

# Unlocking the Inelastic Dark Matter window with Vector Mediators

Ana Luisa Foguel

in collaboration with Peter Reimitz and Renata Z. Funchal

based on: [arxiv:2410.00881](https://arxiv.org/abs/2410.00881)

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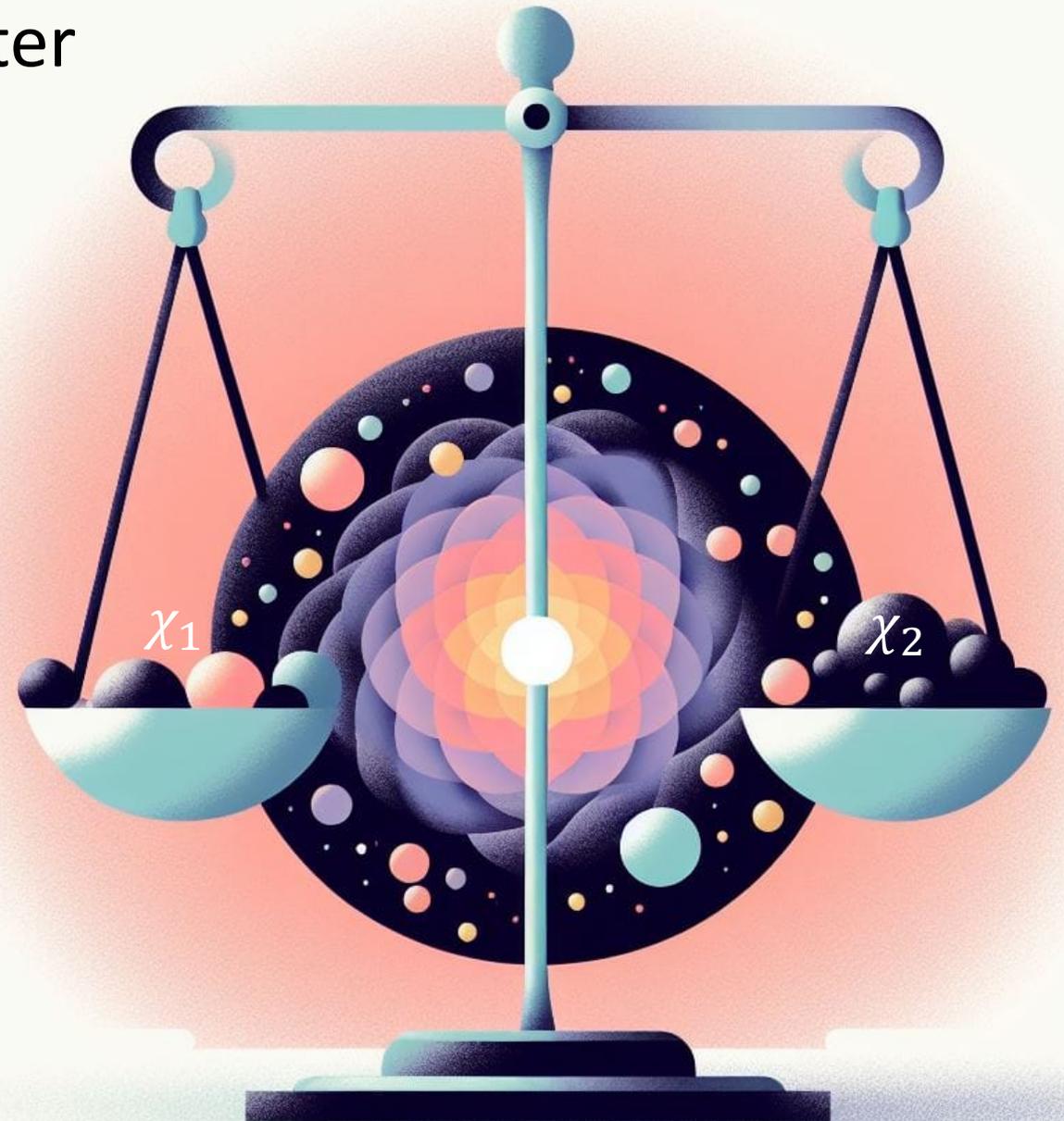
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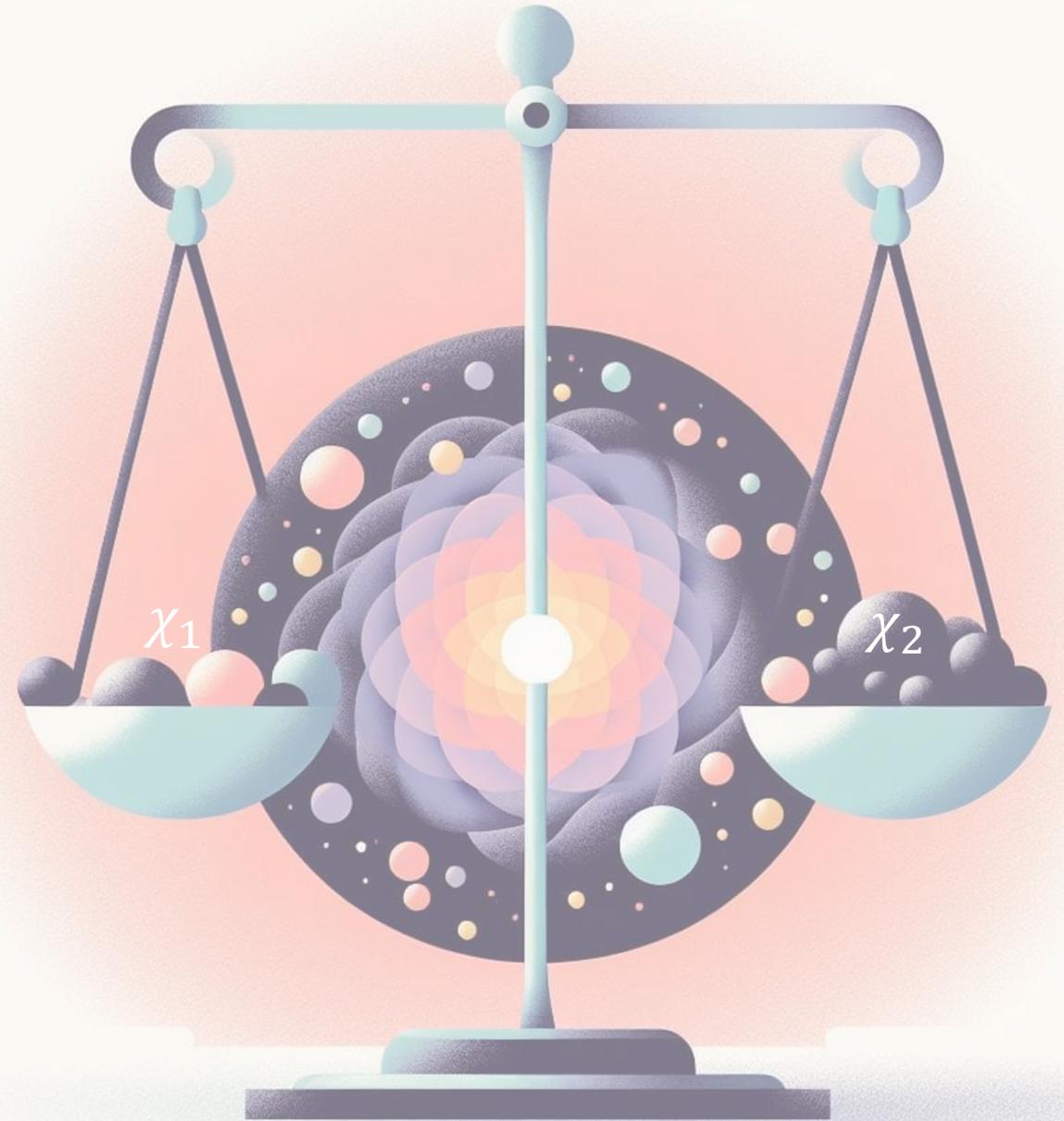
NBI Neutrino School

9 July 2025

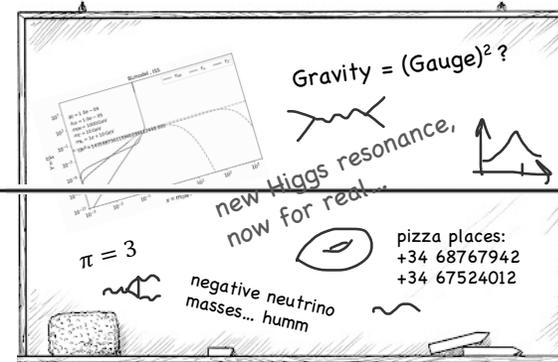
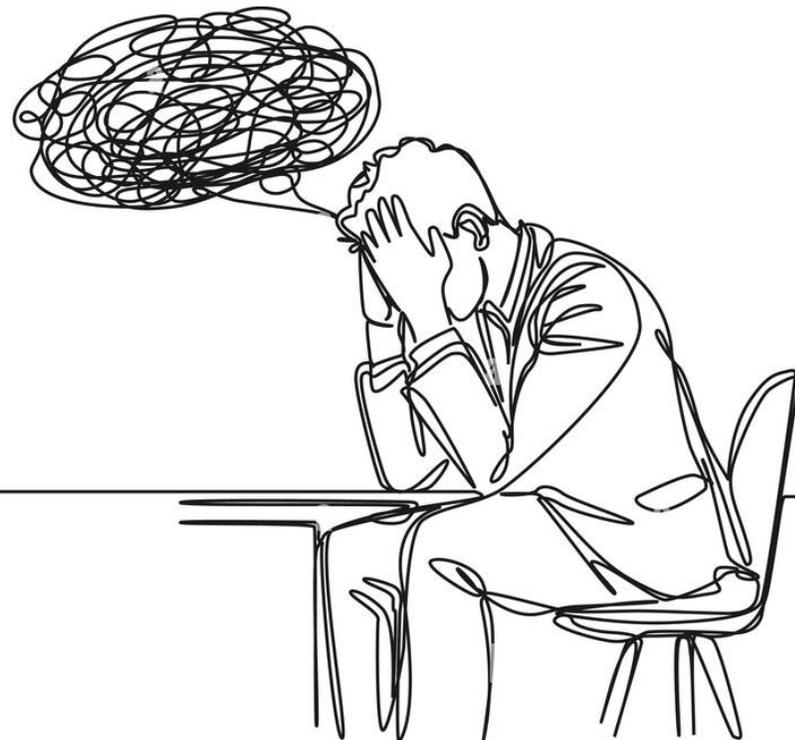


# Outline

1. Introduction and Motivations
2. Inelastic Dark Matter
  - ↪ Theoretical framework
  - ↪ Decay Rates
3. Relic Density Computation
4. ReD-DeLiVeR code
5. Bounds
6. Conclusions

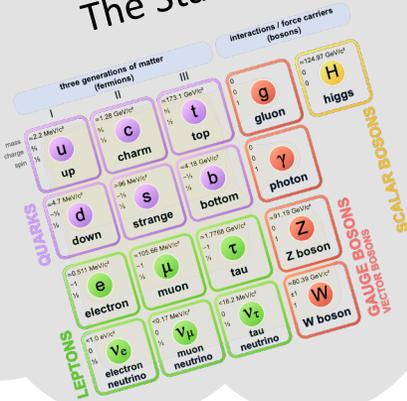


# Introduction and Motivations

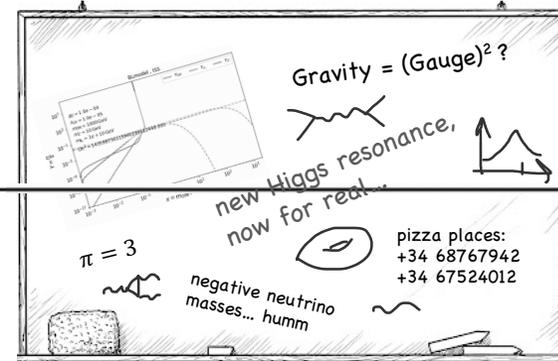
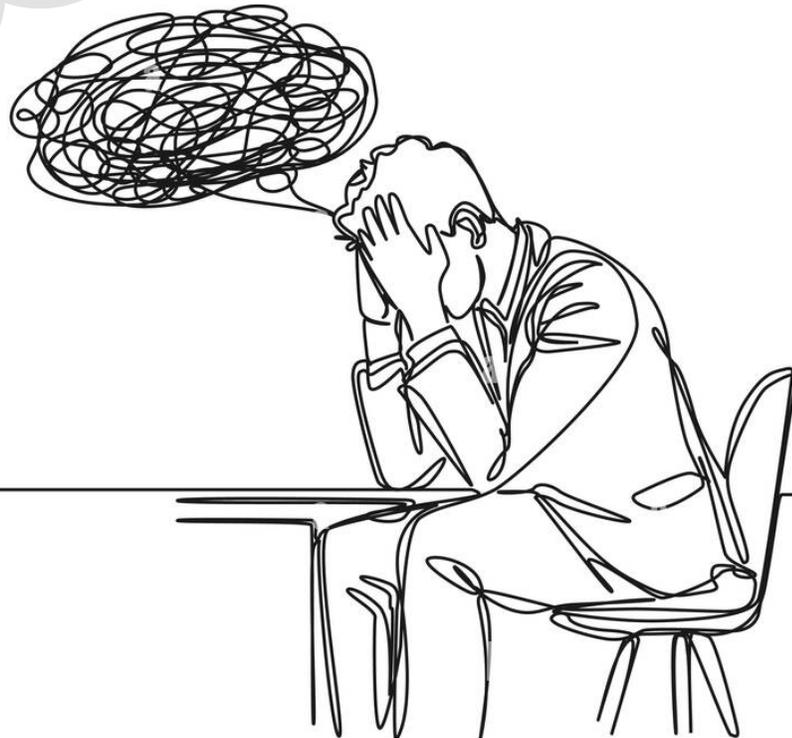


# Introduction and Motivations

## The Standard Model

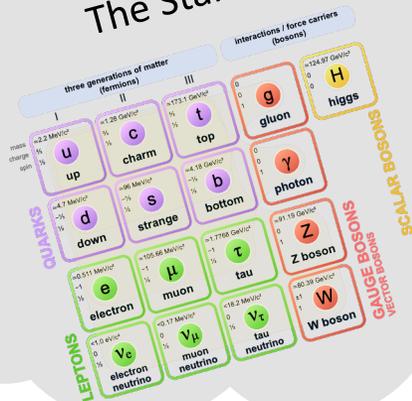


DM ??

