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Search for Inclusive $b \rightarrow s l^+l^-$

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We have searched for the effective flavor changing neutral-current decays $b \to s l^+ l^-$ using an inclusive method. We set upper limits on the branching ratios $\mathcal{B}(b \to s e^+ e^-) < 5.7 \times 10^{-5}$, $\mathcal{B}(b \to s \mu^+ \mu^-) < 5.8 \times 10^{-5}$, and $\mathcal{B}(b \to s e^+ \mu^-) < 2.2 \times 10^{-5}$ [at 90% confidence level (C.L.)]. Combing the dielectron and dimuon decay modes we find $\mathcal{B}(b \to s l^+ l^-) < 4.2 \times 10^{-5}$ (at 90% C.L.).

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Flavor changing neutral currents (FCNC) are forbidden to first order in the standard model. Second order loop diagrams, known as penguin and box diagrams, can generate effective FCNC which lead to $b \to s$ transitions. These processes are of considerable interest because they are sensitive to $V_{ts}$, the Cabibbo-Kobayashi-Maskawa matrix element which will be very difficult to measure in direct decays of the top quark. These processes are also sensitive to non-standard-model physics [1], since charged Higgs bosons, new gauge bosons, or supersymmetric particles can contribute via additional loop diagrams.

The electromagnetic penguin decay $b \to s \gamma$ was first observed by CLEO in the exclusive mode $B \to K^* \gamma$ with $\mathcal{B}(B \to K^* \gamma) = (4.2 \pm 0.8 \pm 0.6) \times 10^{-5}$ [2]. The inclusive rate for the decay $B \to X_s \gamma$ was measured to be $\mathcal{B}(b \to s \gamma) = (2.32 \pm 0.57 \pm 0.35) \times 10^{-4}$ [3]. The measured inclusive $b \to s \gamma$ rate is consistent with standard model calculations.

The $b \to s l^+ l^-$ decay rate is expected in the standard model to be nearly 2 orders of magnitude lower than the rate for $b \to s \gamma$ decays. Nevertheless, the $b \to s l^+ l^-$ process has received considerable attention since it offers a deeper insight into the effective Hamiltonian describing FCNC processes in $B$ decays [4]. While $b \to s \gamma$ is only sensitive to the absolute value of the $C_7$ Wilson coefficient in the effective Hamiltonian, $b \to s l^+ l^-$ is also sensitive to the sign of $C_7$ and to the $C_6$ and $C_{10}$ coefficients, where the relative contributions vary with $l^+ l^-$ mass. These three coefficients are related to three different processes contributing to $b \to s l^+ l^-$: electromagnetic and electroweak penguins, and a box diagram. Processes beyond the standard model can alter both the magnitude and the sign of the Wilson coefficients. The higher-order QCD corrections for $b \to s l^+ l^-$ are smaller than for the electromagnetic penguin and have been calculated in next-to-leading order [5,6].

Several experiments (UA1 [7], CLEO [8], and CDF [9]) have searched for the exclusive decays $B \to K^{+} l^{-}$ and $B \to K^{*} l^{+} l^{-}$ and set upper limits at the level of $(1 - 2) \times 10^{-5}$ at 90% confidence level (C.L.). These exclusive final states are expected to constitute about 6% and 15% of the inclusive $X_s l^+ l^-$ rate, respectively [10]. Inclusively measured rates are more interesting because they can be directly related to underlying quark transitions without large theoretical uncertainties in formation probabilities for specific hadronic final states. Combining electron and muon modes, the previous generation of the CLEO experiment set an inclusive limit: $\mathcal{B}(b \to s l^+ l^-) < 1.2 \times 10^{-3}$ (90% C.L.) [11]. The UA1 experiment [7] searched for inclusive $b \to s \mu^+ \mu^-$ at the end point of the dilepton mass distribution [$M(\mu^+ \mu^-) > 3.9$ GeV] which comprises about a tenth of the total rate. Extrapolating to the full phase space, UA1 claims a limit of $< 5 \times 10^{-5}$ (90% C.L.). However, a simulation of the UA1 acceptance shows that UA1 overestimated their efficiency by at least a factor of 3 [12].

