Measurements of CP-Violating Asymmetries and Branching Fractions in B Meson Decays to $\eta'K$

(BABAR Collaboration)
Nonconservation of $CP$ in the neutral $B$ meson system has been clearly established \cite{1,2} in decays to charmonium such as $B^0 \to J/\psi K^0_S$. The $CP$ effect arises from the interference between mixing and decay involving the $CP$-violating phase $\beta = \arg \left(-V_{cd} V_{cb}^* / V_{td} V_{tb}^* \right)$ of the Cabibbo-Kobayashi-Maskawa (CKM) mixing matrix, and appears experimentally as an asymmetry in the time evolution of the $B^0 \overline{B^0}$ meson pair. These decays occur via a CKM-favored (though color suppressed) $b \to c$ tree amplitude.
Here we report results of a similar analysis of the decay $B^0 \to \eta' K_S^0$, a CKM-suppressed process that is expected to be dominated by penguin $b \to s$ transitions, while the tree and electroweak contributions are expected to be small [3–5]. The observed branching fraction is 3–10 times larger than initially expected [3], which has motivated a variety of conjectures by way of explanation, including flavor singlet [4] and charm enhanced [6] terms. A recent next-to-leading order QCD factorization calculation [5] suggests that the decay rate is not significantly enhanced by these mechanisms, but is accurately predicted by constructive interference between the penguin diagrams in which the spectator quark is contained in the $\eta'$ or in the kaon.

The results presented in this Letter are based on data collected in 1999–2002 with the BABAR detector [7] at the PEP-II asymmetric $e^+e^-$ collider [8] located at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. An integrated luminosity of 81.9 fb$^{-1}$, corresponding to 88.9 $\times$ 10$^6$ $B\bar{B}$ pairs, was recorded at the $Y(4S)$ resonance (center-of-mass energy $\sqrt{s} = 10.58$ GeV).

Charged particles from the $e^+e^-$ interactions are detected, and their momenta measured, by a combination of a vertex tracker (SVT) consisting of five layers of double-sided silicon microstrip detectors, and a 40-layer central drift chamber, both operating in the 1.5 T magnetic field of a superconducting solenoid. Photons and electrons are detected by a CsI(Tl) electromagnetic calorimeter. Charged particle identification (PID) is provided by the average energy loss ($dE/dx$) in the tracking devices, and by an internally reflecting imaging Cherenkov detector (DIRC) covering the central region.

From a $B^0\bar{B}^0$ meson pair produced in $Y(4S)$ decay we reconstruct one of the mesons in the final state $f = \eta' K_S^0$, a CP eigenstate with eigenvalue $\eta' = -1$. For the time evolution measurement, we also identify the flavor ($B^0$ or $\bar{B}^0$) and reconstruct the decay vertex of the partner ($B_{tag}$). The asymmetric beam configuration in the laboratory frame provides a boost of $\beta Y = 0.56$ to the $Y(4S)$, which allows the determination of the proper decay time difference $\Delta t = t_f - t_{tag}$ from the vertex separation of the two $B$ meson candidates. The distribution of $\Delta t$ is

$$F(\Delta t) = \frac{e^{-|\Delta t|/\tau}}{4\tau} \{1 \mp \Delta w \pm (1 - 2w) \times [S_f \sin(\Delta m_d \Delta t) - C_f \cos(\Delta m_d \Delta t)]\}.$$  

The parameter $C_f$ measures direct CP violation. If $C_f = 0$, then $S_f = \sin 2\beta_{eff}$, with $\beta_{eff}$ equal to $\beta$ combined with any weak phase difference arising from multiple amplitudes in the decay. Assuming the tree amplitudes are negligible, a deviation from the value found in charmonium channels can be considered an effect of phases coming from new physics [9]. Direct CP violation can also be detected as an asymmetry $\mathcal{A}_{CP} = (\Gamma^{-} - \Gamma^{+})/(\Gamma^{-} + \Gamma^{+})$ in the rates $\Gamma^+ = \Gamma(B^+ \to \eta' K^+)$.

