transverse (T) photons. Hence the Fock states n+ π^+ and n+ ρ^+ (or N+ π^0 , N+ ρ^0 , and N+ ω for neutral mesons) can be separately measured with the $d\sigma_L/dt$ and $d\sigma_T/dt$ [7, 8].

¹In the I.M.F., it gives a momentum distribution of mesons as partons

$$p \rightarrow \infty: \quad S_{N\infty}^{BM} = \int \frac{d^2k_\perp}{(4\pi)^2} \frac{dx}{x(1-x)} \frac{|\overline{\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow M + B)}|^2}{(M_N^2 - W^2(k_\perp^2, x))^2}, \quad W^2(k_\perp^2, x) = \frac{m_B^2 + k_\perp^2}{1-x} + \frac{m_M^2}{x}.$$

²Note that the most natural process for vector mesons p+e $\rightarrow \rho^+$ +n+e' (with the real ρ -meson production) proceeds according to a totally different (vector dominance) scheme with the Pomeron exchange.

In this work, the model w.f.'s $R_N^{N\pi}(k)$ were calculated on the basis of

1) phenomenological vertex form factors (f.f.) and coupling constants

$$F_{\pi NN}(\mathbf{k}^2) = \frac{\Lambda_\pi^2}{\Lambda_\pi^2 + \mathbf{k}^2}, \quad F_{\rho NN}(\mathbf{k}^2) = \frac{\Lambda_\rho^2}{\Lambda_\rho^2 + \mathbf{k}^2}, \quad (1)$$

with $\Lambda_\pi \approx m_\rho$, $\Lambda_\rho = 2m_\rho$, $g_{\pi NN} = 13.2$, $g_{\rho NN} = 2.9$, $\kappa_\rho = 6.1$, $g_{\rho\pi\gamma} = 0.609\mu_p m_\pi$;

2) phenomenological π -N potentials of a separable form

$$V(k, k'; E) = \frac{f_0(k)f_0(k')}{E - M_{N_0} + 0} - h_0(k)h_0(k'),$$

fitted to the π -N elastic scattering [9, 10], for which the w.f. of π N system

$$R_p^{n\pi^+}(k) = \frac{f(k, E = M_N)}{M_N - \omega_\pi(k) - E_{N_0}} \quad (2)$$

is a residue of the exact π N propagator³ $G(k, k'; E) = f(k, E)f(k', E)/(E - M_N)$ in the nucleon pole $E = M_N$, $E_{N_0} = \sqrt{M_{N_0}^2 + \mathbf{k}^2}$, where M_{N_0} is a ‘‘bare’’ nucleon mass;

3) the CQM with taking into account a scalar $q\bar{q}$ (3P_0) fluctuation in the non-trivial QCD vacuum [3, 4, 6].

Note that the relation of the phenomenological 3P_0 models [3, 4] to the first principals of QCD has not been clearly established because of the essentially non-perturbative mechanism of low-energy meson emission. However, the models [3, 4] have their good points: they satisfy the OZI rule and they make possible reasonable predictions for the transition amplitudes. The most general prediction of the 3P_0 model is that the meson momentum distribution in the cloud replicates the quark momentum distribution in the nucleon. For such a prediction, the details of different 3P_0 models are not important, and we start here from a universal formulation proposed in Ref. [6]. The interaction Hamiltonian is written in a covariant form as a scalar source of $q\bar{q}$ pairs

$$H_s = g_s \int d^3x \bar{\psi}_q(x)\psi_q(x) = g_s \int d^3x [\bar{u}(x)u(x) + \bar{d}(x)d(x) + \bar{s}(x)s(x)], \quad (3)$$

where $u(x)$, $d(x)$ and $s(x)$ are Dirac fields for the triplet of constituent quarks (the color part is omitted). Amplitudes of meson emission $N \rightarrow M+B$ and $M \rightarrow$

³In this model, the w.f. $R_p^{n\pi^+}(k)$ satisfies a non-trivial normalisation condition

$$\int |R_p^{n\pi^+}(k)|^2 k^2 dk + (M_N - M_{N_0})^{-1} \left(\int R_p^{n\pi^+}(k) k^2 dk \right)^2 = 1, \quad S_p^{n\pi^+} = \int |R_p^{n\pi^+}(k)|^2 k^2 dk < 1.$$