In this Letter, we present results of the search for inclusive $b \to s \mu^+ \mu^-$, $b \to s e^+ e^-$, and $b \to s e^+ \mu^-$. The latter decay violates conservation of electron and muon lepton numbers and thus can originate only from processes beyond the standard model. The data were obtained with the CLEO II detector at the Cornell Electron Storage Ring. A sample with an integrated luminosity of $3.1 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ was collected on the $Y(4S)$ resonance. This sample contains $(3.30 \pm 0.06) \times 10^6$ produced $B \bar{B}$ pairs. For background subtraction we also use $1.6 \text{ fb}^{-1}$ of data collected just below the $Y(4S)$.

The data selection method is very similar to the reconstruction method presented in our previous measurement of the $b \to s \gamma$ rate [3], with the $\gamma$ candidate replaced by a lepton pair. We select events that pass general hadronic event criteria based on charged track multiplicity, visible energy, and location of the event vertex. The highest energy pair of oppositely charged leptons is then selected. Electron candidates are required to have an energy deposition in the calorimeter nearly equal to the measured momentum, and to have a specific ionization $(dE/dx)$ in the drift chamber consistent with that expected for an electron. Muon candidates are identified as charged tracks with matching muon-detector hits at absorber depths of at least three nuclear interaction lengths. In the $\mu^+ \mu^-$ channel, one muon is required to penetrate at least five interaction lengths. We then look for a combination of hadronic particles, denoted $X_s$, with a kaon candidate and 0–4 pions, which together with the selected lepton pair satisfy energy-momentum constraints for the $B$ decay hypothesis $B \to X_s l^{+} l^{-}$. To quantify consistency with this hypothesis, we use

$$
\chi_B^2 = \left( \frac{M_B - 5.279}{\sigma_M} \right)^2 + \left( \frac{E_B - E_{\text{beam}}}{\sigma_E} \right)^2,
$$

where $M_B = \sqrt{E_{\text{beam}}^2 - P_B^2}$, $E_B$, $P_B$ are the measured energy and momentum of the $B$ candidate, and $\sigma_M$, $\sigma_E$ are experimental errors on $M_B$ and $E_B$ estimated from the
detector resolution and beam energy spread. The kaon candidate is a charged track with \(dE/dx\) and time of flight (TOF) consistent with the kaon hypothesis, or a \(K^0 \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-\) candidate identified by a displaced vertex and invariant mass cut. A pion candidate is a charged track with \(dE/dx\) and TOF consistent with the pion hypothesis, or a \(\pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma \gamma\) candidate. At most one \(\pi^0\) is allowed in the \(X_s\) combination. In each event, we pick the combination that minimizes overall \(\chi^2\), which includes \(\chi^2_B\) together with contributions from \(dE/dx\), TOF, and \(K^0\) and \(\pi^0\) mass deviations, where relevant.

To suppress continuum background we require the event to have \(H_s/H_0 < 0.45\), where \(H_s\) are Fox-Wolfram moments [14]. We also require \(|\cos \theta_{tt}| < 0.8\), where \(\theta_{tt}\) is the angle between the thrust axis of the candidate \(B\) and the thrust axis of the rest of the event. To suppress \(B\bar{B}\) background we require the mass of the \(X_s\) system to be less than 1.8 GeV. The dominant \(B\bar{B}\) background comes from two semileptonic decays of \(B\) or \(D\) mesons, which produce the lepton pair with two undetected neutrinos. Since most signal events are expected to have zero or one neutrino, we also require the mass of the undetected system in the event to be less than 1.5 GeV. By excluding the mode with \(X_s = K \pi^+ \pi^- \pi^0\), we reduce the expected \(B\bar{B}\) background by an additional 21\% while reducing the signal efficiency by only 6\%.

