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Search for displaced muonic lepton jets from light Higgs boson decay in proton–proton collisions at √s = 7 TeV with the ATLAS detector

ATLAS Collaboration

A search is performed for collimated muon pairs displaced from the primary vertex produced in the decay of long-lived neutral particles in proton–proton collisions at √s = 7 TeV centre-of-mass energy, with the ATLAS detector at the LHC. In a 1.9 fb⁻¹ event sample collected during 2011, the observed data are consistent with the Standard Model background expectations. Limits on the product of the production cross section and the branching ratio of a Higgs boson decaying to hidden-sector neutral long-lived particles are derived as a function of the particles’ mean lifetime.

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1. Introduction

A search is presented for long-lived neutral particles decaying to final states containing collimated muon pairs in proton–proton collisions at √s = 7 TeV centre-of-mass energy. The event sample, collected during 2011 at the LHC with the ATLAS detector, corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 1.9 fb⁻¹. The model considered in this analysis consists of a Higgs boson decaying to a new hidden sector of particles which finally produce two sets of collimated muon pairs, but the search described is equally valid for other, distinct models such as heavier Higgs boson doublets or singlet scalars, produced through gluongluon fusion, that decay to a hidden sector and eventually produce collimated muon pairs.

Recently, evidence for the production of a boson with a mass of about 126 GeV has been published by ATLAS [1] and CMS [2]. The observation is compatible with the expected production and decay of the Standard Model (SM) Higgs boson [3–5] at this mass. Testing the SM Higgs hypothesis is currently of utmost importance. To this end two effects may be considered: (i) additional resonances which arise in an extended Higgs sector found in many extensions of the SM, or (ii) rare Higgs boson decays which may deviate from those predicted by the SM. In this Letter we search for a scalar, produced through gluongluon fusion, that decays to a light hidden sector, according to the topology of Fig. 1, focusing on the 100 GeV to 140 GeV mass range.

The phenomenology of light hidden sectors has been studied extensively over the past few years [6–10]. Possible characteristic topological signatures of such extensions of the SM are “lepton jets”. A lepton jet is a cluster of highly collimated particles: electrons, muons and possibly pions [7,11–13]. These arise if light unstable particles with masses in the MeV to GeV range (for example dark photons, γd) reside in the hidden sector and decay predominantly to SM particles. At the LHC, hidden-sector particles may be produced with large boosts, causing the visible decay products to form jet-like structures. Hidden-sector particles such as γd may be long-lived, resulting in decay lengths comparable to, or larger than, the detector dimensions. The production of lepton jets can occur through various channels. For instance, in supersymmetric models, the lightest visible superpartner may decay into the hidden sector. Alternatively, a scalar particle that couples to the visible sector may also couple to the hidden sector through Yukawa couplings or the scalar potential. This analysis is focused on the case where the Higgs boson decays to the hidden sector [14,15]. The SM Higgs boson has a narrow width into SM final states if mh < 2mw. Consequently, any new (non-SM) coupling to additional states, which reside in a hidden sector, may contribute significantly to the Higgs boson decay branching ratios. Even with new couplings, the total Higgs boson width is typically small, well below the order of one GeV. If a SM-like Higgs boson is confirmed, it will remain important to constrain possible rare decays, e.g. into lepton jets.

Neutral particles with large decay lengths and collimated final states represent, from an experimental point of view, a challenge both for the trigger and for the reconstruction capabilities of the detector. Collimated particles in the final state can be hard to disentangle due to the finite granularity of the detectors; moreover, in the absence of inner tracking detector information and a primary vertex constraint, it is difficult to reconstruct charged-particle tracks from decay vertices far from the interaction point (IP). The ATLAS detector [16] is equipped with a muon spectrometer (MS) with high-granularity tracking detectors that allow charged-particle tracks to be reconstructed in a standalone configuration using only the muon detector information (MS-only). This is a crucial feature for detecting muons not originating from the primary interaction vertex.
The benchmark model used for this analysis is a simplified scenario where the Higgs boson decays to two neutral hidden fermions \((f_{d1})\) each of which decays to one long-lived \(\gamma_d\) and one stable neutral hidden fermion \((f_{d2})\) that escapes the detector unnoticed, resulting in two lepton jets from the \(\gamma_d\) decays in the final state (see Fig. 1). The mass of the \(\gamma_d\) (0.4 GeV) is chosen to provide a sizeable branching ratio to muons \([14]\).