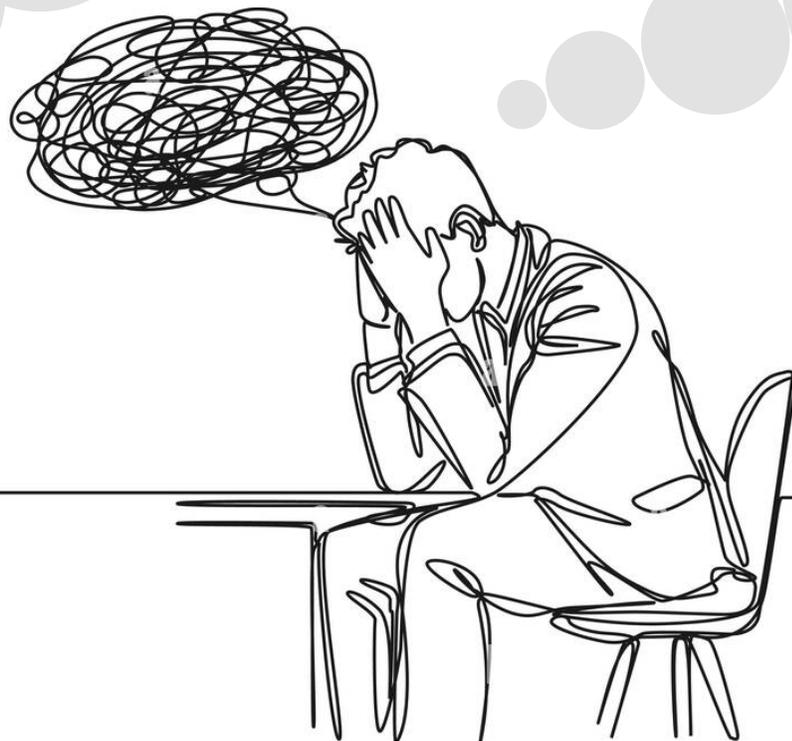


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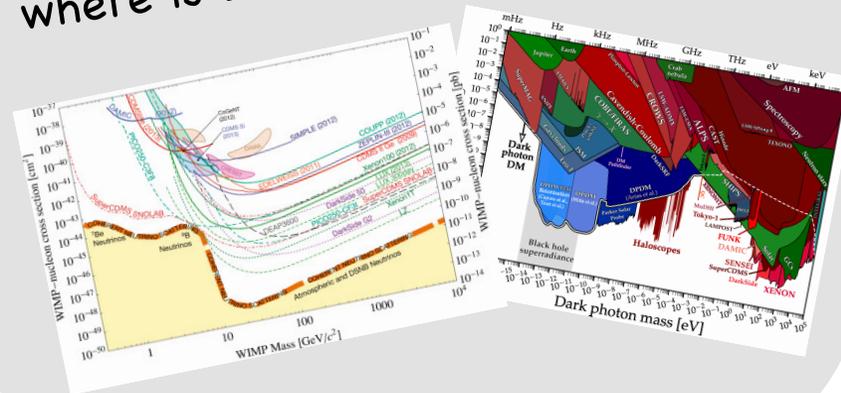
The Standard Model



DM ??



where is New Physics?  
where is DM???



Gravity = (Gauge)<sup>2</sup> ?

new Higgs resonance,  
now for real...

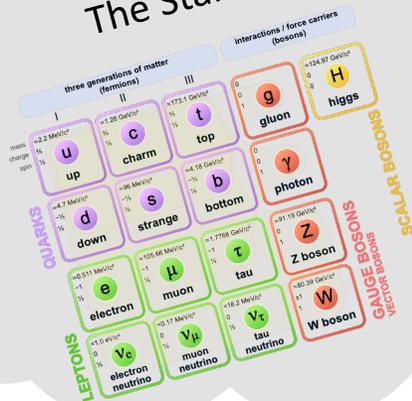
$\pi = 3?$

negative neutrino  
masses... humm

pizza places:  
+34 68767942  
+34 67524012

# Introduction and Motivations

The Standard Model

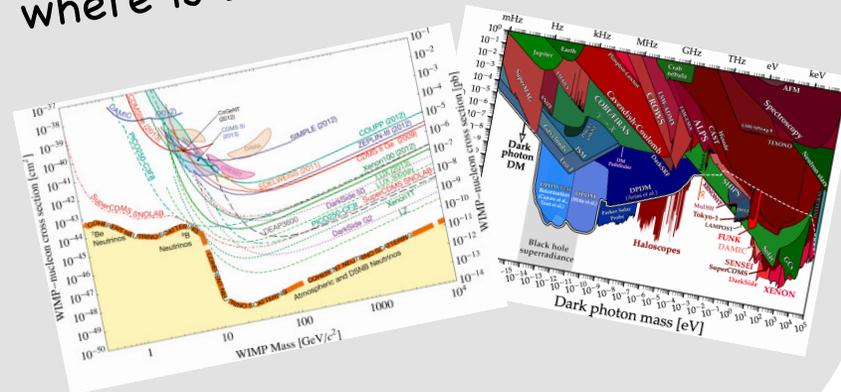


DM ??

and what about...  
neutrino masses?  
BAU? Hierarchy problem?  
Strong CP?

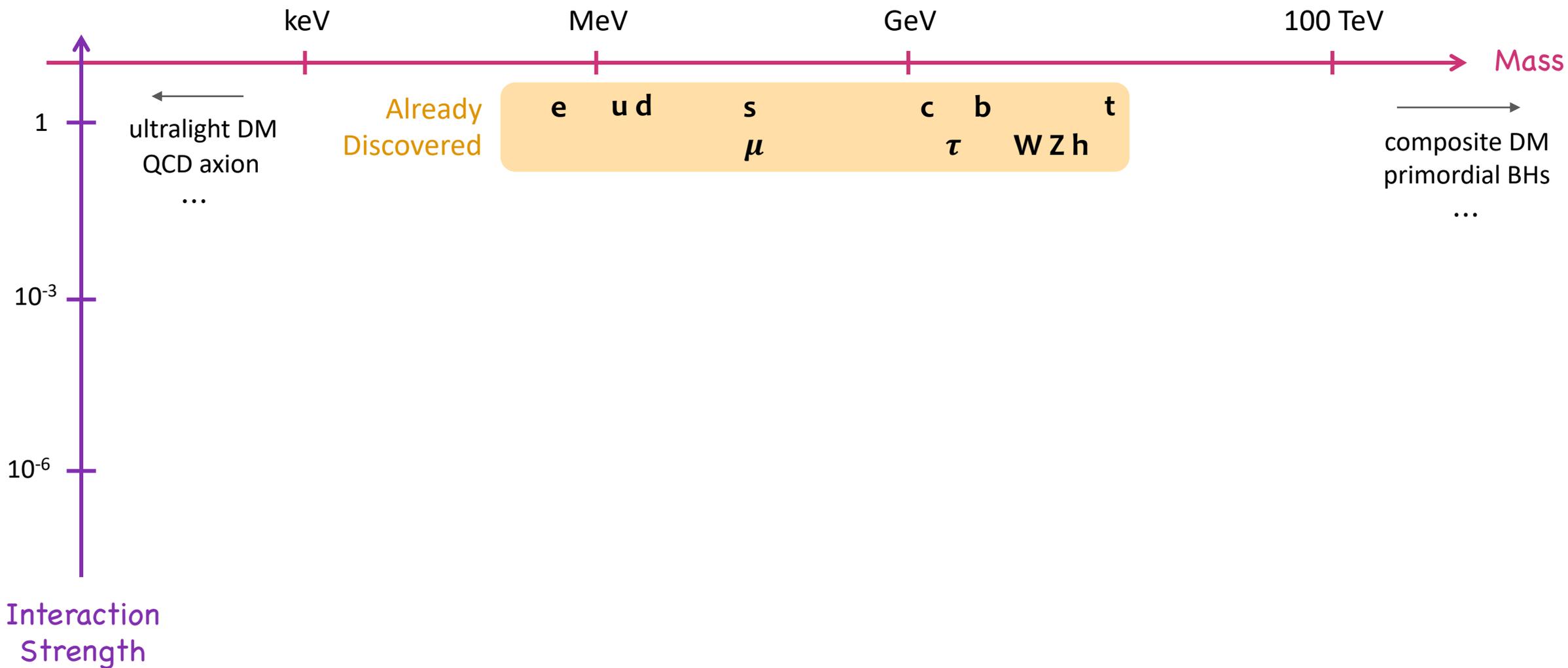


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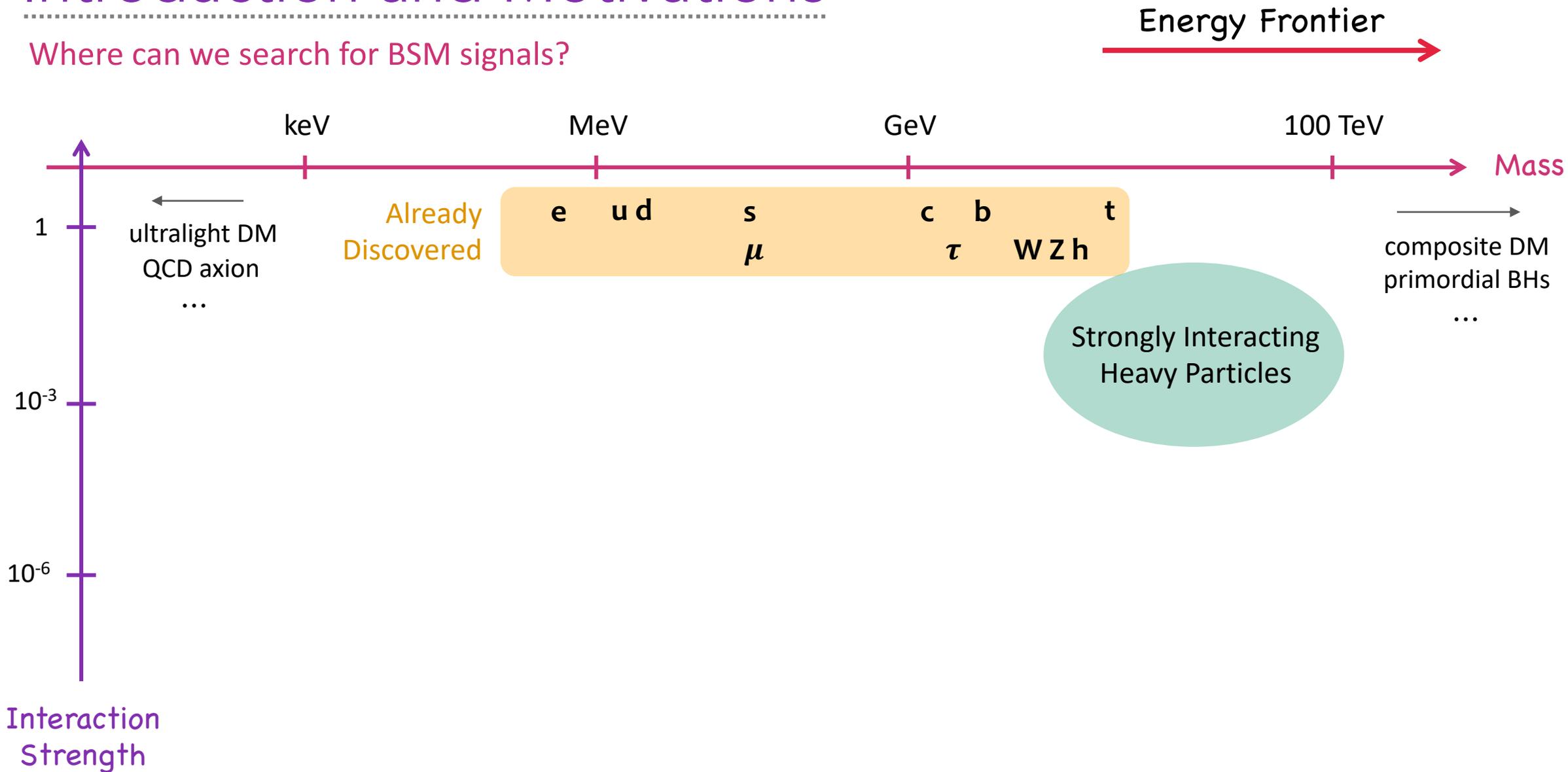
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Where can we search for BSM signals?