Figure 1 shows the dilepton mass \(M(l^+ l^-)\) for the events which pass the cuts previously described and the \(B\) consistency requirement \(\chi^2_B < 6\), in the on- and off-resonance data samples. Unlike the \(b \rightarrow s \gamma\) analysis, the continuum background is small. The peaks at the \(\psi\) and \(\psi'\) masses that are observed in the on-resonance data are due to well known decays \(B \rightarrow X_s \psi^{(i)}\), \(\psi^{(i)} \rightarrow l^+ l^-\) involving long distance interactions in formation of the \(\psi^{(i)}\) resonances. Using cuts on \(M(X_s)\) to identify \(K\) and \(K^*\), we measure the branching ratios for \(B \rightarrow K^{(*)} \psi^{(i)}\) and obtain results consistent with a recent CLEO publication [15]. For further analysis, we exclude events with \(M(l^+ l^-)\) near the \(\psi\) and \(\psi'\) masses (\(\pm 0.1\) GeV for \(\mu^+ \mu^-\), \(-0.3\), \(+0.1\) GeV for \(e^+ e^-\), no cut for \(e^\pm \mu^\mp\)), since we want to probe short distance contributions to the production of \(X_s l^+ l^-\) states. The exclusion region is wider in the \(e^+ e^-\) channel because of the radiative tail. After these cuts and continuum subtraction, we observe \(10 \pm 5 \times e^+ e^-\), \(12 \pm 6 \times \mu^+ \mu^-\), and \(18 \pm 8 \times e^\pm \mu^\mp\) events in the data, whereas from the Monte Carlo simulation of generic \(B\bar{B}\) events we expect \(9 \pm 1\), \(16 \pm 2\), and \(39 \pm 3\) (statistical errors only) background events, respectively. The \(B\bar{B}\) Monte Carlo reproduces also the number of events in the tail of the \(\chi^2_B\) distribution (\(6 < \chi^2_B < 30\)) where the signal contribution is expected to be 2.3 times smaller. Continuum-subtracted data yield \(14 \pm 6\), \(26 \pm 7\), and \(66 \pm 11\) events, whereas the Monte Carlo expectations are \(24 \pm 2\), \(29 \pm 2\), and \(71 \pm 4\) events, respectively. Therefore, no evidence for signal is found in the data and we proceed to set limits on these decay rates.
The shapes of all these contributions are fixed from the Monte Carlo simulation, while the normalizations are allowed to float. The Monte Carlo predictions for the signal shape distribution agree well with the distribution observed in the data for the $B \rightarrow \phi X_s$ signal. We assign a generous systematic error to the uncertainty in $X_b^2$ signal and background shapes by varying $X_s$ composition in the Monte Carlo as described below. The fitted number of $X_b^2 e^+ e^-$, $X_s \mu^+ \mu^-$, and $X_e^+ e^- \mu^-$ events is $7 \pm 7$, $1 \pm 7$, and $-18 \pm 10$, respectively. As an example, the fit to the $X_b^2 e^+ e^-$ data is displayed in Fig. 2(b)–2(c).

To calculate the signal efficiency and to predict the $X_b^2$ signal distribution we generated $b \rightarrow s l^+ l^-$ Monte Carlo events. The parton level distributions for $b \rightarrow se^+ e^-$ and $b \rightarrow s \mu^+ \mu^-$ are predicted from the effective Hamiltonian containing standard model contributions. The next-to-leading-order calculations were used [6]. At present, the effect of gluon bremsstrahlung on the outgoing $s$ quark is only partially included in the theoretical calculations. After our $\psi$ and $\psi'$ veto cuts, the long distance interactions are expected to constructively interfere with the short distance contributions. Estimates of these interference effects are model dependent. The most recent calculation predicts modifications of the short distance rate by only about 2% [16] compared to 20% predicted by some earlier simplified models [17]. We neglect long distance interactions in our Monte Carlo. Since no theoretical calculations for the non-standard-model decay $b \rightarrow se^+ e^-$ exist, we use a phase space model for these decays. To account for Fermi motion of the $b$ quark inside the $B$ meson we have used the spectator model by Ali et al. [18]. The particle content of the $X_s$ system was modeled with the conventional method quark hadronization from JETSET [19]. For better accuracy of the simulations, when $M(X_s)$ is in the $K$ or $K^*$ mass region, the event is regenerated according to the theoretical predictions for the exclusive $B \rightarrow K^{(*)} l^+ l^-$ decays by Greub et al. [20]. The estimated efficiencies are 5.2%, 4.5%, and 7.3% for $e^+ e^-$, $\mu^+ \mu^-$, and $e^+ e^- \mu^+ \mu^-$ modes, respectively.