2. The ATLAS detector

ATLAS is a multi-purpose detector \([16]\) at the LHC, consisting of an inner tracking system (ID) embedded in a superconducting solenoid, which provides a 2 T magnetic field parallel to the beam direction, electromagnetic and hadronic calorimeters and a muon spectrometer using three air-core toroidal magnet systems.\(^1\) The trigger system has three levels \([21]\) called Level-1 (L1), Level-2 (L2) and Event Filter (EF). L1 is a hardware-based system using information from the calorimeter and muon spectrometer, and defines one or more Regions of Interest (ROIs), geometrical regions of the detector, identified by \(\eta, \phi\) coordinates, containing interesting physics objects. L2 and the EF (globally called the High Level Trigger, HLT) are software-based systems and can access information from all sub-detectors. The ID, consisting of silicon pixel and micro-strip detectors and a straw-tube tracker, provides precision tracking of charged particles for \(|\eta| \leq 2.5\). The electromagnetic and hadronic calorimeter system covers \(|\eta| \leq 4.9\) and, at \(\eta = 0\), has a total depth of 9.7 interaction lengths (22 radiation lengths in the electromagnetic part). The MS provides trigger information (\(|\eta| \leq 2.4\)) and momentum measurements (\(|\eta| \leq 2.7\)) for charged particles entering the spectrometer. It consists of one barrel and two endcap parts, each with 16 sectors in \(\phi\), equipped with precision tracking chambers and fast detectors for triggering. Monitored drift tubes are used for precision tracking in the region \(|\eta| \leq 2.0\) and cathode strip chambers are used for 2.0 \(\leq |\eta| \leq 2.7\). The MS detectors are arranged in three stations of increasing distance from the IP: inner, middle and outer. The air core toroidal magnetic field allows an accurate charged particle reconstruction independent of the ID information. The three planes of trigger chambers (resistive plate chambers in the barrel and thin gap chambers in the endcaps) are located in middle and outer (only in the barrel) stations. The L1 muon trigger requires hits in the middle stations to create a low transverse momentum (\(p_T\)) muon ROI or hits in both the middle and outer stations for a high \(p_T\) ROI. The muon ROIs have a spatial extent of 0.2 \(\times\) 0.2 (\(\Delta \eta \times \Delta \phi\)) in the barrel and of 0.1 \(\times\) 0.1 in the endcap. L1 ROI information seeds, at HLT level, the reconstruction of muon momenta using the precision chamber information. In this way sharp trigger thresholds up to 40 GeV can be obtained.

3. Signal and background simulation

The set of parameters used to generate the signal Monte Carlo samples is listed in Table 1. The Higgs boson is generated through the gluon–gluon fusion production mechanism which is the dominant process for a low mass Higgs boson. The gluon–gluon fusion Higgs boson production cross section in \(pp\) collisions at \(\sqrt{s} = 7\) TeV, estimated at the next-to-next-to-leading order (NNLO)\([22]\), is \(\sigma_{SM} = 24.0\) pb for \(m_H = 100\) GeV and \(\sigma_{SM} = 12.1\) pb for \(m_H = 140\) GeV. The \(\text{PYTHIA}\) generator \([23]\) is used, linked together with \(\text{MadGraph4.4.2}\) \([24]\) and \(\text{BRIDGE}\) \([25]\), for gluon–gluon fusion production of the Higgs boson and the subsequent decay to hidden-sector particles.

As discussed in the introduction, the signal is chosen to enable a study of rare, non-SM, Higgs boson decays in the (possibly extended) Higgs sector. To do so we choose two points which envelope a mass range covering the 126 GeV resonance. The lower mass point, \(m_H = 100\) GeV, is chosen to be compatible with the decay-mode-independent search by OPAL at LEP \([26]\). The higher mass point, \(m_H = 140\) GeV, is chosen well below the \(WW\) threshold, where a sizeable branching ratio into a hidden sector may be naturally achieved. The masses of \(f_{d2}\) and \(f_{d1}\) are chosen so that a large fraction of the Higgs boson mass, and far from the kinematic threshold at \(m_{f_{d2}} + m_{\gamma_d} = m_{f_{d1}}\). For the chosen dark photon mass (0.4 GeV), the \(\gamma_d\) decay branching ratios are expected to be \([14]\): 45% \(e^+\!e^-\), 45% \(\mu^+\!\mu^-\), 10% \(\pi^+\!\pi^-\). Thus 20% of the Higgs \(H \rightarrow \gamma_d\gamma_d + X\) decays are expected to have the required four-muon final state.