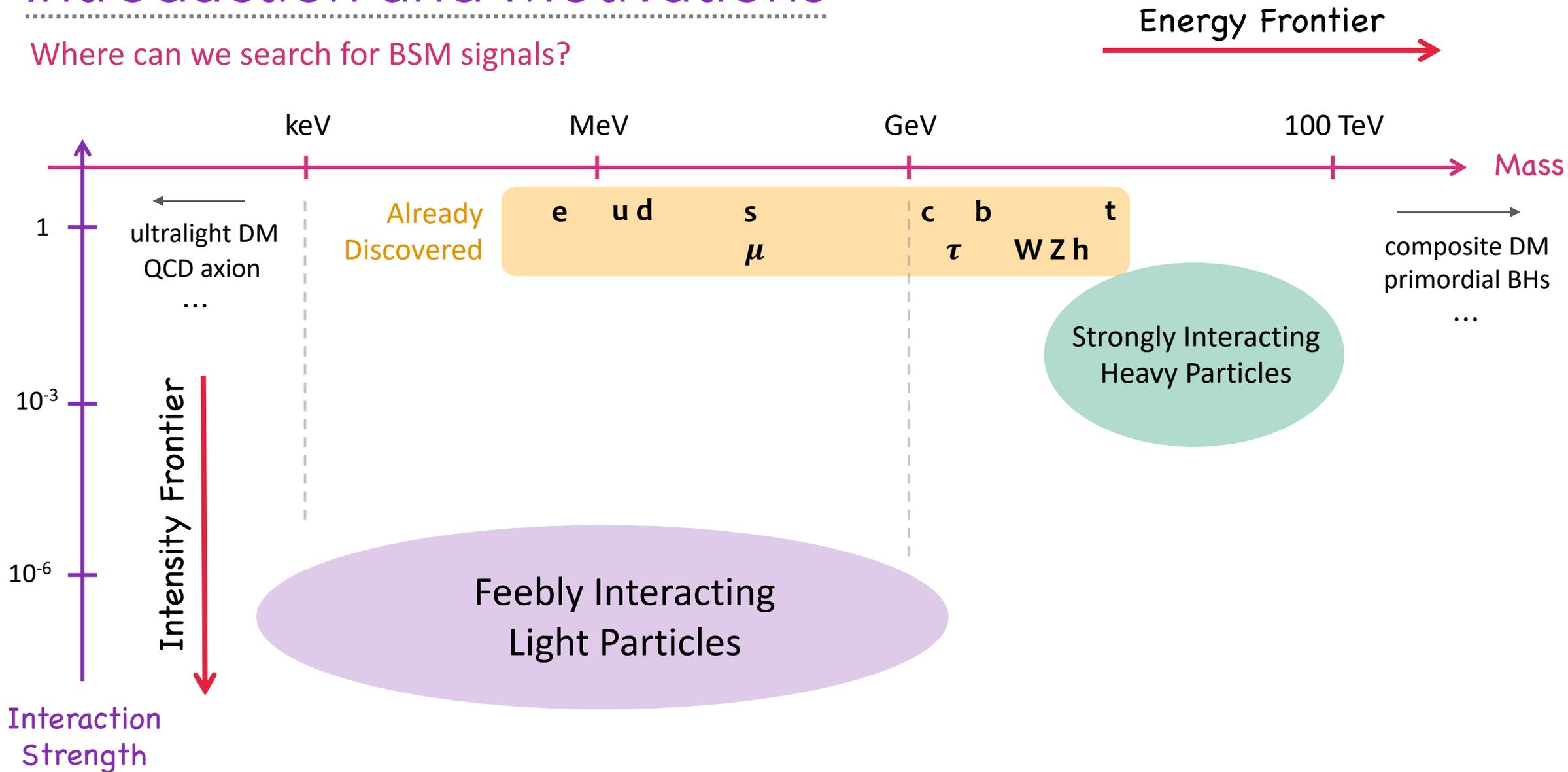
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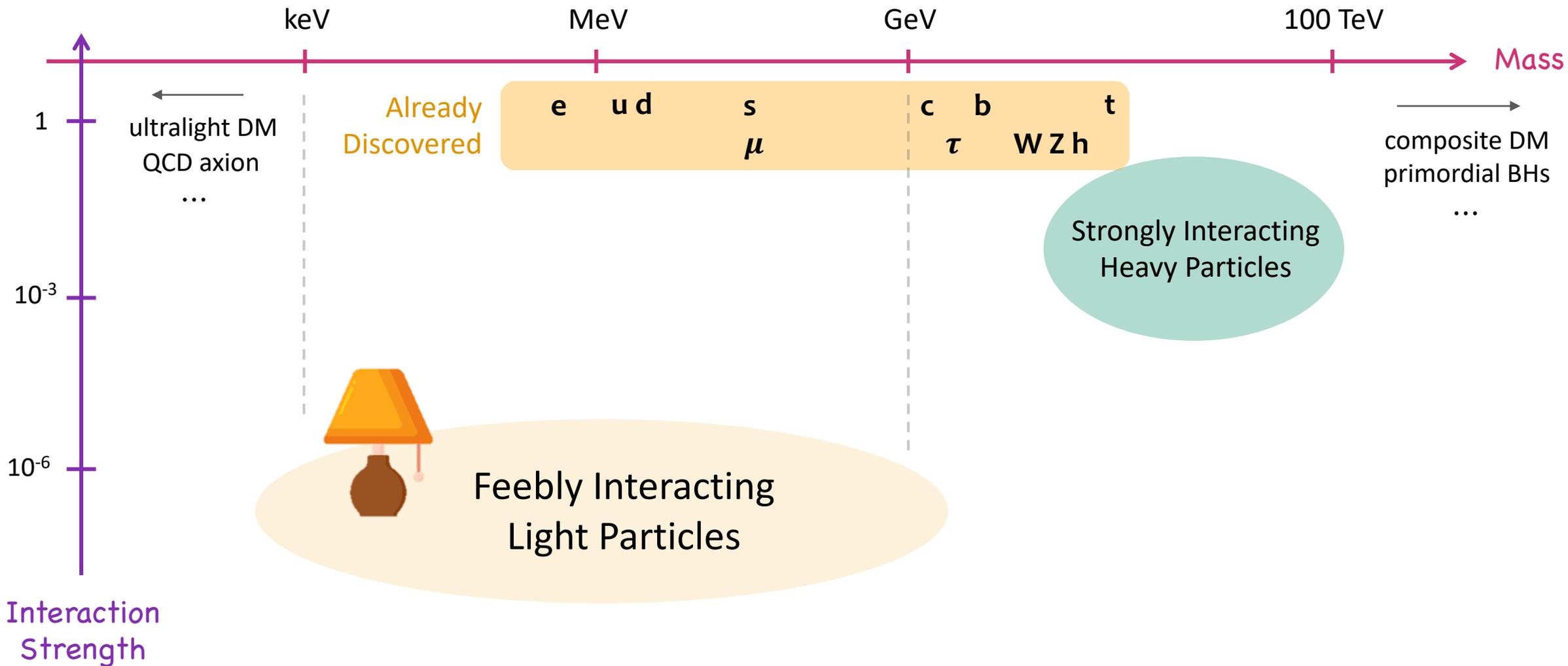
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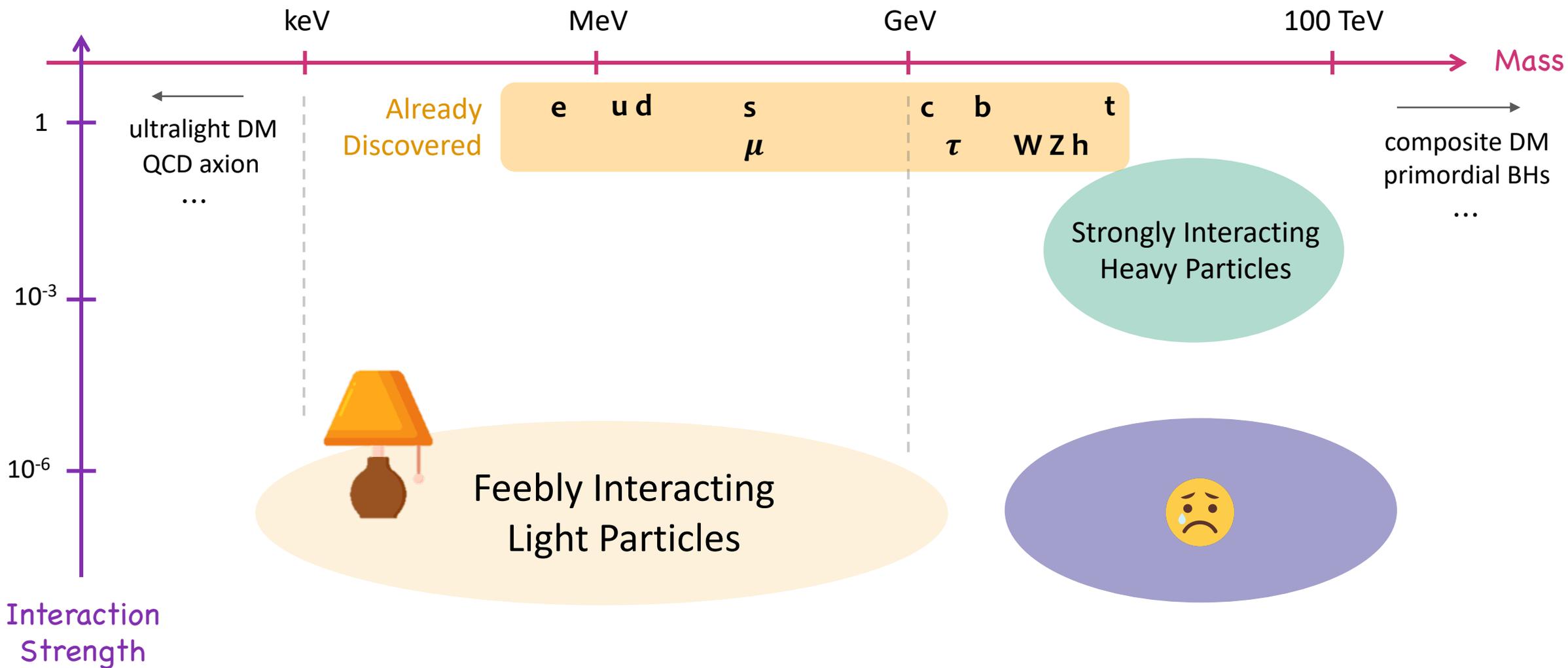
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# Introduction and Motivations

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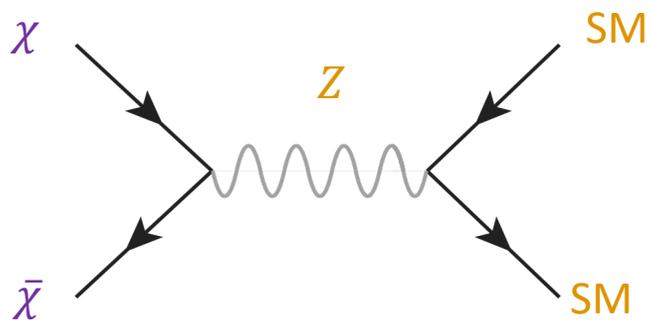
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How can we search for light particle BSM signals?