We reconstruct a $B$ meson candidate by combining a $K^+$ [10] or $K_S^0$ with an $\eta' \to \eta \pi^+ \pi^- (\eta'_{\pi\pi\pi})$ or $\rho \to \eta' \pi^+ \pi^-$ ($\eta'_{\rho\pi}$). The $K_S^0 \to \pi^+ \pi^-$, $\eta' \to \gamma \gamma$, and $\rho \to \pi^+ \pi^-$ candidates are selected with requirements on the relevant invariant masses similar to those of our previous analysis [11]. Distributions from the data and from Monte Carlo (MC) simulations [12] guide the choice of these selection criteria. For those quantities taken subsequently as observables for fitting we retain sidebands adequate to characterize the background as well as the signal. For charged $B$ decays, the $K^+$ candidate must have an associated DIRC Cherenkov angle between $-5 \sigma$ and $+2 \sigma$ of the value expected for a kaon. This requirement rejects 91% of pions.

The $B$-meson candidate is characterized by the energy substituted mass $m_{ES} = \sqrt{(1/2 \cdot p_t \cdot p_B)^2/E_0^2 - |p_B|^2}$ and energy difference $\Delta E = E_0^* - 1/2\sqrt{s}$, where the subscripts 0 and $B$ refer to the initial $Y(4S)$ and the $B$ candidate, respectively, and the asterisk denotes the $Y(4S)$ rest frame. The resolutions on these quantities measured for signal events are 29 MeV for $\Delta E$ and 2.9 MeV/$c^2$ for $m_{ES}$. We require $|\Delta E| \leq 0.2$ GeV and $5.2 \leq m_{ES} \leq 5.29$ GeV/$c^2$.

Backgrounds arise primarily from combinatorics among continuum events. To reject these we make use of the angle $\theta_f$ between the thrust axis of the $B$ candidate in the $Y(4S)$ frame and that of the rest of the charged tracks and neutral clusters in the event. The distribution of $\cos \theta_f$ is sharply peaked near 1 for combinations drawn from jetlike $q\bar{q}$ pairs, and nearly uniform for the isotropic $B$ meson decays; we require $|\cos \theta_f| < 0.9$.

We obtain the yields and decay time evolution from extended unbinned maximum likelihood fits, with input observables $\Delta t$, $\Delta E$, $m_{ES}$, $m_{q\bar{q}}$, and a Fisher discriminant $f$. The Fisher discriminant [13] combines four variables: the angles with respect to the beam axis of the $B$ momentum and $B$ thrust axis [in the $Y(4S)$ frame], and the zeroth and second angular moments of the energy flow (excluding the $B$ candidate) about the $B$ thrust axis.

We use MC simulation to estimate backgrounds from other $B$ decays, including final states with and without charm. These contributions are negligible for the $\eta'_{\rho\pi}$ modes. For $\eta'_{\rho\pi}$ we include in the fit a $B\bar{B}$ component (which we find to be small).

Since we measure the correlations among the observables to be small in the (background-dominated) data samples entering the fit, we take the probability density
function (PDF) for each event to be a product of the PDFs for the separate observables. The efficiencies and mistag rates \( w \) for each of four tagging categories are measured with a large sample \( (B_{\text{flav}}) \) of decays to fully reconstructed flavor eigenstates [1]. The signatures of the four tagging categories are essentially lepton, \( K^+ \) from \( D^* \), \( K^+ \), and a flavor-correlated inclusive class. For each event hypothesis \( j \) (signal, \( B\bar{B} \) background, continuum background) and tagging category \( k \), we define the PDF (to be evaluated with the observable set for event \( i \)) as

\[
P_{jk}^i = P_j(m_{ES})P_j(\Delta E)P_j(F)P_j(m_{\varphi})P_j(\Delta t; \sigma_{\Delta t}, k).
\]

The likelihood function for each decay chain is then

\[
L = \prod_k \exp\left(-\sum_j Y_{j,k}\right) \sum_i \left[\sum_j Y_{j,k} P_{jk}^i\right],
\]

where \( Y_{j,k} \) is the yield of events of hypothesis \( j \) found by the fitter in category \( k \), and \( N_i \) is the number of category \( k \) events in the sample.