The mean lifetime \(\tau\) of the \(\gamma_d\) (expressed throughout this Letter as \(\tau\) times the speed of light \(c\)) is a free parameter of the model. In the generated samples \(\tau\) is chosen so that a large fraction of the decays occur inside the sensitive ATLAS detector volume, i.e. up to 7 m in radius and 13 m along the \(z\)-axis, where the trigger chambers of the middle stations are located. The detection efficiency can then be estimated for a range of \(\gamma_d\) decay lifetimes through re-weighting of the generated samples.

Potential backgrounds include all the processes which lead to real prompt muons in the final state such as the SM processes \(W +\) jets, \(Z +\) jets, \(t\!\bar{t}\), \(WW, WZ, Z\!Z\). However, the main contribution to the background is expected from processes giving a high production rate of secondary muons which do not point to the primary vertex, such as decays in flight of \(K/\pi\) and heavy flavour decays in multi-jet processes, or muons due to cosmic rays. The prompt lepton background samples are generated using \(\text{PYTHIA}\) (\(W +\) jets, \(Z +\) jets) and \(\text{MC@NLO}\) \([27]\) (\(t\!\bar{t}\), \(WW, WZ\), and \(Z\!Z\)).

\(^1\) ATLAS uses a right-handed coordinate system with its origin at the nominal interaction point (IP) in the centre of the detector and the \(z\)-axis coinciding with the beam pipe axis. The \(x\)-axis points from the IP to the centre of the LHC ring, and the \(y\)-axis points upward. Cylindrical coordinates \((r, \phi)\) are used in the transverse plane, \(\phi\) being the azimuthal angle around the beam pipe. The pseudorapidity is defined in terms of the polar angle \(\theta\) as \(\eta = -\ln\tan(\theta/2)\).
Since the two \( \gamma \) decays from the ATLAS simulation chain based on \textsc{geant4} [28,29]. Additional pp interactions in the same and nearby bunch crossings (pile-up) are included in the simulation. All Monte Carlo samples are re-weighted to reproduce the observed distribution of the number of interactions per bunch crossing in the data. For the multi-jet background evaluation a data-driven method is used. The cosmic-ray background is also evaluated from data.

4. The kinematics of the signal

The main kinematic characteristics of the signal sample are:

- The \( \gamma \gamma \) pair are emitted approximately back-to-back in \( \phi \), with an angular spread of the distribution due to the emission of the \( f_{1(1)} \).
- The average \( p_T \) of the \( \gamma \gamma \) in the laboratory frame is about 20 GeV for \( m_H = 100 \) GeV and 30 GeV for \( m_H = 140 \) GeV; due to the small mass of the \( \gamma \gamma \), large boost factors in the decay length should be expected.
- Fig. 2 shows the distribution of \( \Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta \eta)^2 + (\Delta \phi)^2} \) between the two muons from the \( \gamma \gamma \) decay. The \( \Delta R \) is computed at the decay vertex of the \( \gamma \gamma \) from the vector momenta of the two muons. Due to the small mass of the \( \gamma \gamma \), the \( \Delta R \) is almost always below 0.1.

Since the two \( f_{1(1)} \) are, like the two \( \gamma \gamma \), emitted back-to-back in \( \phi \), the observed missing transverse momentum \( E^{\text{miss}} \), computed at the event-generator level, is small and cannot be used as a discriminating variable against the background.

5. Data samples and trigger selection

The dataset used for this analysis was collected at a centre-of-mass energy of 7 TeV during the first part of 2011, where a low level of pile-up events in the same bunch-crossing was present (an average of \( \approx 6 \) interactions per crossing). Only periods in which all ATLAS subdetectors were operational are used. The total integrated luminosity used is 1.94 \pm 0.07 fb\(^{-1}\) [30,31]. All events are required to have at least one reconstructed vertex along the beam line with at least three associated tracks, each with \( p_T \geq 0.4 \) GeV. The primary interaction vertex is defined to be the vertex whose constituent tracks have the largest \( \sum p_T^2 \). This analysis deals with displaced \( \gamma \gamma \) decays with final states containing only muons. Signal events are therefore characterized by a four-muon final state with the four muons coming from two displaced decay vertices. Due to the relatively low \( p_T \) of the muons and due to the displaced decay vertex, a low-\( p_T \) multi-muon trigger with muons reconstructed only in the MS is needed. In order to have an acceptably low trigger rate at a low \( p_T \) threshold, a multiplicity of at least three muons is required. Candidate events are collected using an unprescaled HLT trigger with three reconstructed muons of \( p_T \geq 6 \) GeV, seeded by a L1-accept with three different muon ROIs. These muons are reconstructed only in the MS, since muons originating from a neutral particle decaying outside the pixel detector will not have a matching track in the ID tracking system. The trigger efficiency for the Monte Carlo signal samples, defined as the fraction of events passing the trigger requirement with respect to the events satisfying the analysis selection criteria (described in Section 6) is 0.32 \pm 0.01\( \text{stat} \) for \( m_H = 100 \) GeV and 0.31 \pm 0.01\( \text{stat} \) for \( m_H = 140 \) GeV.