Suppose we have particles  $\chi$  and  $\bar{\chi}$  in the dark sector

↪ natural possibility: couple to the gauge bosons of **weak interactions**



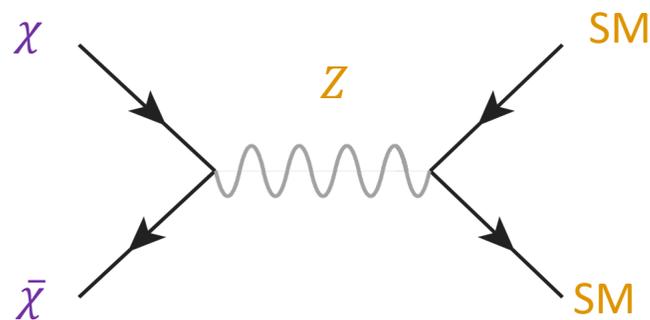
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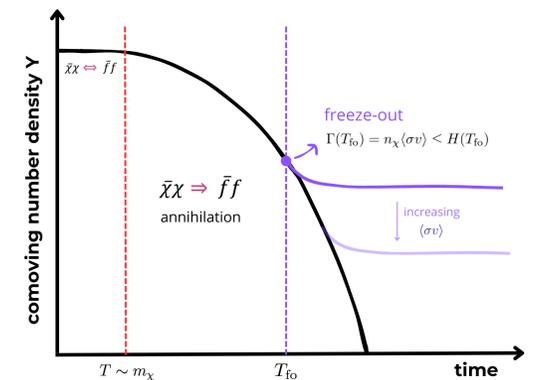
However...

$$\langle \sigma v \rangle \sim \frac{m_\chi^2}{m_Z^4}$$

which means that lowering the DM mass decreases the thermal-average cross section

→ **DM is overproduced!**

Remember!



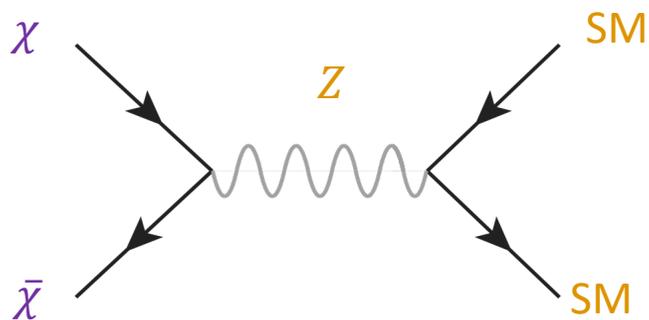
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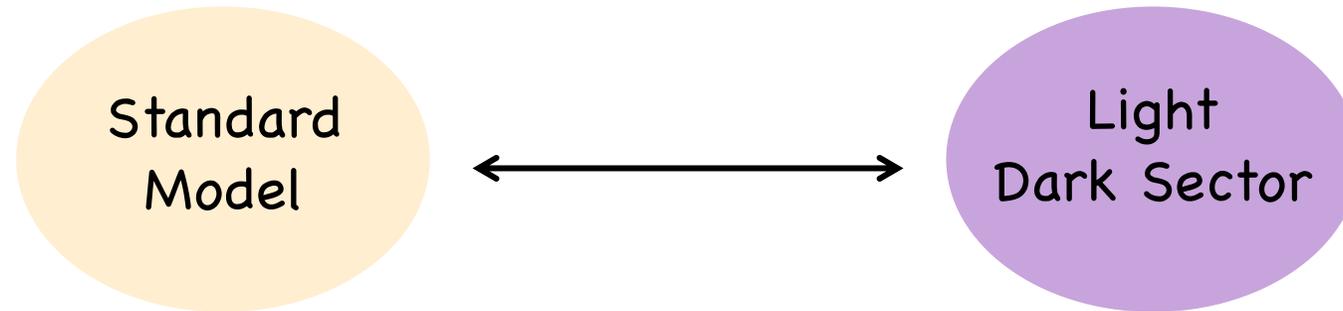
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Lee-Weinberg bound

$$m_\chi \gtrsim 2 \text{ GeV}$$

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⇒ So, how can we explore sub-GeV dark sectors?

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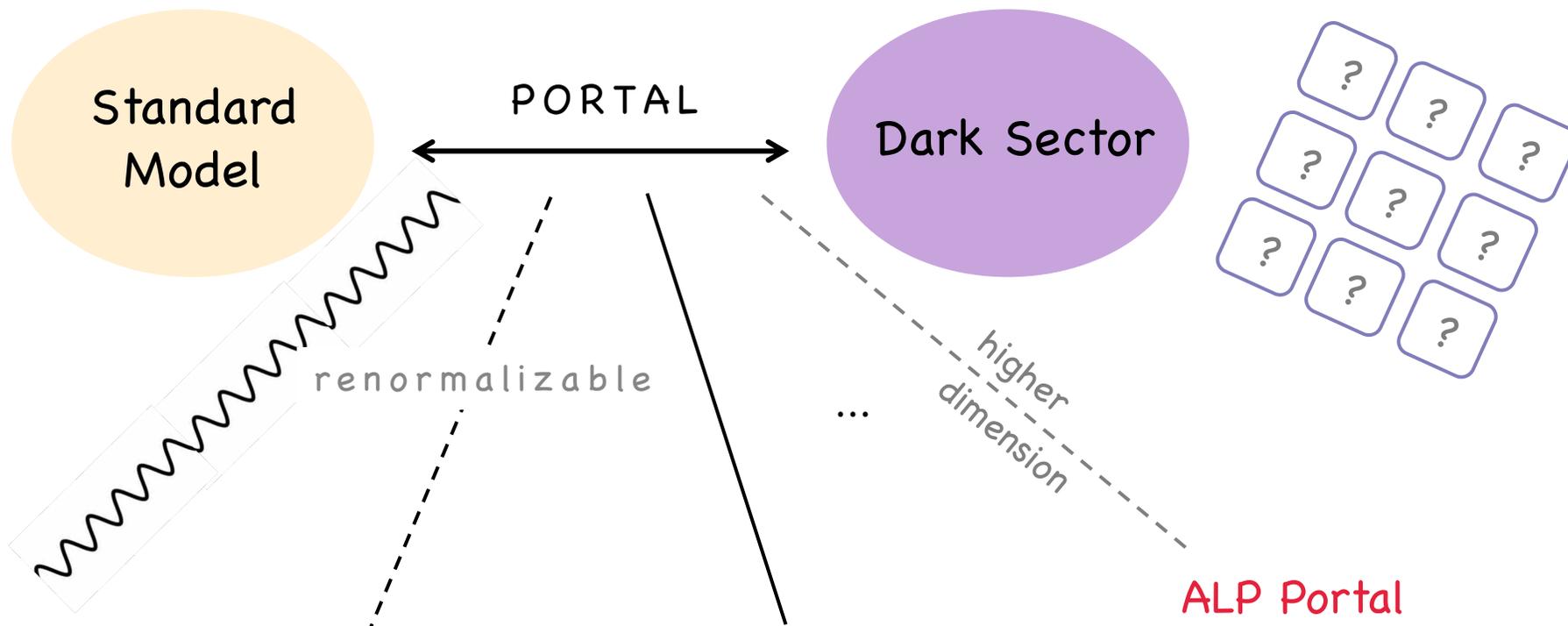
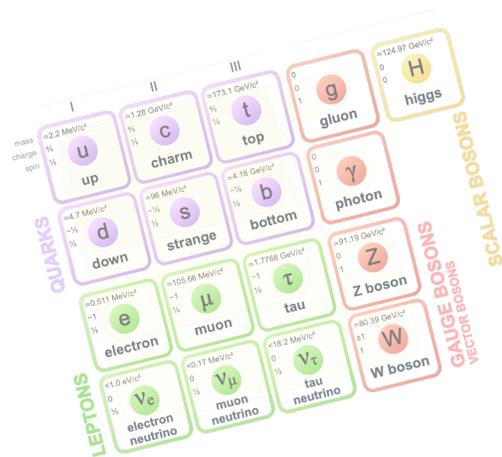
⇒ So, how can we explore sub-GeV dark sectors?

↪ solution: inclusion of new light dark sector mediator states!

These light mediators will act as portals between the dark sector and the SM.

# Introduction and Motivations · Hidden Portals

How can we search for light particle BSM signals?



**Vector Portal**

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{KM}} = \epsilon \hat{Z}_{Q\mu\nu} \hat{B}^{\mu\nu}$$

dark boson

**Scalar Portal**

$$V(H, S) \supset \kappa |H|^2 |S|^2$$

dark Higgs

**Neutrino Portal**

$$\mathcal{L} \supset -y^\alpha L_\alpha H N + \text{h.c.}$$

Heavy Neutral Lepton

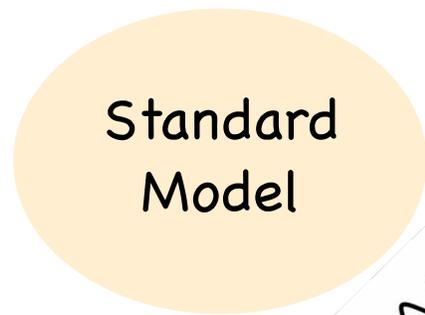
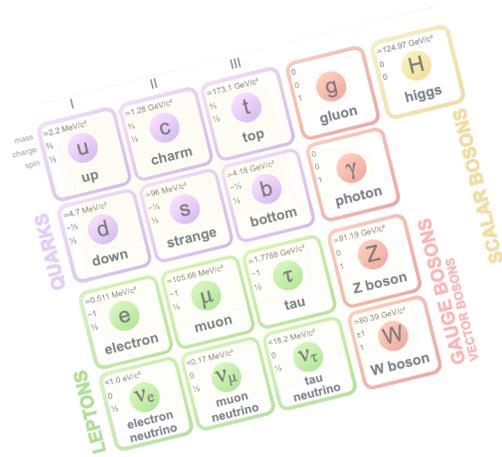
**ALP Portal**

axion-like-particle

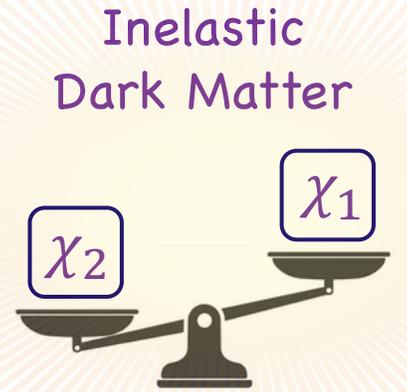


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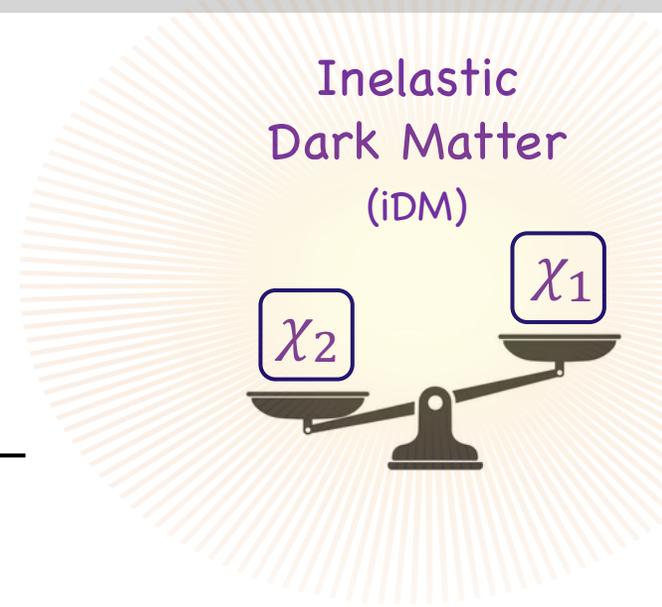
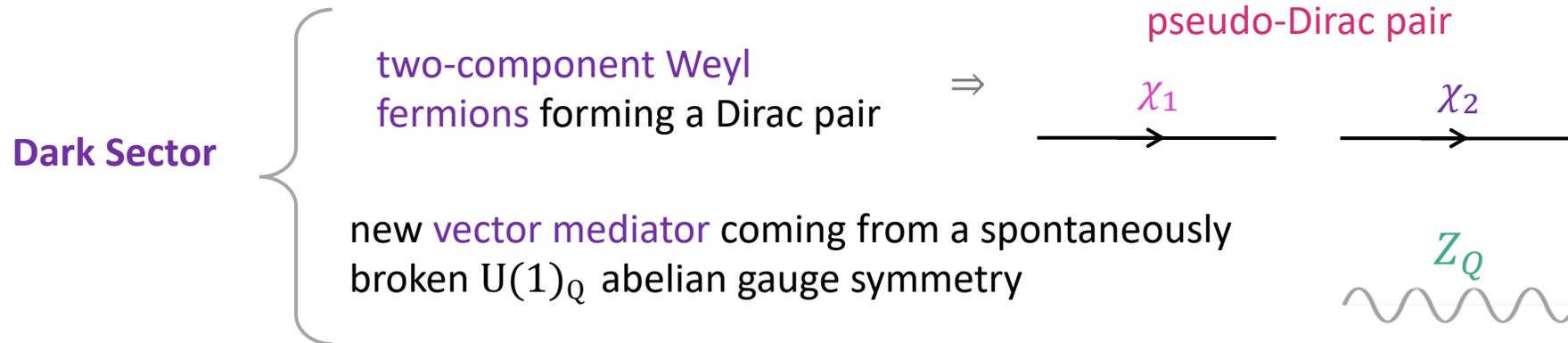
Heavy Neutral Lepton

**ALP Portal**  
axion-like-particle

$a \rightarrow$  photons  
 $a \rightarrow$  leptons  
 $a \rightarrow$  ...