The signal PDF factor \( P_{\text{sig}}(\Delta t; \sigma_{\Delta t}, k) \) is equal to the convolution of \( F(\Delta t; k) \) [Eq. (1)], with the signal resolution function, determined from the \( B_{\text{flav}} \) sample; \( \sigma_{\Delta t} \) is the error on \( \Delta t \) for a given event. We determine the remaining PDFs from simulation for the signal and \( B\bar{B} \) background components, and from \( (m_{ES}, \Delta E) \) sideband data for continuum background. Each of the functions \( P_{\text{sig}}(m_{ES}), P_{\text{sig}}(\Delta E), P_j(F), P_{\text{tag}}(\Delta t; k) \), and the peaking component of \( P_j(m_{\varphi}) \) is parametrized as a Gaussian function, with or without a second or third Gaussian or asymmetric width as required to describe the distribution. Slowly varying distributions (combinatoric background under mass or energy peaks) are represented by linear or quadratic dependences, or for \( m_{ES} \), by the function \( x\sqrt{1-x^2}\exp[-\xi(1-x^2)] \), with \( x = 2m_{ES}/\sqrt{s} \) and parameter \( \xi \). Large control samples of \( B \) decays to charmed final states of similar topology are used to verify the simulated resolutions in \( \Delta E \) and \( m_{ES} \).

We compute the branching fractions and \( \mathcal{A}_{\text{ch}} \) from fits made without \( \Delta t \) or flavor tagging. Seven parameters of the background PDF are free in the fit, along with signal and continuum background yields, for \( \eta'_{\gamma} K \) the \( B\bar{B} \) background yield, and for charged modes the signal and background \( \mathcal{A}_{\text{ch}} \). We compute the branching fractions from the fitted signal yields, reconstruction efficiencies, daughter branching fractions, and the number of produced \( B \) mesons, assuming equal production rates of charged and neutral pairs. To determine the reconstruction efficiency, including any yield bias of the likelihood fit, we apply the method to simulated samples constructed to contain the signal and continuum background populations expected for data.

Table I shows for each decay chain the branching fraction we measure, together with the quantities entering into its computation. The purity estimate is given by the ratio of the signal yield to the effective background plus signal, defined as the square of the error on the yield. In Fig. 1 we show projections onto \( m_{ES} \) and \( \Delta E \) of a subset of the data for which the signal likelihood (computed without the variable plotted) exceeds a mode-dependent threshold that optimizes the sensitivity.

For the time evolution we combine the two decay chains in a single fit with 28 free parameters: \( S_f, C_f \), signal fractions (two), \( \eta'_{\gamma} K \) \( B\bar{B} \) background yield (one), common background \( F \) PDF parameters (three), and separate background \( \Delta t, m_{ES}, \Delta E, m_{\varphi} \) PDF parameters (20). The last four columns of Table I give the tagged subsample yields with their purity, along with \( S_f \) and \( C_f \). The \( S_f \) and \( C_f \) values for \( B^+ \rightarrow \eta' K^+ \) are included as a control; they are consistent with zero, as expected. We show in Fig. 2 the \( \Delta t \) projections and asymmetry of the combined neutral modes for events selected as for Fig. 1.

Most of the systematic errors on yields, which arise from PDF uncertainties (1%−2%, depending on the decay mode), have already been incorporated into the overall statistical error, because their background parameters are free in the fit. We verify that the likelihood of each fit is consistent with the distribution found in simulation.

The uncertainty in our knowledge of the efficiency is found from auxiliary studies to be 0.8% per charged track, 2.5% per photon, and 4% per \( K^0 \). Our estimate of the \( B \) production systematic error is 1.1%. The estimate of systematic bias from the fitter itself (0%−4%) comes from fits of simulated samples with varying background.