The main reason for the relatively low trigger efficiency is the small opening \( \Delta R \) between the two muons of the \( \gamma \gamma \) decay (\( \Delta R \leq 0.1 \)) shown in Fig. 2. These values of \( \Delta R \) are often smaller than the L1 trigger granularity; in this case the L1 produces only one ROI. The trigger only fires if at least one of the \( \gamma \gamma \) produces two distinct L1 ROIs. The single \( \gamma \) ROI efficiency, \( \epsilon_{\text{ROI}} \), defined as the fraction of \( \gamma \gamma \) passing the offline selection that give two (one) trigger ROIs is 0.296 \pm 0.004\( \text{stat} \) (0.626 \pm 0.004\( \text{stat} \)) for \( m_H = 100 \) GeV and 0.269 \pm 0.003\( \text{stat} \) (0.653 \pm 0.003\( \text{stat} \)) for \( m_H = 140 \) GeV. Fig. 3 shows the \( \epsilon_{\text{ROI}} \) as a function of the dark photon \( \eta \) and of the \( \Delta R \) of the two muons from the \( \gamma \gamma \) decay. The increased trigger granularity in the endcap and the efficiency decrease at small values of \( \Delta R \) are clearly visible.

The systematic uncertainty on the trigger efficiency is estimated with a sample of \( J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^- \) from collision data and a corresponding sample of Monte Carlo events, using the tag-and-probe (TP) method. A cut on \( \Delta R \leq 0.1 \) between the two muons is used to reproduce the small track-to-track spatial separation in the MS of the signal. The tag is a (MS + ID) combined muon, defined as a MS-reconstructed muon that is associated with a trigger object and combined with a matching “good ID track”. Good ID tracks must have at least one hit in the pixel detector, at least six hits in the silicon micro-strip detectors and at least six hits in the straw-tube tracker. The probe is a good ID track which, when combined with the tag track, gives an invariant mass inside a 100 MeV window around the \( J/\psi \) mass. A muon ROI that matches the probe in \( \eta \) and \( \phi \), and is different from the ROI associated with the tag, is searched for. The number of probes with a matched ROI divided by the number of probes without a matched ROI gives the \( \epsilon_{\text{ROI}}^{\text{TP}} \) ratio. Values of \( \epsilon_{\text{ROI}}^{\text{TP}} = 0.42 \pm 0.05\( \text{stat} \) for the \( J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^- \) data and \( \epsilon_{\text{ROI}}^{\text{TP}} = 0.39 \pm 0.05\( \text{stat} \) for the corresponding Monte Carlo sample are obtained. The relative statistical uncertainty on the difference between these two estimates is 17% and this is taken conservatively to be the systematic uncertainty on the trigger efficiency.

6. Muon Jet reconstruction and event selection

MJs from displaced \( \gamma \gamma \) decays are characterized by a pair of muons in a narrow cone, produced away from the primary vertex of the event. Consequently tracks reconstructed in the MS with a good quality track fit [32] are used. MJs are identified using a simple clustering algorithm that associates all the muons in cones produced away from the primary vertex, and this is taken conservatively to be the systematic uncertainty on the trigger efficiency.
are formed. The MJ direction and momentum are obtained from the vector sum over all muons in the MJ. Only MJs with two reconstructed muons are accepted and only events with two MJs are kept for the subsequent analysis. In order to keep the search as model independent as possible no requirement on the muon momenta has been introduced.