# Inelastic Dark Matter

## Theoretical Framework



From the diagonalization of the fermion mass terms

$$\mathcal{L} \supset -\overset{\text{Dirac}}{m_D \psi_1 \psi_2} - \overset{\text{Majorana}}{\frac{1}{2}(\delta_1 \psi_1^2 + \delta_2 \psi_2^2)} + \text{h.c.}, \quad \text{with } \delta_{1,2} \ll m_D$$

$\Rightarrow$  mass eigenstates

$$\chi_1 \simeq \frac{i}{\sqrt{2}}(\psi_1 - \psi_2), \quad \text{pseudo-Dirac pair with nearly degenerate masses}$$

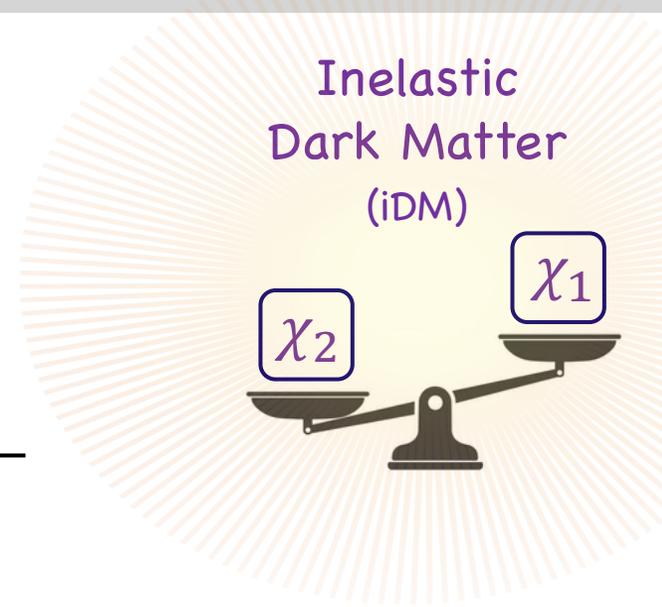
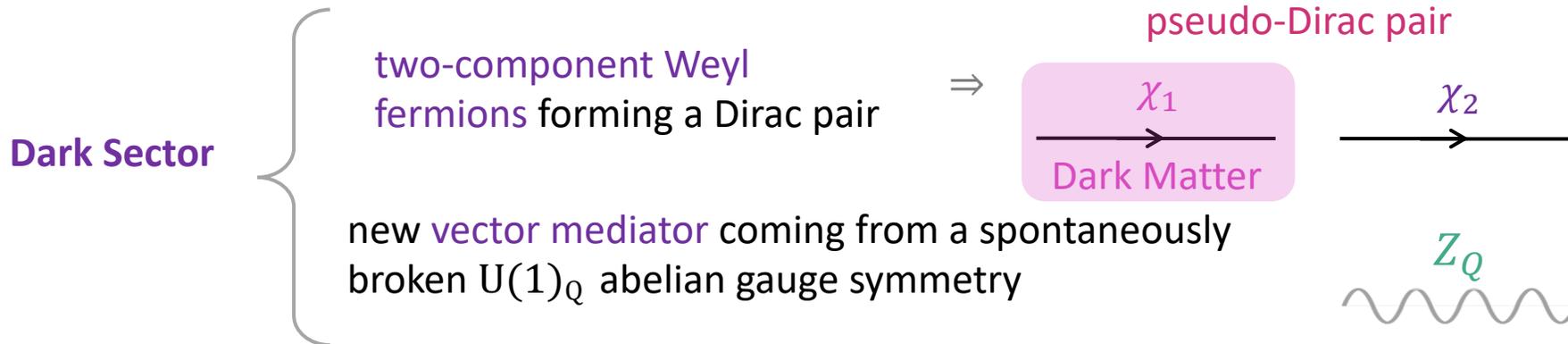
$$\chi_2 \simeq \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(\psi_1 + \psi_2), \quad m_{1,2} \simeq m_D \mp \frac{1}{2}(\delta_1 + \delta_2) \Rightarrow$$

Mass splitting

$$\Delta := \frac{m_2 - m_1}{m_1} = \frac{\delta_1 + \delta_2}{m_1} < 1$$

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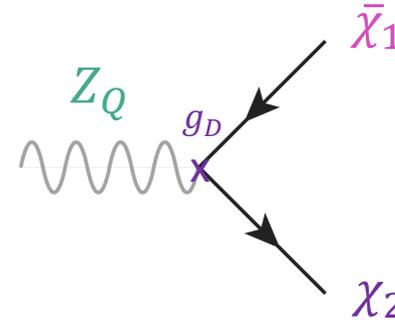
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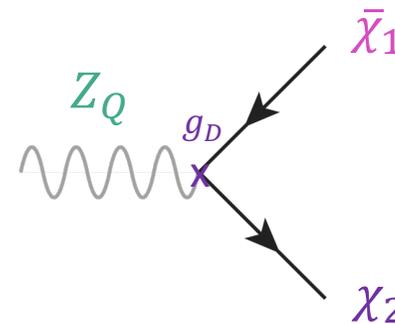


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## Motivations

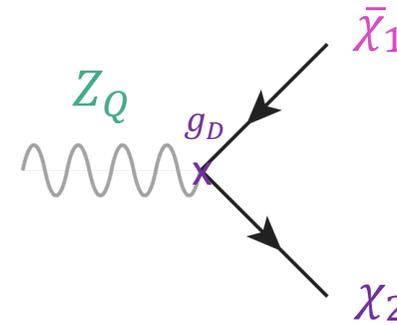
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## Motivations

→ **Thermal relics:** DM abundance can be computed via thermal freeze-out.

→ **Evades indirect and direct detection experimental limits**

The heavier state  $\chi_2$  can decay into the DM candidate  $\chi_1$ , depleting its abundance

⇒ **no present-day population of heavier states** to co-annihilate with the DM → avoid indirect detection signals

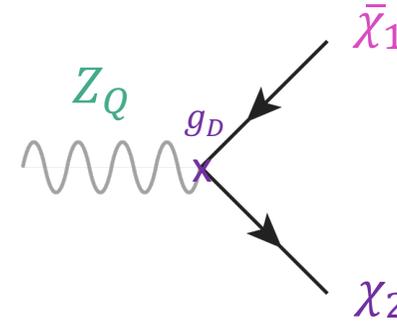
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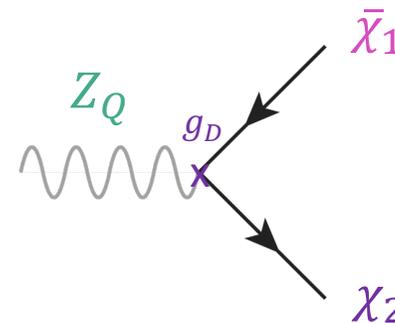
→ **Evades stringent CMB limits**

Since the abundance of  $\chi_2$  is already reduced during recombination era, **coannihilations that would inject energy into the plasma are suppressed.**

# Inelastic Dark Matter

## Theoretical Framework

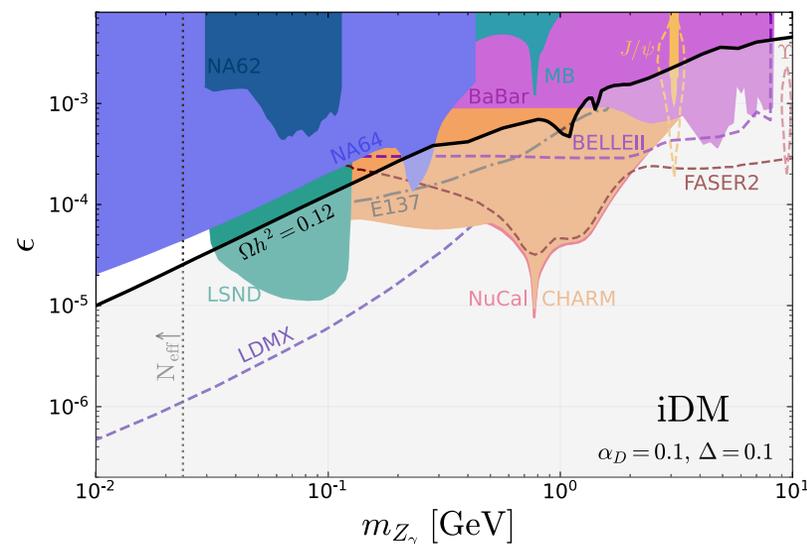
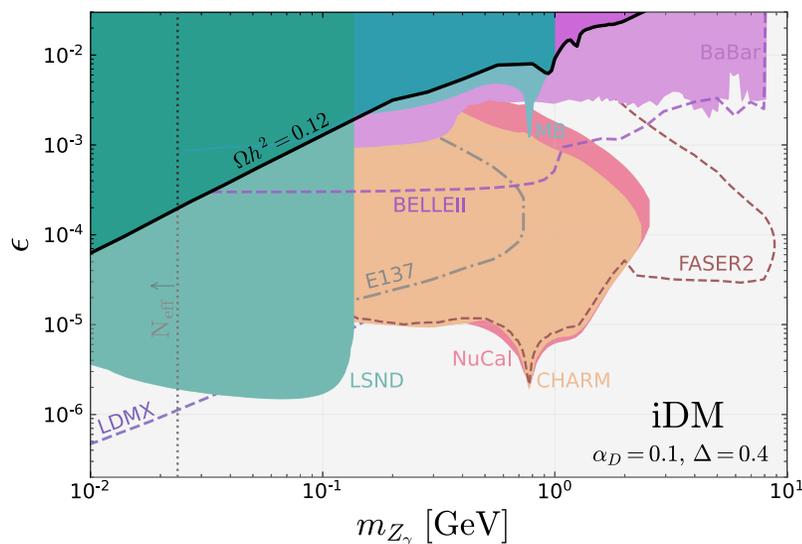
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## What's new?

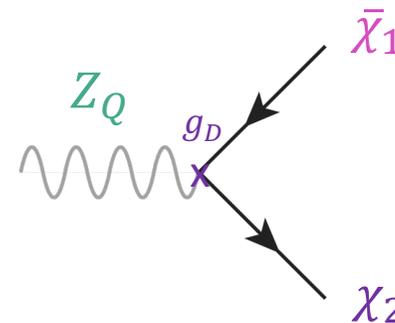
- In the literature: only considered the minimal scenario with a secluded **dark photon portal**  $Z_D$   
However... this case has been nearly **completely ruled out by experimental limits**...



# Inelastic Dark Matter

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## What's new?