To estimate the systematic error due to the uncertainty in the $X_b^2$ signal and background shapes, we divide the Monte Carlo sample into low and high multiplicity channels in the manner which produces the largest shape variation. This shape variation changes the upper limits by 9%, 19%, and 20% for the $e^+ e^-$, $\mu^+ \mu^-$, and $e^+ e^- \mu^+ \mu^-$ channels, respectively. Variations of the spectator model parameters [3] result in changes of the selection efficiency by $(12 \pm 4\%)$, $(30 \pm 4\%)$, and $(11 \pm 4\%)$, respectively. The larger uncertainty in the $\mu^+ \mu^-$ channel is the result of the lack of muon identification for $P_\text{mu} < 1$ GeV/c. Uncertainty in the modeling of the hadronization of the $X_s$ system gives a contribution of 9%. Remaining systematic error in the simulation of detector response is dominated by charged tracking systematics and is estimated to be 14%. Adding all these sources of systematic errors in the quadrature, we estimate the total systematic errors to be 22%, 39%, and 28%, respectively.

Using a Gaussian likelihood integrated over positive signal values, we find upper limits using statistical errors only. We then loosen these limits by one unit of systematic uncertainty.

The final results are $\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow se^+ e^-) < 5.7 \times 10^{-5}$, $\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow s\mu^+ \mu^-) < 5.8 \times 10^{-5}$, and $\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow se^+ \mu^-) < 2.2 \times 10^{-5}$. The results are consistent with the standard model predictions [18], $(0.8 \pm 0.2) \times 10^{-5}$, $(0.6 \pm 0.1) \times 10^{-5}$, and 0, respectively. Combining the $e^+ e^-$ and $\mu^+ \mu^-$ results, we also set a limit on the rate averaged over lepton flavors, $\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow sl^+ l^-) = [\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow se^+ e^-) + \mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow s\mu^+ \mu^-)]/2 < 4.2 \times 10^{-5}$ (90% C.L.).

The limit on $\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow se^+ e^-)$ is more than an order of magnitude more restrictive than the previous limits. The limit on $\mathcal{B}(b \rightarrow s\mu^+ \mu^-)$ is also significantly tighter than the UA1 limit after correcting for the efficiency problem (see discussion above). Furthermore, in contrast with the UA1 measurement, the present analysis is sensitive to a much wider range of $M(l^+ l^-)$. Therefore, our extrapolation to the full phase space is more reliable, and we are sensitive to a broader range of processes beyond the standard model.

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We have estimated a fraction of $K l^- l^-$ and $K^* l^- l^-$ final states among all $X_{s l^- l^+}$ decays by integrating the $dM(X_s)$ distribution predicted by the inclusive theoretical model described below in the appropriate $M(X_s)$ ranges.

To simulate the UA1 acceptance, we use the PYTHIA program [19] to generate $p\bar{p} \rightarrow b\bar{b}X$ at 630 GeV in the center of mass energy. The simulation of $b \rightarrow s\mu^+\mu^-$ decays is described later in the text. For the kinematic cuts used by UA1 [1, $P_t(b) > 7$ GeV/c, and $3.9 < M(\mu^+\mu^-) < 4.4$ GeV/c$^2$], we obtain an efficiency of $(0.36 \pm 0.03)\%$ when normalized to $b$ quark production with $P_t(b) > 6$ GeV/c and $|y(b)| < 1.5$. Further losses are expected due to inefficiencies in the trigger and reconstruction. The overall efficiency quoted in the UA1 publication [7] for these cuts and this normalization is three times larger: $(1.1 \pm 0.3)\%$. A large portion of this disagreement can be traced to the simulation of $M(\mu^+\mu^-)$ distribution in $B \rightarrow X_s\mu^+\mu^-$ decays. When applied to $B^0 \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$, our simulation of the UA1 kinematic cuts gives an acceptance consistent with the overall efficiency quoted by UA1. Furthermore, while our simulation of $B \rightarrow X_s\mu^+\mu^-$ decays predict that only $(6.7 \pm 0.6)\%$ of events passing the $P_t$ cuts fall into the $3.9 < M(\mu^+\mu^-) < 4.4$ GeV/c$^2$ interval, the number extracted from Table I in the UA1 paper is 2.3 times larger: $(15.0 \pm 0.3)\%$. The $M(\mu^+\mu^-)$ distribution generated by our Monte Carlo program is in good agreement with the distribution published by A. Ali et al. [18].