The possible contribution to the background of SM processes which lead to real prompt muon pairs in the final state is evaluated using simulated samples. After the trigger and the requirement of having two MJs in the event, their contributions have been found to be negligible. The only significant background sources are expected to be from processes giving a high production rate of secondary muons which do not point to the primary vertex, such as decays in flight of $K/\pi$ and heavy flavoured decays in multi-jet production, or cosmic-ray muons not pointing to the primary vertex.

In order to separate the signal from the background, a number of discriminating variables have been studied. The multi-jet background can be significantly reduced by using calorimeter isolation requirements around the MJ direction. The calorimetric isolation variable $E_{\text{isol}}$ is defined as the difference between the transverse calorimetric energy $E_T$ in a cone of $\Delta R = 0.4$ around the highest $p_T$ muon of the MJ and the $E_T$ in a cone of $\Delta R = 0.2$; a cut $E_{\text{isol}} \leq 5$ GeV keeps almost all the signal. The isolation modelling is validated for real isolated muons with a sample of muons coming from $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ decays. To further improve the signal-to-background ratio, two additional discriminating variables are used: $\Delta\phi$ between the two MJs and $\sum p_T$ for the MJ, defined as the scalar sum of the transverse momentum of the tracks, measured in the ID, inside a cone $\Delta R = 0.4$ around the direction of the MJ. The muon tracks of the MJ in the ID, if any, are not removed from the isolation sum, so that prompt muons, which give a reconstructed track in both the ID and MS, will contribute to the $\sum p_T$. As a consequence a cut on $\sum p_T$ of a few GeV will remove prompt MJs or MJs with very short decay length.

For the background coming from cosmic-ray muons (mainly pairs of almost parallel cosmic-ray muons crossing the detector) a cut on the impact parameters of the muon tracks with respect to the primary interaction vertex is used.

The final set of selection criteria used is the following:

- Topology cut: events are required to have exactly two MJs, $N_{\text{MJ}} = 2$.
- MJ isolation: require MJ isolation with $E_{\text{isol}} \leq 5$ GeV for both MJs in the event.
- Require $|\Delta\phi| \geq 2$ between the two MJs.
- Require opposite charges for the two muons in a MJ ($Q_{\text{MJ}} = 0$).
- Require a cut on the transverse and longitudinal impact parameters of the muons with respect to the primary vertex: $|d_0| < 200$ mm and $|z_0| < 270$ mm.
- Require $\sum p_T < 3$ GeV for both MJs.

The distributions of the relevant variables used in the selection before each step of the cut flow are shown in Fig. 4. The results are summarized in Table 2. No events survive the selection in the data sample whereas the expected signals from Monte Carlo simulation, assuming the Higgs boson SM production cross section, 100% branching ratio for $H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ and the parameters given in Table 1, are 75 or 48 events for Higgs boson masses of 100 GeV and 140 GeV respectively. The method used to estimate the cosmic-ray and multi-jet background yields, quoted in Table 2, is discussed in Section 7.

The resulting single $\gamma\gamma$ reconstruction efficiency for the mean lifetimes given in Table 1 is shown in Fig. 5 as a function of $\eta$, the $\Delta R$ separation of the two muons from the $\gamma\gamma$ decay and the decay length in the transverse plane, $L_{xy}$, of the $\gamma\gamma$. The efficiency is defined as the number of $\gamma\gamma$ passing the offline selection divided by the number of $\gamma\gamma$ in the spectrometer acceptance ($|\eta| \leq 2.4$) with both muons having $p_T > 6$ GeV. The low reconstruction efficiency at very short $L_{xy}$ is a consequence of the $\sum p_T$ cut.

The systematic uncertainty on the reconstruction efficiency is evaluated using a tag-and-probe method by comparing the reconstruction efficiency $E_{\text{T&P}}$ for $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ samples from collision data and $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ Monte Carlo simulation. The tag-and-probe definitions and the cut on $\Delta R < 0.1$ between the two muons are the same as in Section 5. To measure the reconstruction efficiency the ID probe track is associated with a MS-only muon track, different from the one associated with the tag. The result is shown in Fig. 6.

The relative difference between the result obtained from the $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ data and the $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ Monte Carlo sample in the same range of $\Delta R \leq 0.1$, as for the signal, is taken as the systematic uncertainty on the reconstruction efficiency and amounts to 13%.