- This work: we consider the case of **generic charges for the  $U(1)_Q$  group**



vector mediator also couples to the SM via **direct terms** depending on the choice of charge

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{int}}^{\text{SM}} = e\epsilon J_{\text{em}}^\mu Z_{Q\mu} - g_Q J_Q^\mu Z_{Q\mu}$$

$$J_Q^\mu = \sum_f q_Q^f \bar{f} \gamma^\mu f + \sum_{\ell=e,\mu,\tau} q_Q^{\nu\ell} \bar{\nu}_\ell \gamma^\mu P_L \nu_\ell,$$

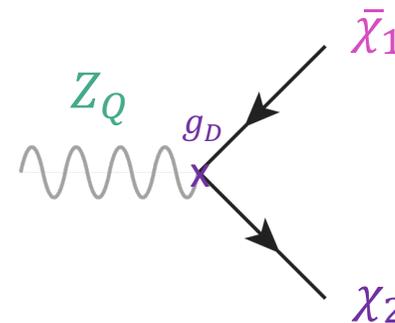
$$Q = x_B B - x_e L_e - x_\mu L_\mu - x_\tau L_\tau$$

$x_B$	$x_e$	$x_\mu$	$x_\tau$	$Q$	$q_Q^f$			
					quarks	$e/\nu_e$	$\mu/\nu_\mu$	$\tau/\nu_\tau$
1	1	1	1	$B - L$	$\frac{1}{3}$	-1	-1	-1
1	0	0	3	$B - 3L_\tau$	$\frac{1}{3}$	0	0	-3
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**ALF**, P. Reimitz, R.Z. Funchal  
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0	0	-1	1	$L_\mu - L_\tau$	0	0	1	-1

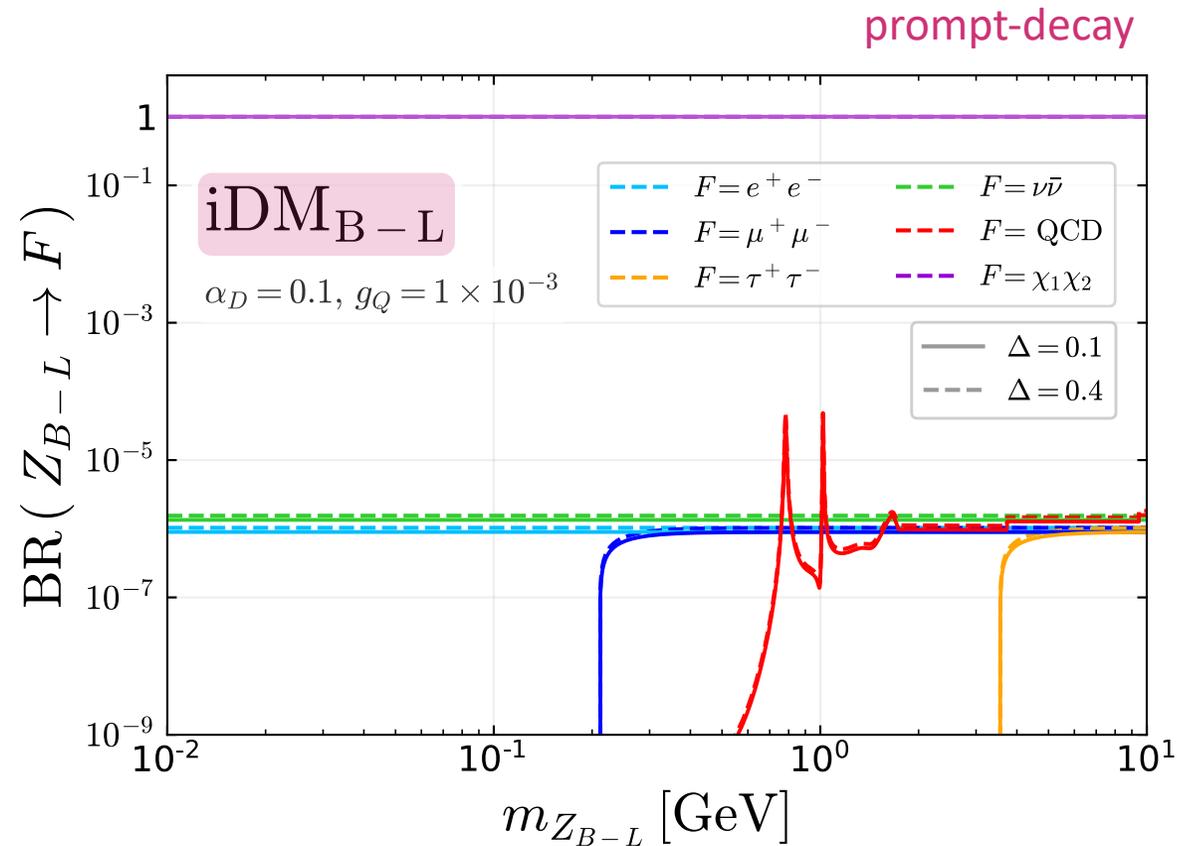
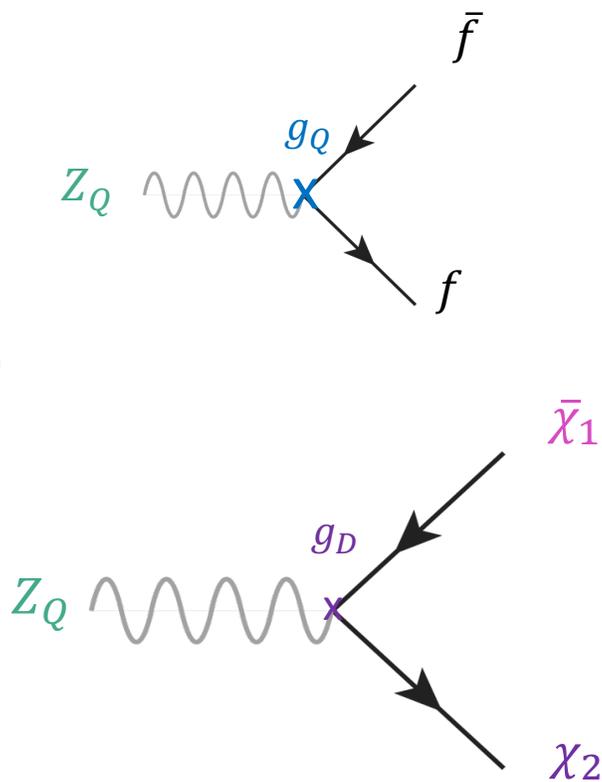
iDM<sub>Q</sub>  
models

free parameters:  $m_{Z_Q}, R, \Delta, g_Q, \alpha_D$

# Inelastic Dark Matter · Decay Rates

$\rightarrow$  Hierarchy  $m_{Z_Q} > m_1 + m_2$        $\rightarrow$  Limit  $g_D \gg g_Q$

Mediator



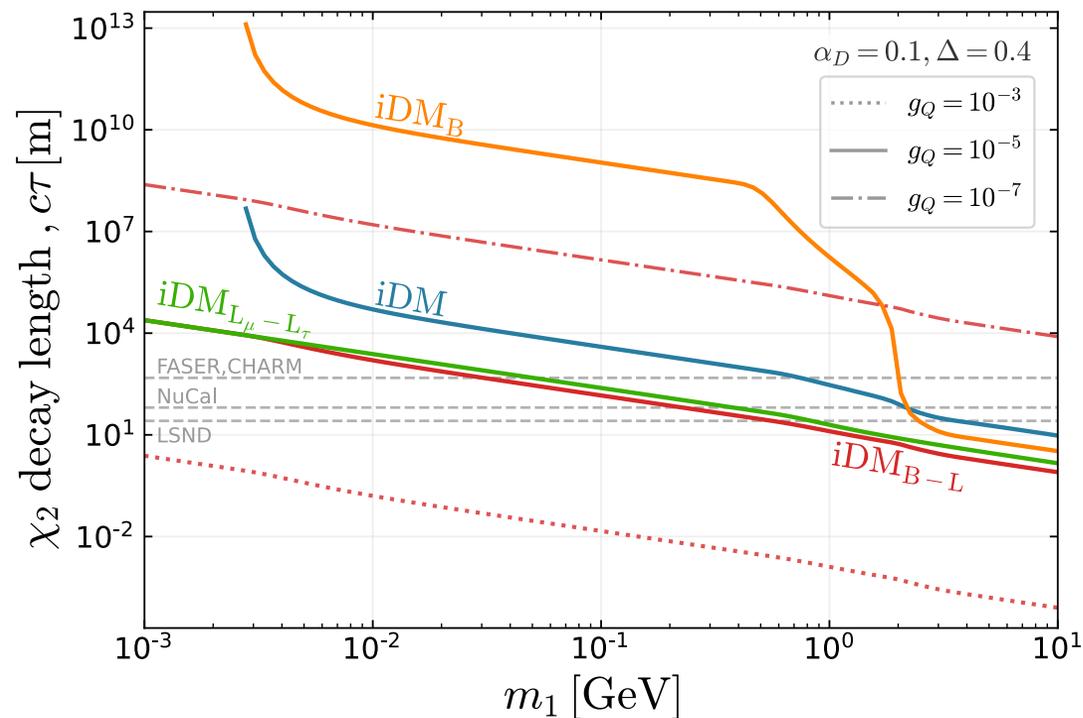
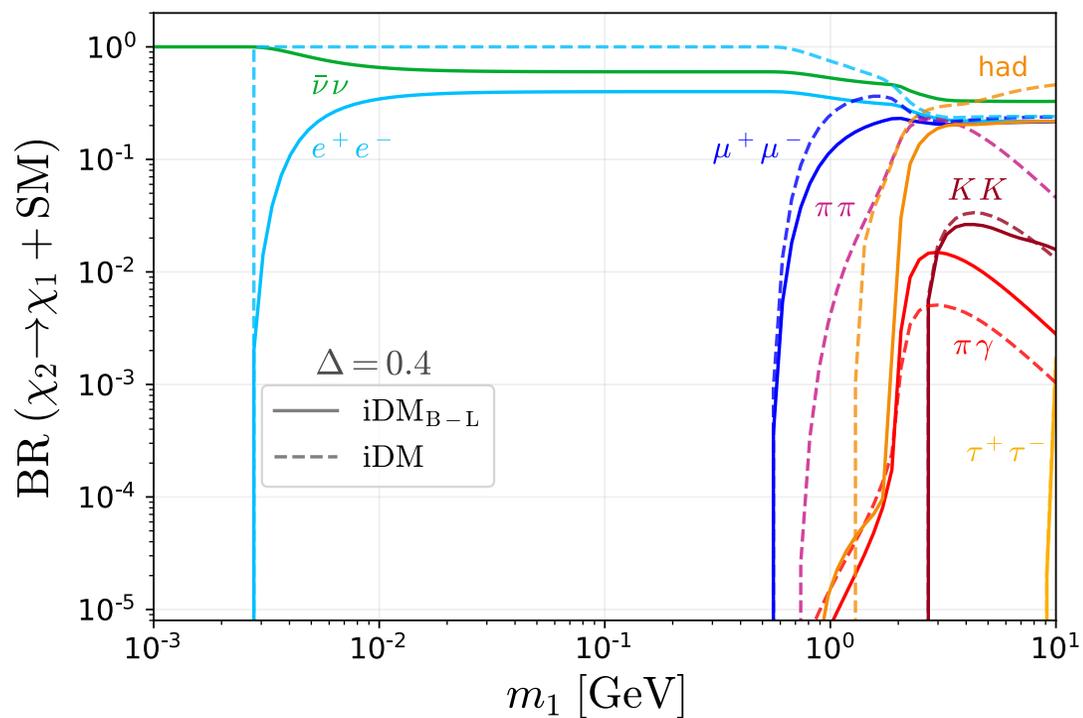
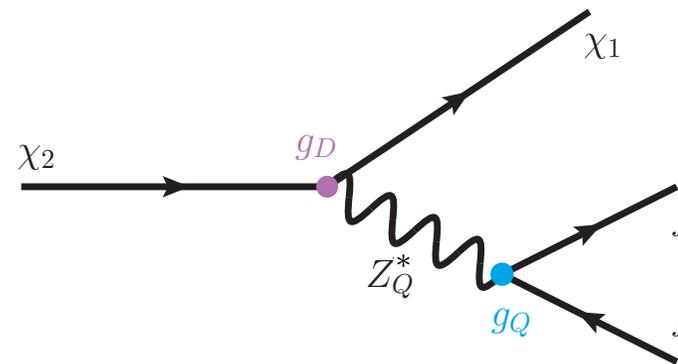
# Inelastic Dark Matter · Decay Rates

→ Hierarchy  $m_{Z_Q} > m_1 + m_2$

→ Limit  $g_D \gg g_Q$

Dark fermion

$$\Gamma(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \bar{f} f) \simeq \frac{4\alpha_Q \alpha_D \Delta^5 m_{Z_Q}}{15\pi R^5}$$



# Inelastic Dark Matter · Relic Density Computation

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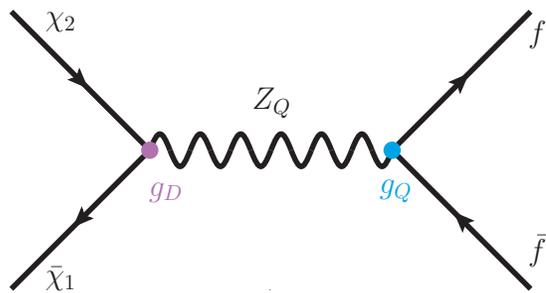
## Boltzmann Equation

$$\frac{dY_{1,2}}{dx} = \frac{s}{Hx} \left[ - \langle \sigma v \rangle_{12 \rightarrow ff} (Y_1 Y_2 - Y_1^{\text{eq}} Y_2^{\text{eq}}) \pm 2 \langle \sigma v \rangle_{22 \rightarrow 11} \left( (Y_2)^2 - \left( Y_1 \frac{Y_2^{\text{eq}}}{Y_1^{\text{eq}}} \right)^2 \right) \right. \\ \left. \pm \left( \langle \sigma v \rangle_{2f \rightarrow 1f} Y_f^{\text{eq}} + \frac{1}{s} \langle \Gamma \rangle_{2 \rightarrow 1ff} \right) \left( Y_2 - Y_1 \frac{Y_2^{\text{eq}}}{Y_1^{\text{eq}}} \right) \right],$$