M_1+M_2 are defined as matrix elements $\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow M+B) = \langle M | \langle B | H_s | N \rangle$, $\mathcal{M}(M \rightarrow M_1+M_2) = \langle M_1 | \langle M_2 | H_s | M \rangle$, where the initial and final states are basis vectors of constituent quark model (CQM). In the first order of v/c , one can obtain (see Ref. [11] for details)

$$\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow \pi_\alpha + N) = \frac{5}{3} \frac{ig_s}{m_\pi m_q} \frac{(2\pi b_\pi^2 m_\pi^2)^{3/4}}{(1 + \frac{2}{3}x_\pi^2)^{3/2}} F_{\pi NN}(\mathbf{k}^2) \tau_\alpha^{(N)\dagger} \boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(N)} \cdot \left[\mathbf{k} - \frac{\omega_\pi(k)}{2M_N} (\mathbf{P} + \mathbf{P}') \right], \quad (4)$$

where b and b_π are parameters of CQM (nucleon and pion radii respectively), $x_\pi = b_\pi/b \approx 0.5$ and the strong πNN form factor has a Gaussian form $F_{\pi NN}(\mathbf{k}^2) = \exp[-\frac{1}{6}k^2 b^2 (1 + \frac{1}{6}x_\pi^2/(1 + 2x_\pi^2/3))]$ characteristic of the harmonic oscillator (h.o.) wave functions. Equation (4) should be compared with the standard definition of pseudo-vector (P.V.) vertex for point-like nucleons and pions to obtain the normalization condition for g_s on the P.V. coupling constant $f_{\pi NN} \approx 1.0$

$$f_{\pi NN} = \frac{5}{3} \frac{g_s}{m_q} (2\pi b_\pi^2 m_\pi^2)^{3/4} (1 + \frac{2}{3}x_\pi^2)^{-3/2}, \quad g_{\pi NN} = \frac{2M_N}{m_\pi} f_{\pi NN}. \quad (5)$$

Starting from this value of g_s , we have calculated amplitudes for all transitions $N \rightarrow \pi^\alpha + B$ and $N \rightarrow K^\alpha + Y$. For the ρNN and $\rho\pi\gamma$ vertexes, we have obtained

$$\mathcal{M}(N \rightarrow \rho_\alpha^{(m)} + N) = \frac{g_{\rho NN}}{2M_N} \tau_\alpha^{(N)\dagger} \boldsymbol{\epsilon}_\rho^{(m)*} \cdot \{ \mathbf{P} + \mathbf{P}' - (1 + \kappa_\rho) i [\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(N)} \times \mathbf{k}] \} F_{\rho NN}(\mathbf{k}^2) \quad (6)$$

$$\text{and } \mathcal{M}(\boldsymbol{\rho} + \boldsymbol{\gamma} \rightarrow \boldsymbol{\pi}) = g_{\rho\pi\gamma} \frac{|\mathbf{q}|}{m_\pi} \boldsymbol{\epsilon}_\gamma^{(m)} \cdot [\hat{\boldsymbol{\rho}} \times \hat{\mathbf{q}}] [\boldsymbol{\rho} \times \boldsymbol{\pi}]_{I_z=0} F_{\rho\pi\gamma}(\mathbf{q}^2), \quad (7)$$

where Eq. (7) is the (spin-flip) matrix element calculated with the spin part of isovector e.-m. quark current $\sim \tau_z^{(q)} (e/2m_q) i [\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(q)} \times \mathbf{q}]$; $\hat{\boldsymbol{\rho}}$ is the ρ -meson polarisation vector, $\hat{\mathbf{q}} = \mathbf{q}/|\mathbf{q}|$, $\boldsymbol{\epsilon}_\gamma^{(m)}$ is the photon polarization vector with transverse sperical components $m = \pm 1$ only, and $\boldsymbol{\rho}$, $\boldsymbol{\gamma}$ and $\boldsymbol{\pi}$ are isovectors. The coupling constants $g_{\rho NN}$, $(1 + \kappa_\rho)g_{\rho NN}$, and $g_{\rho\pi\gamma}$ are calculated with the fractional parentage coefficients technique on the basis of CQM

$$g_{\rho NN} = \frac{g_s}{m_q} \frac{m_\pi}{3m_\rho} (2\pi b_\rho^2 m_\rho^2)^{3/4} (1 + \frac{2}{3}x_\rho^2)^{-3/2}, \quad 1 + \kappa_\rho = 5, \quad g_{\rho\pi\gamma} = \frac{2}{3} \frac{em_\pi}{2m_q}. \quad (8)$$