7. Multi-jet and cosmic-ray background evaluation

To estimate the multi-jet background contamination in the signal region we use a data-driven ABCD method slightly modified to cope with the problem of the very low number of events in the control regions. The ABCD method assumes that two variables can be identified, which are relatively uncorrelated, and which can each be used to separate signal and background. It is assumed that the multi-jet background distribution can be factorized in the $E_{\text{isol}}$-$|\Delta\phi|$ plane. The region A is defined by $E_{\text{isol}} \leq 5$ GeV and $|\Delta\phi| < 2$; the region B, defined by $E_{\text{isol}} \leq 5$ GeV and $|\Delta\phi| > 2$, is the signal region. The regions C and D are the anti-isolated regions ($E_{\text{isol}} > 5$ GeV) and they are defined by $|\Delta\phi| < 2$ and $|\Delta\phi| > 2$, respectively. Neglecting the signal contamination in regions A, C and...
as the systematic uncertainty, that amounts to a bunch crossing was not active in all the runs). No events survived the ratio and for the active time (since the trigger in the empty triggered events is rescaled by the collision to empty bunch crossing). The number of evaluated using events collected by the trigger being active when there are no collisions (empty bunch crossings). The number of triggered events is rescaled by the collision to empty bunch crossing ratio and for the active time (since the trigger in the empty bunch crossing was not active in all the runs). No events survived the requirements on the impact parameters with respect to the primary vertex (\(|d_0| < 200 \text{ mm}\) and \(|z_0| < 270 \text{ mm}\)), resulting in a cosmic-ray contamination estimate of \(\Delta \gamma = 1.64\). The final yields for the different background sources are summarized in Table 2.

8. Systematic uncertainties

The following effects are considered as possible sources of systematic uncertainty:

- **Luminosity**
  The overall normalization uncertainty of the integrated luminosity is 3.7% \([30,31]\).

- **Muon momentum resolution**
  The systematic uncertainty on the muon momentum resolution for MS-only muons has been evaluated by smearing and shifting the momenta of the muons by scale factors derived from the signal Monte Carlo comparison, and by observing the effect of this shift on the signal efficiency. The overall effect of the muon momentum resolution uncertainty is negligible.

- **Trigger**
  The systematic uncertainty on the single \(\gamma_d\) trigger efficiency, evaluated using a tag-and-probe method is 17% (see Section 5).

- **Reconstruction efficiency**
  The systematic uncertainty on the reconstruction efficiency, evaluated using a tag-and-probe method for the single \(\gamma_d\) reconstruction efficiency, is 13% (see Section 6).

- **Effect of pile-up**
  The systematic uncertainty on the signal efficiency related to the effect of pile-up is evaluated by comparing the number of signal events after imposing all the selection criteria on the the signal Monte Carlo sample increasing the average number of interactions per crossing from \(\approx 6\) to \(\approx 16\). This systematic uncertainty is negligible.
The efficiency of the selection criteria described above is evaluated for the simulated signal samples (see Table 1) as a function of the mean lifetime of the $\gamma_d$. The signal Monte Carlo events are weighted by the detection probability of the two $\gamma_d$ in the various parts of the detector, generating their decay points according to a functional model used to fit the data-driven method. The functional model was used to fit the efficiency of the selection criteria described above is evaluated for the simulated signal samples (see Table 1) as a function of the mean lifetime of the $\gamma_d$. These numbers, together with the expected number of background events (multi-jet and cosmic rays) and taking into account the zero data events surviving the selection criteria in 1 fb$^{-1}$, are used as input to obtain limits at the 95% confidence level (CL). The CLs method [33] is used to set 95% CL upper limits on the cross section times branching ratio ($\sigma \times BR$) for the process $H \rightarrow \gamma_d\gamma_d + X$, according to the model of Fig. 1. Here the branching ratio of $\gamma_d \rightarrow \mu\mu$ is set to 45% with $\gamma_d$ mass set to 0.4 GeV, as previously discussed. The $\sigma \times BR$ is given as a function of the $\gamma_d$ mean lifetime, expressed as $ct$ for $m_H = 100$ GeV and $m_H = 140$ GeV. These limits are shown on Fig. 7. Table 3 shows the ranges in which the $\gamma_d$ is excluded at 95% CL for $H \rightarrow \gamma_d\gamma_d + X$ branching ratios of 100% and 10%.