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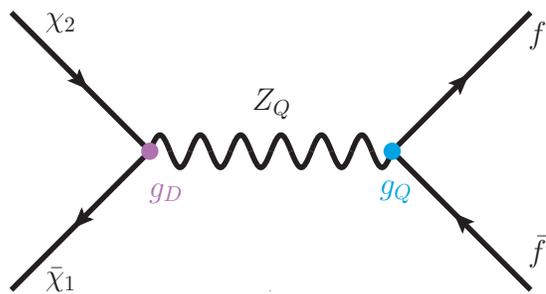


a)  $\chi_1 \chi_2 \rightarrow \text{SM}$

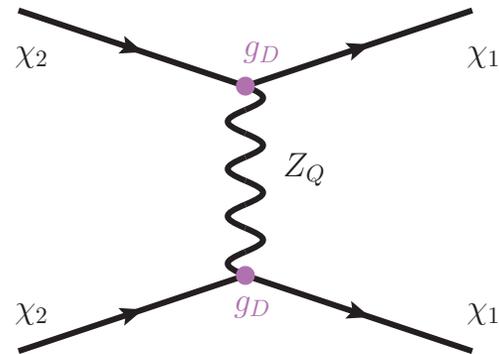
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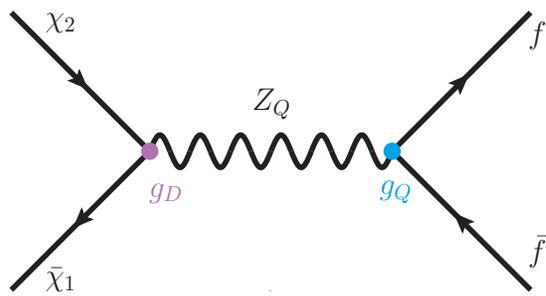


b)  $\chi_2 \chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_1$

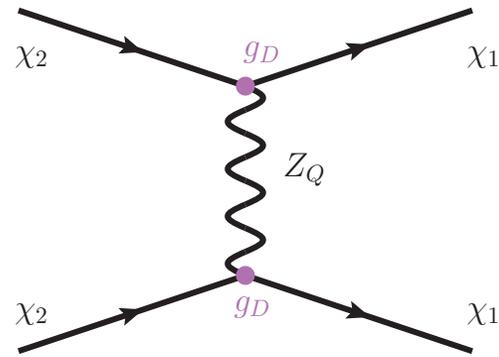
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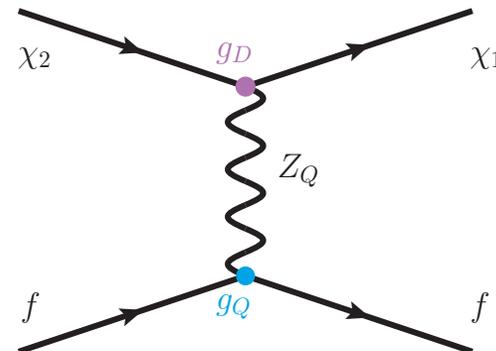
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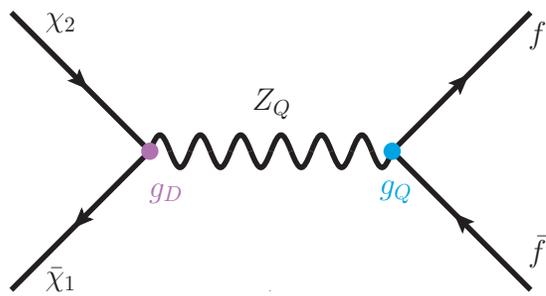


c)  $\chi_2 f \rightarrow \chi_1 f$

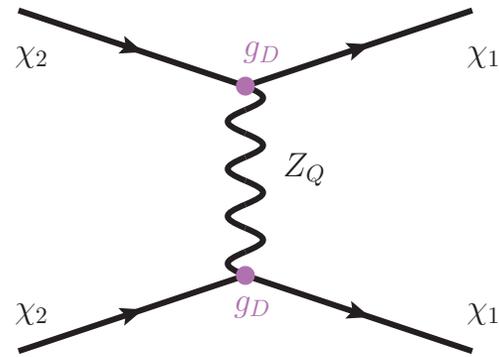
# Inelastic Dark Matter · Relic Density Computation

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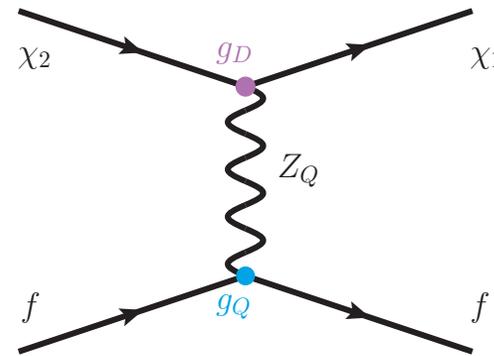
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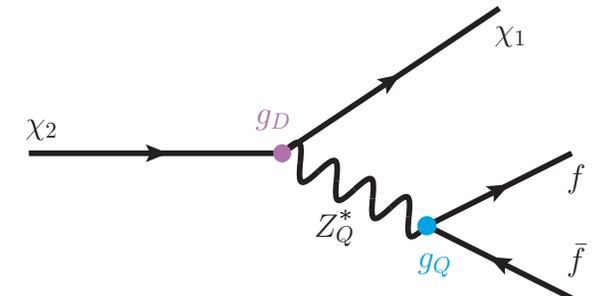
a)  $\chi_1 \chi_2 \rightarrow \text{SM}$



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c)  $\chi_2 f \rightarrow \chi_1 f$



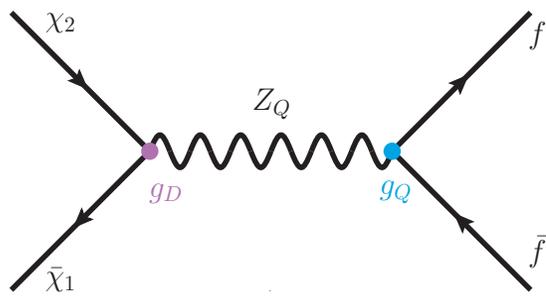
d)  $\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 + \text{SM}$

# Inelastic Dark Matter · Relic Density Computation

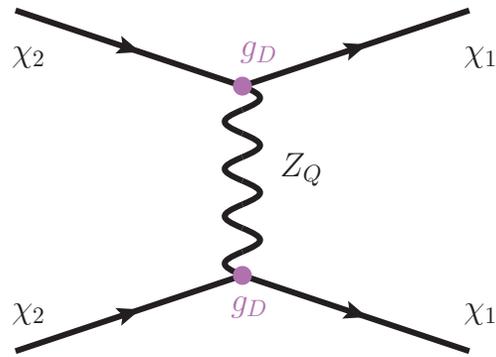
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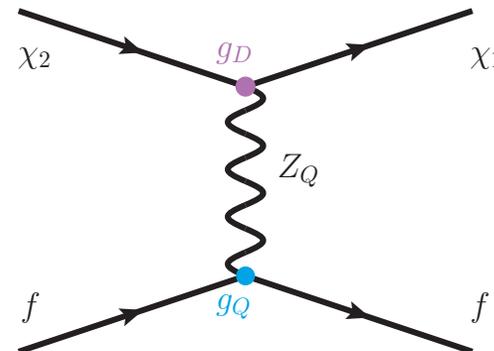
coannihilations  
dominate!



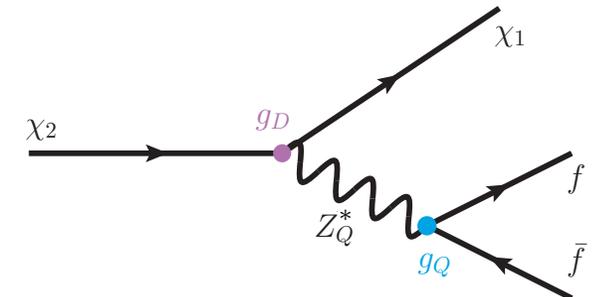
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b)  $\chi_2 \chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_1$



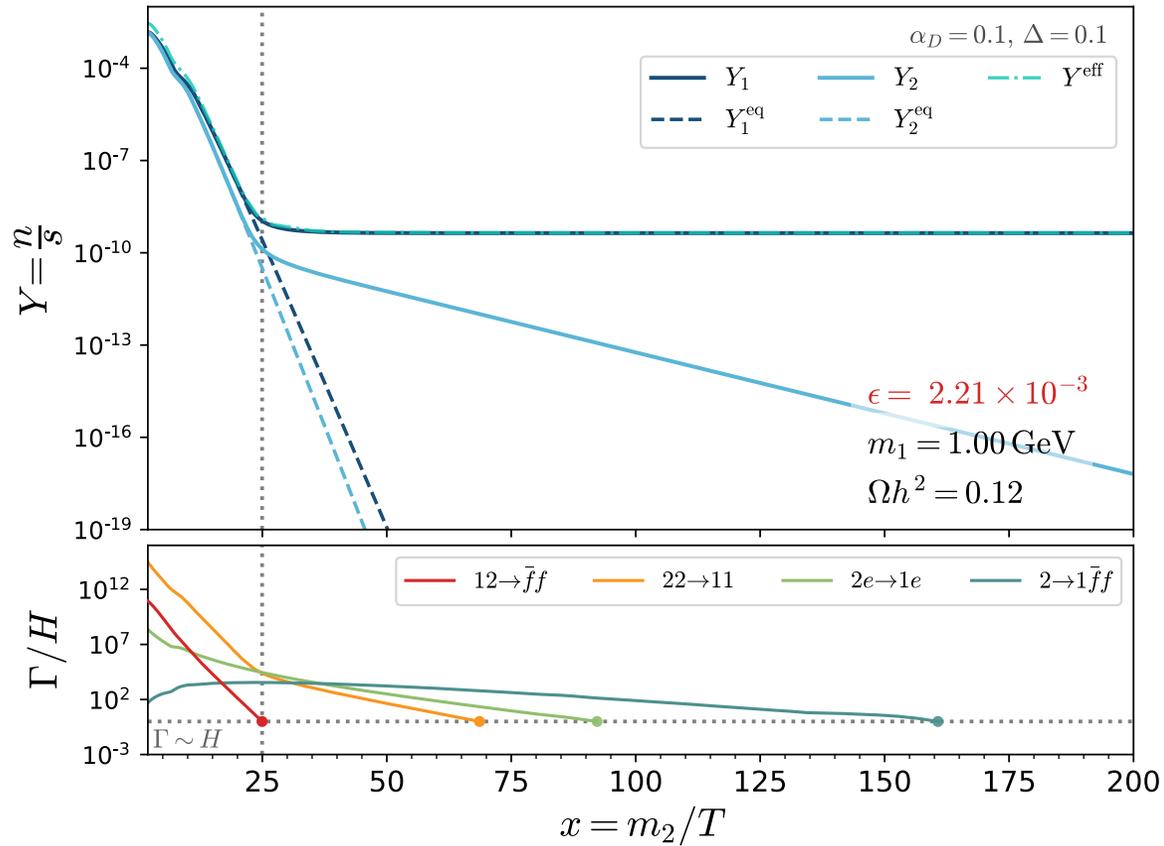
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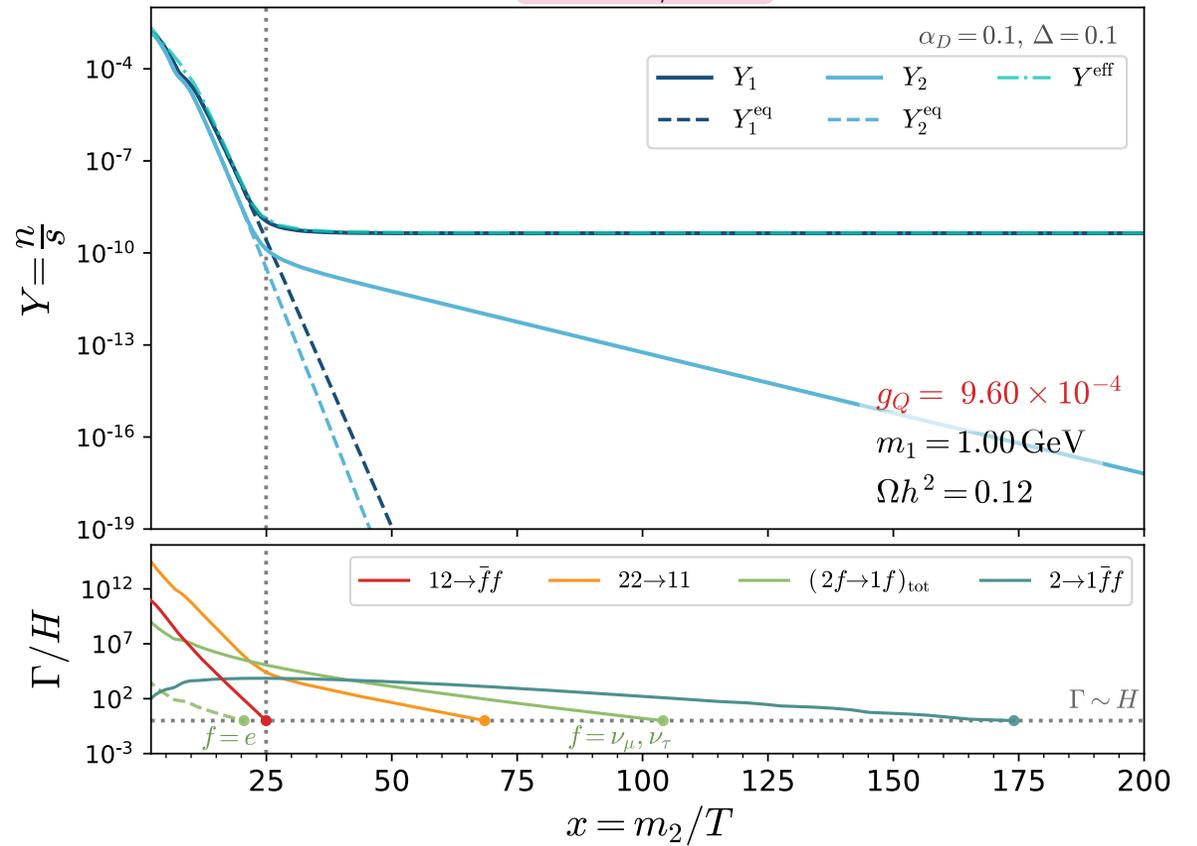
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# Inelastic Dark Matter · Relic Density Computation