The momentum distribution of pions in the nucleon $|R_p^{n\pi^+}|^2$ calculated [Eq. (2)] with phenomenological πN potentials [9, 10] and with the monopole ($\Lambda_\pi = 0.6 \text{ GeV}/c$) vertex f.f. (1) are shown in Fig. 2 (left panel, solid line). The dashed line corresponds to Afnan's πN potential [9], and the dash-dotted line to the Lee's potential [10]. We see that the latter is rather far from the solid line and, consequently, from the experimental data. The MD and strong form factors for the channels $\pi + N$, $\pi + \Delta$, $\pi + N_{1/2^-}$ (N^*) and $\pi + N_{1/2^+}$ (N^{**}) calculated on the basis of the

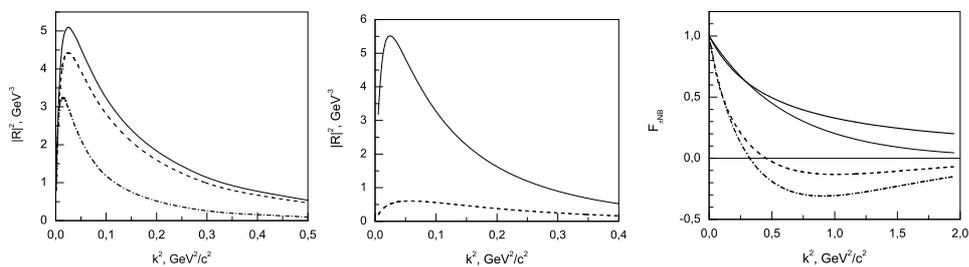


Fig. 2. The pion MD calculated in 1) phenomenological πN models [9, 10] (left panel); 2) the 3P_0 model (central panel: for $\pi + N$ and $\pi + \Delta$ channels, right panel: strong form factors for $\pi + N$, $\pi + N^*$ and $\pi + N^{**}$ channels).

3P_0 model are shown in the central and right panels of Fig. 2. For comparison, the form factor (1) for $\Lambda_\pi = 0.7$ GeV/c (thick solid line) is also shown. One can see that the 3P_0 predictions are in a good agreement with this monopole f.f. up to $|t| \approx 0.5$ GeV $^2/c^2$. However, the experimental data on Rosenbluth separation [5] are not of high accuracy to resolve a wide interval of Λ_π from 0.7 to 1.2 GeV/c, as it is seen from Fig. 3, where the calculated $d\sigma_L/dt$ is compared with the data [5] at $Q^2 = 0.7$ and 3.3 GeV $^2/c^2$. Nevertheless, it is important to note here that both the absolute value of cross section $d\sigma_L/dt$ and the shape of its dependence on t ($\approx -k^2$) are well reproduced by the microscopical models (CQM + 3P_0). In particular, as Fig. 2 (right panel) shows, both the shape of monopole f.f. and the empirical value⁴ $\Lambda_\pi \approx 0.6 \div 0.7$ GeV/c find its microscopical foundation. So, our predictions for $N \rightarrow \pi + B$, $B = \Delta, N^*, N^{**}$ seem to be useful for future exclusive experiments.

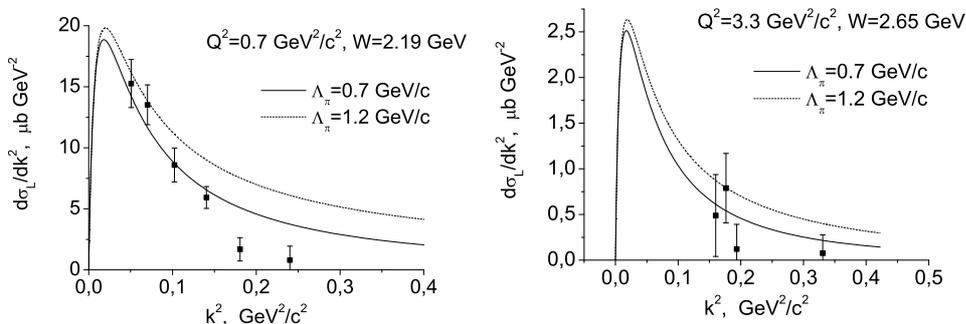


Fig. 3. The longitudinal cross section calculated with phenomenological monopole strong form factors Eq. (1). The data from [5].

The ρ -meson pole contribution to the transverse cross section of pion electroproduction is shown in Fig. 4 in comparison with the data [5] for $Q^2 = 0.7$ and 3.3 GeV $^2/c^2$. The contribution of pion pole is shown by the dashed line and the sum of ρ and π contribution by the solid line. It is seen that the ρ -pole contri-

⁴It appears close to the result by Phandaripande et al. [12] related to very different physics.