9. Results and interpretation

The efficiency of the selection criteria described above is evaluated for the simulated signal samples (see Table 1) as a function of the mean lifetime of the $\gamma_d$. The signal Monte Carlo events are weighted by the detection probability of the two $\gamma_d$ in the various parts of the detector, generating their decay points according to a functional model used to fit the data-driven method. The functional model was used to fit the efficiency of the selection criteria described above is evaluated for the simulated signal samples (see Table 1) as a function of the mean lifetime of the $\gamma_d$. These numbers, together with the expected number of background events (multi-jet and cosmic rays) and taking into account the zero data events surviving the selection criteria in 1 fb$^{-1}$, are used as input to obtain limits at the 95% confidence level (CL). The CLs method [33] is used to set 95% CL upper limits on the cross section times branching ratio ($\sigma \times BR$) for the process $H \rightarrow \gamma_d\gamma_d + X$, according to the model of Fig. 1. Here the branching ratio of $\gamma_d \rightarrow \mu\mu$ is set to 45% with $\gamma_d$ mass set to 0.4 GeV, as previously discussed. The $\sigma \times BR$ is given as a function of the $\gamma_d$ mean lifetime, expressed as $ct$ for $m_H = 100$ GeV and $m_H = 140$ GeV. These limits are shown on Fig. 7. Table 3 shows the ranges in which the $\gamma_d$ is excluded at 95% CL for $H \rightarrow \gamma_d\gamma_d + X$ branching ratios of 100% and 10%.

10. Conclusions

The ATLAS detector at the LHC was used to search for a light Higgs boson decaying into a pair of hidden fermions ($f\bar{f}$), each of which decays to a $\gamma_d$ and to a stable hidden fermion ($f_H$), resulting in two muon jets from the $\gamma_d$ decay in the final state. In a 1.9 fb$^{-1}$ sample of $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV proton–proton collisions no events consistent with this Higgs boson decay mode are observed. The observed data are consistent with the Standard Model background expectations.

Limits are set on the $\sigma \times BR$ to $H \rightarrow \gamma_d\gamma_d + X$, according to the model of Fig. 1, as a function of the long-lived particle mean lifetime for $m_H = 100$ GeV and $140$ GeV, with the chosen $\gamma_d$ mass that gives a decay branching ratio of 45% for $\gamma_d \rightarrow \mu\mu$. Assuming that the SM production rate for a 140 GeV Higgs boson, its branching ratio to two hidden-sector photons is found to be below 10%, at 95% CL for hidden photon $ct$ in the range $7 \text{ mm} \leq ct \leq 82 \text{ mm}$. Bounds
on the $\sigma \times BR$ of a 126 GeV Higgs boson may be conservatively extracted using the corresponding 140 GeV exclusion curve.