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**Table I.** Signal yield, purity \( P \), detection efficiency \( \epsilon \), daughter branching fraction product that was forced to 100% in our signal mode simulation, measured branching fraction, background \( \mathcal{A}_{\text{tag}} \) and signal \( \mathcal{A}_{\text{ch}} \) charge asymmetries, tagged subsample yield \( Y_{\text{tag}} \) and purity \( P_{\text{tag}} \), \( S_f \), and \( C_f \) for each decay chain, and the combined result for each mode, with statistical error.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Yield</th>
<th>( P ) (%)</th>
<th>( \epsilon ) (%)</th>
<th>( \prod B_i ) (%)</th>
<th>( B ) (10^{-6})</th>
<th>( \mathcal{A}_{\text{tag}} ) (%)</th>
<th>( \mathcal{A}_{\text{ch}} ) (%)</th>
<th>( Y_{\text{tag}} )</th>
<th>( P_{\text{tag}} ) (%)</th>
<th>( S_f )</th>
<th>( C_f )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( \eta'_{\gamma} \pi K^+ )</td>
<td>268 ± 19</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>71 ± 5</td>
<td>0.6 ± 1.6</td>
<td>−0.1 ± 6.8</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0.08 ± 0.20</td>
<td>−0.16 ± 0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \eta'_{\gamma} K^+ )</td>
<td>514 ± 31</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>82 ± 5</td>
<td>−0.9 ± 0.5</td>
<td>6.3 ± 5.9</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>−0.07 ± 0.16</td>
<td>−0.14 ± 0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \eta K^+ )</td>
<td>76.9 ± 3.5</td>
<td>−0.8</td>
<td>± 0.4</td>
<td>3.7 ± 4.5</td>
<td>−0.01 ± 0.13</td>
<td>−0.15 ± 0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \eta_{\gamma} K^0 )</td>
<td>48 ± 8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>42 ± 7</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.75 ± 0.51</td>
<td>−0.21 ± 0.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>( \eta'_{\gamma} K^0 )</td>
<td>155 ± 17</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>76 ± 8</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>−0.41 ± 0.42</td>
<td>0.24 ± 0.27</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>( \eta K^0 )</td>
<td>60.6 ± 5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02 ± 0.34</td>
<td>0.10 ± 0.22</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
A nonzero value of varying within their errors the fit parameters controlling estimate an uncertainty in from previous determinations of these effects [1]. We find systematic uncertainties for branches, the time-integrated charge asymmetry $A_{\text{ch}}$, and the time-dependent asymmetry parameters $S_{\eta'K^0_S}$ and $C_{\eta'K^0_S}$. We find $S_{\eta'K^0_S} = 0.02 \pm 0.34 \pm 0.03$ and $C_{\eta'K^0_S} = 0.10 \pm 0.22 \pm 0.04$. These are in agreement with a previous measurement by the Belle Collaboration [16]. A nonzero value of $C_{\eta'K^0_S}$ would indicate direct $CP$ nonconservation in the $B^0 \to \eta'K^0_S$ decay. With $C_{\eta'K^0_S} = 0$, and provided the decay is dominated by amplitudes with a single weak phase, $S_{\eta'K^0_S}$ is equal to sin$2\beta$. Our result for $S_{\eta'K^0_S}$ is about 2 standard deviations smaller than the value obtained with $B^0 \to J/\psi K^0_S$ [1,2], and consistent with zero.

The measured branching fractions are $B(B^+ \to \eta'K^+) = (76.9 \pm 3.5 \pm 4.4) \times 10^{-6}$ and $B(B^0 \to \eta'K^0) = (60.6 \pm 5.6 \pm 4.6) \times 10^{-6}$, and we find $A_{\text{ch}} = 0.037 \pm 0.045 \pm 0.011$. The null result for $A_{\text{ch}}$ represents a limit on direct $CP$ nonconservation in $B^+ \to \eta'K^+$; the 90% C.L. limit range is $[-0.04, 0.11]$, and is consistent with predictions [5]. These values supersede our previous measurements [11], and are more than a factor of 2 more precise than previous results [11,17]. The branching fractions depend on $r_{+0} \equiv B(Y(4S) \to B^+B^0)/B(Y(4S) \to B^0B^0)$, which we have assumed to be unity. To compare the decay rates we form their ratio, making use of measurements [18] of $r_{+0} \equiv B_{+0} \times \tau(B^+)/\tau(B^0) = 1.14 \pm 0.06$ (our average); we find

$$\frac{\Gamma(B^+ \to \eta'K^+) \Gamma(B^0 \to \eta'K^0)}{r_{+0}} = 1.12 \pm 0.13 \pm 0.06 \pm 0.06,$$

where the last error is from $r_{+0}$.

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[10] Except as noted explicitly, we use a particle name to denote either member of a charge conjugate pair.