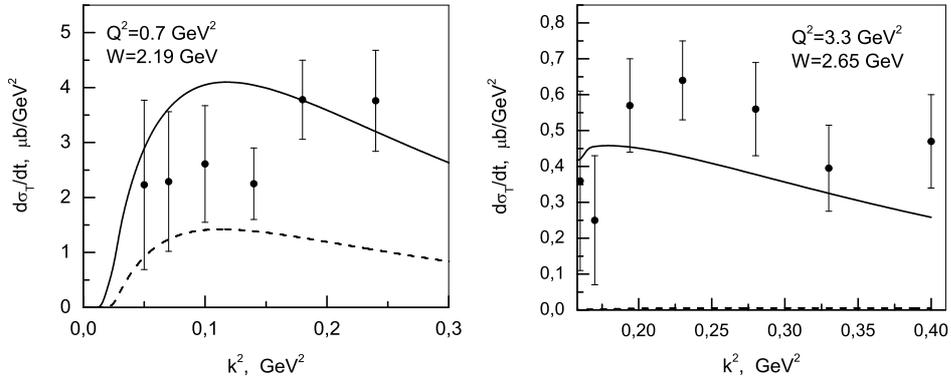


Fig. 4. The transverse cross section calculated in the 3P_0 model. π^- - and ρ -pole contributions (see comments in the text). The data from Ref. [5].

bution increases with Q^2 and becomes predominant at a few GeV^2/c^2 . Therefore, the ρNN and $\rho\pi\gamma$ vertices can be studied in exclusive π^+ electro-production experiments, but new more precise data on the Rosenbluth separation are necessary. This is also true for π^0 electro-production, where an interference between ρ^0 and ω contributions can be studied in the transverse cross section.

Unfortunately, the longitudinal and transverse cross sections of the channel $N \rightarrow Y + K$ are not separated in the available data, and we cannot extract the MD of kaons from the experiment as we did for pions. Here we only use an estimated value $d\sigma_L/dt \approx \frac{1}{2}d\sigma/dt$ [5] to compare the 3P_0 -model prediction for $d\sigma_L/dt$ with the data Ref. [5] at $Q^2 = 1.35 \text{ GeV}^2/c^2$ (Fig. 5, left panel). So, our calculated results for the MDs of kaons in the channels $p \rightarrow \Lambda + K$ and $p \rightarrow \Sigma + K$ need verification in future experiments with longitudinal virtual photons. Our calculations of these MDs within the 3P_0 model are shown in Fig. 5 (right panel). Predicted spectroscopic factors are $S_p^{K\Lambda} = 0.076$ and $S_p^{K\Sigma} = 0.003$ (for comparison, $S_N^{\pi N} = 0.25$).

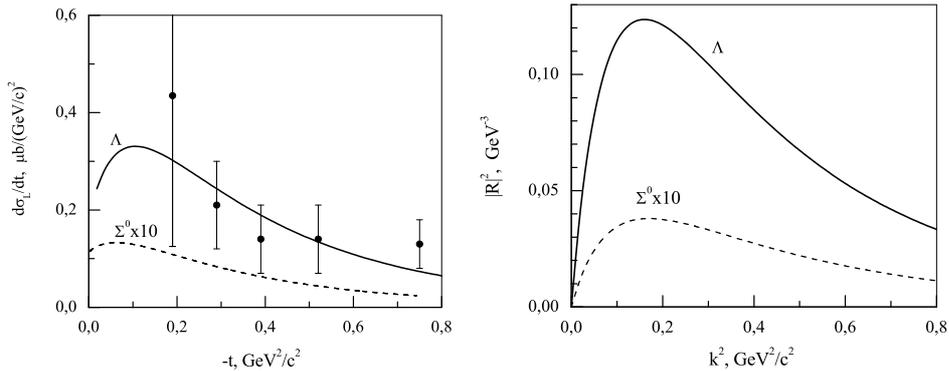


Fig. 5. The $d\sigma_L/dt$ cross section (left) and MD (right) for $p + e \rightarrow e' + K^+ + \Lambda(\Sigma_0)$.

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KVAZILASTIČNO IZBIJANJE MEZONA IZ NUKLEONA. RAZVOJ I
BUDUĆNOST

Elektrotvorba piona i kaona u uvjetima kvazielastičnog izbijanja je moćna metoda za istraživanje elektronskog oblaka. Primijenili smo model skalarnih fluktuacija $q\bar{q}$ (3P_0) u netrivialnom QCD vakuumu radi računanja raspodjela impulsa piona i kaona u kanalima $N \rightarrow B + \pi$, $B = N, \Delta, N^*, N^{**}$, i $N \rightarrow Y + K$, $Y = \Lambda, \Sigma_0$.