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References

ATLAS Collaboration

\[ \text{Department of Physics, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey} \]
\[ \text{INFN Sezione di Bologna; Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy} \]
\[ \text{Physikalisches Institut, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Boston University, Boston, MA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Universidade Federal do Rio De Janeiro COPPE/EE/RT, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil} \]
\[ \text{Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF), Juiz de Fora, Brazil} \]
\[ \text{Federal University of Sao Joao del Rei (UFSJ), Sao Joao del Rei, Brazil} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, NY, United States} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina} \]
\[ \text{Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON, Canada} \]
\[ \text{CERN, Geneva, Switzerland} \]
\[ \text{Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, United States} \]
\[ \text{Departamento de Fisica, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Santiago, Chile} \]
\[ \text{Departamento de Fisica, Universidad Tecnica Federico Santa Maria, Valparaíso, Chile} \]
\[ \text{Department of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China} \]
\[ \text{Department of Modern Physics, University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei, China} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Nanjing University, Nanjing, China} \]
\[ \text{School of Physics, Shandong University, Shandong, China} \]
\[ \text{Laboratoire de Physique Corpusculaire, Clermont Université and Université Blaise Pascal and CNRS/IN2P3, Clermont-Ferrand, France} \]
\[ \text{nevis Laboratory, Columbia University, Irvington, NY, United States} \]
\[ \text{Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark} \]
\[ \text{INFN Gruppo Collegato di Cosenza; Dipartimento di Fisica, Università della Calabria, Rende, Italy} \]
\[ \text{AGH University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Krakow, Poland} \]
\[ \text{The Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics, Polish Academy of Sciences, Krakow, Poland} \]
\[ \text{Physics Department, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, United States} \]
\[ \text{Physics Department, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX, United States} \]
\[ \text{DESY, Hamburg and Zeuthen, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Institut für Experimentelle Physik IV, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, Technical University Dresden, Dresden, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Duke University, Durham, NC, United States} \]
\[ \text{SUPA – School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy} \]
\[ \text{Fakultät für Mathematik und Physik, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Section de Physique, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland} \]
\[ \text{INFN Sezione di Genova; Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Genova, Genova, Italy} \]
\[ \text{I. Andronikashvili Institute of Physics, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia} \]
\[ \text{II Physikalisches Institut, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, Gießen, Germany} \]
\[ \text{SUPA – School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{II Physikalisches Institut, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie, Université Joseph Fourier and CNRS/IN2P3 and Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble, Grenoble, France} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Hampton University, Hampton, VA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Kuriloff-Institut für Physik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Mannheim, Germany} \]
\[ \text{Faculty of Applied Information Science, Hiroshima Institute of Technology, Hiroshima, Japan} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, United States} \]
\[ \text{Institut für Astro- und Teilchenphysik, Leopold-Franzens-Universität, Innsbruck, Austria} \]
\[ \text{University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics and Astronomy, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, JINR Dubna, Dubna, Russia} \]
\[ \text{KEK, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, Tsukuba, Japan} \]
\[ \text{Graduate School of Science, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan} \]
\[ \text{Faculty of Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan} \]
\[ \text{Kyoto University of Education, Kyoto, Japan} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan} \]
\[ \text{Instituto de Fisica La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata and CONICET, La Plata, Argentina} \]
\[ \text{Physics Department, Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{INFN Sezione di Lecce; Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy} \]
\[ \text{Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Joliot-Curie Institute and University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia} \]
\[ \text{School of Physics and Astronomy, Queen Mary University of London, London, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Royal Holloway University of London, Surrey, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London, London, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France} \]
\[ \text{Fysiska institutionen, Lund universitet, Lund, Sweden} \]
\[ \text{Departamento de Fisica Teorica C-15, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain} \]
\[ \text{Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, Mainz, Germany} \]
\[ \text{School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom} \]
\[ \text{CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada} \]
\[ \text{School of Physics, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, United States} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, United States} \]
\[ \text{INFN Sezione di Milano; Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy} \]
\[ \text{I.I. Stepanov Institute of Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus} \]
\[ \text{National Scientific and Educational Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Belarus} \]
\[ \text{Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, United States} \]
\[ \text{Group of Particle Physics, University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada} \]
Department of Physics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada
Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom
Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
Department of Particle Physics, The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel
Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, United States
Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany
Fachbereich C Physik, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany
Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven, CT, United States
Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia
Centre de Calcul de l’Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne, France

a Also at Laboratorio de Instrumentacao e Fisica Experimental de Particulas – LIP, Lisboa, Portugal.
b Also at Faculdade de Ciencias and CFNUL, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal.
c Also at Particle Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom.
d Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver, BC, Canada.
e Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno, CA, United States.
f Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia.
g Also at Fermilab, Batavia, IL, United States.
h Also at Department of Physics, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal.
i Also at Department of Physics, UNAM, Mexico.
j Also at Università di Napoli Parthenope, Napoli, Italy.
k Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Canada.
l Also at Department of Physics, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.
m Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA, United States.
n Also at Dipartimento di Fisica and CEFITEC of Faculdade de Ciencias e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Caparica, Portugal.
o Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London, London, United Kingdom.
p Also at Group of Particle Physics, University of Montreal, Montreal, QC, Canada.
q Also at Department of Physics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.
r Also at Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan.
s Also at Institut für Experimentalphysik, Universität Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany.
t Also at Manhattan College, New York, NY, United States.
u Also at School of Physics, Shandong University, Shandong, China.
w Also at CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France.
x Also at School of Physics and Engineering, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China.
y Also at Academia Sinica Grid Computing, Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan.
z Also at Dipartimento di Fisica, Università La Sapienza, Roma, Italy.
aa Also at DSM/IRFU (Institut de Recherches sur les Lois Fondamentales de l'Univers), CEA Saclay (Commissariat a l'Energie Atomique), Gif-sur-Yvette, France.
ab Also at Section de Physique, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland.
ac Also at Departamento de Fisica, Universidade de Minho, Braga, Portugal.
d Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, United States.
e Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary.
f Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA, United States.
g Also at Institute of Physics, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland.
h Also at LAL, Université Paris-Sud and CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France.
i Also at Department of Physics, University of California, Berkeley, CA, United States, and Theoretical Physics Group, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA, United States.
j Also at Nevis Laboratory, Columbia University, Irvington, NY, United States.
k Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom.
l Also at Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom.
m Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, United States.
n Also at Discipline of Physics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

* Deceased.