iDM

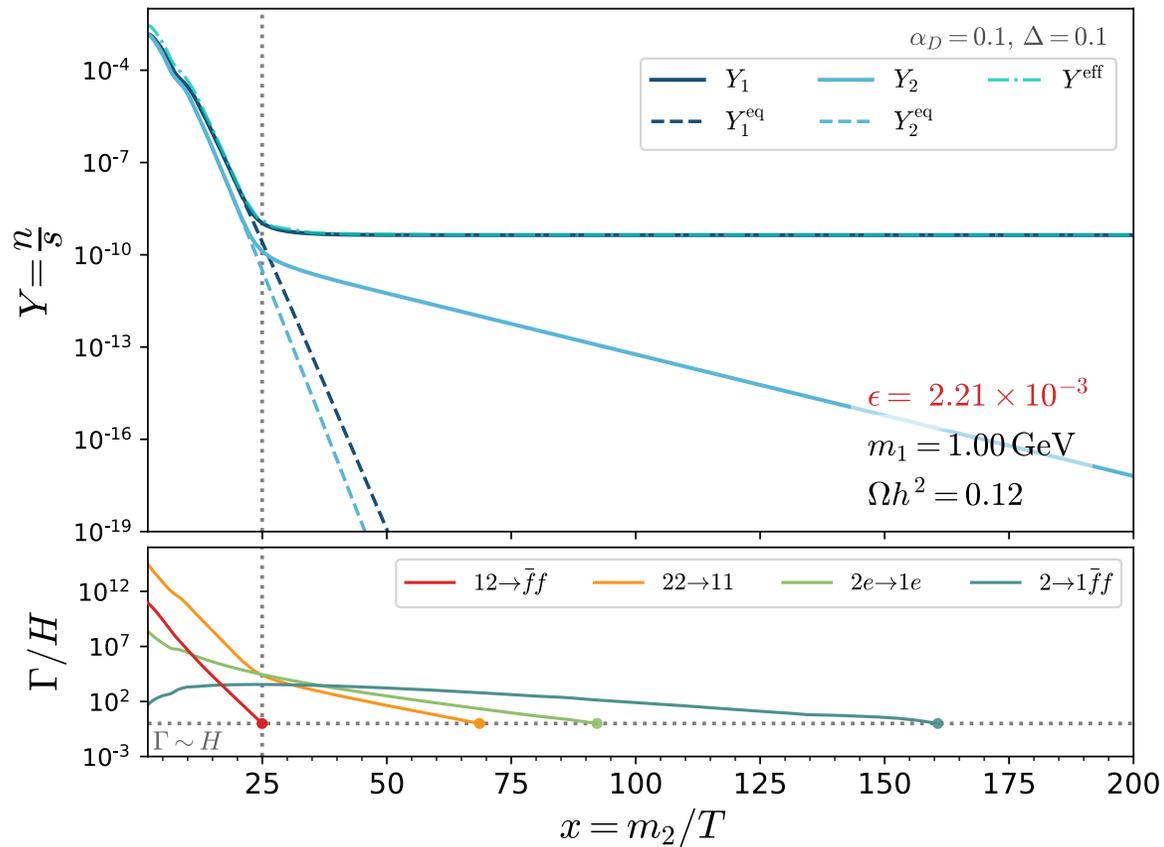


iDM<sub>L<sub>μ</sub> - L<sub>τ</sub></sub>

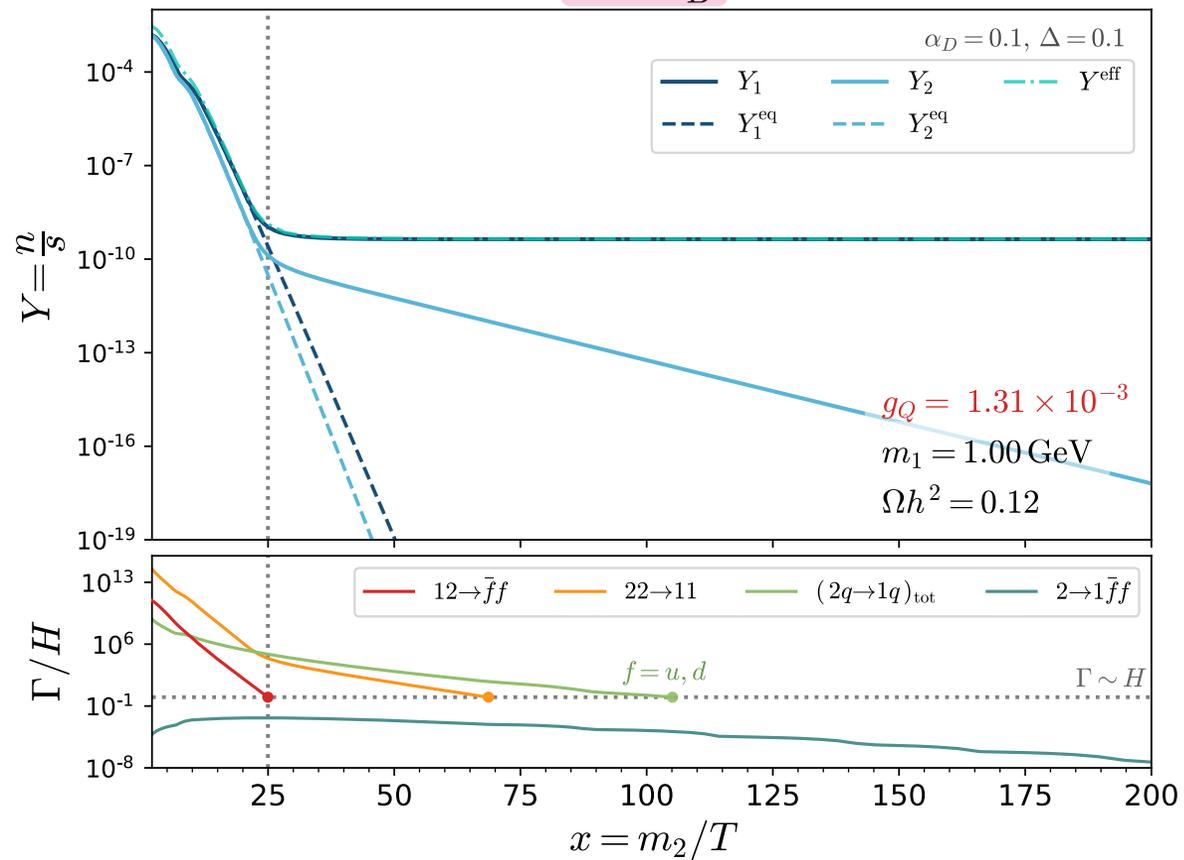


# Inelastic Dark Matter · Relic Density Computation

iDM



iDM<sub>B</sub>



# Inelastic Dark Matter · ReD-DeLiVeR code

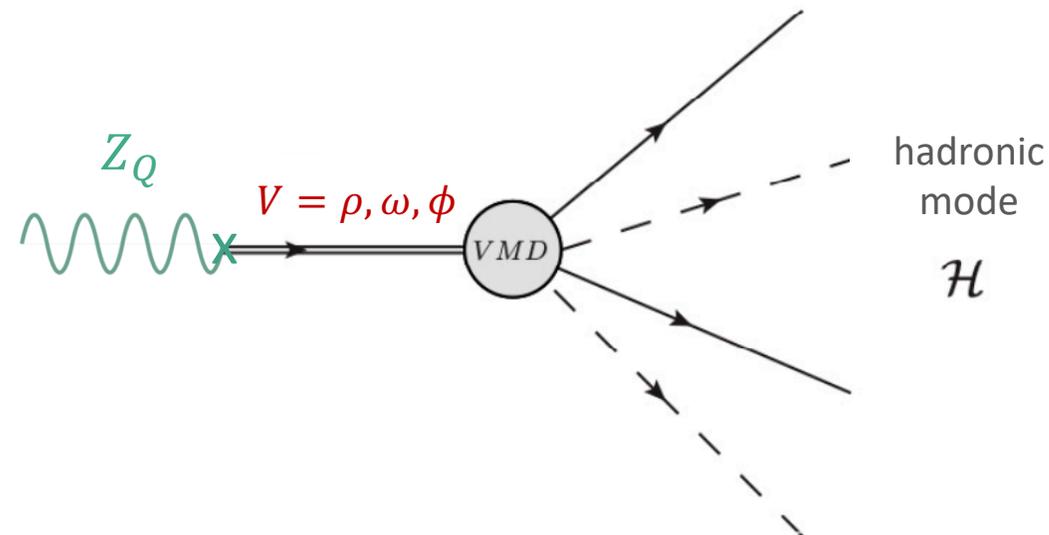
## ReD-DeLiVeR (Relic Density with DeLiVeR)

- update of the previous python package **DELIVER** (**Decays of Light Vectors Revised**), which can be used to compute decay rates and branching ratios for **user-defined  $U(1)_Q$  charges**,
- **key feature**: includes a complete set of **hadronic decays** (20 channels)

channel	resonances
$\pi\gamma$	$\rho, \omega, \omega', \omega'', \phi$
$\pi\pi$	$\rho, \rho', \dots$
$3\pi$	$\rho, \rho'', \omega, \omega', \omega'', \phi$
$4\pi$	$\rho, \rho', \rho'', \rho'''$
$KK$	$\rho, \dots, \omega, \dots, \phi, \dots$
$KK\pi$	$\rho, \rho', \rho'', \phi, \phi', \phi''$

channel	resonances
$\eta\gamma$	$\rho, \rho', \omega, \phi$
$\eta\pi\pi$	$\rho, \rho', \rho''$
$\omega\pi \rightarrow \pi\pi\gamma$	$\rho, \rho', \rho''$
$\omega\pi\pi$	$\omega''$
$\phi\pi$	$\rho, \rho'$
$\eta'\pi\pi$	$\rho'''$
$\eta\omega$	$\omega', \omega''$
$\eta\phi$	$\phi', \phi''$
$p\bar{p}/n\bar{n}$	$\rho, \rho', \dots, \omega, \omega', \dots$
$\phi\pi\pi$	$\phi', \phi''$
$K^*(892)K\pi$	$\rho'', \phi'$
$6\pi$	$\rho'''$

ALF, P. Reimitz, R.Z. Funchal [JHEP 04 (2022)119]



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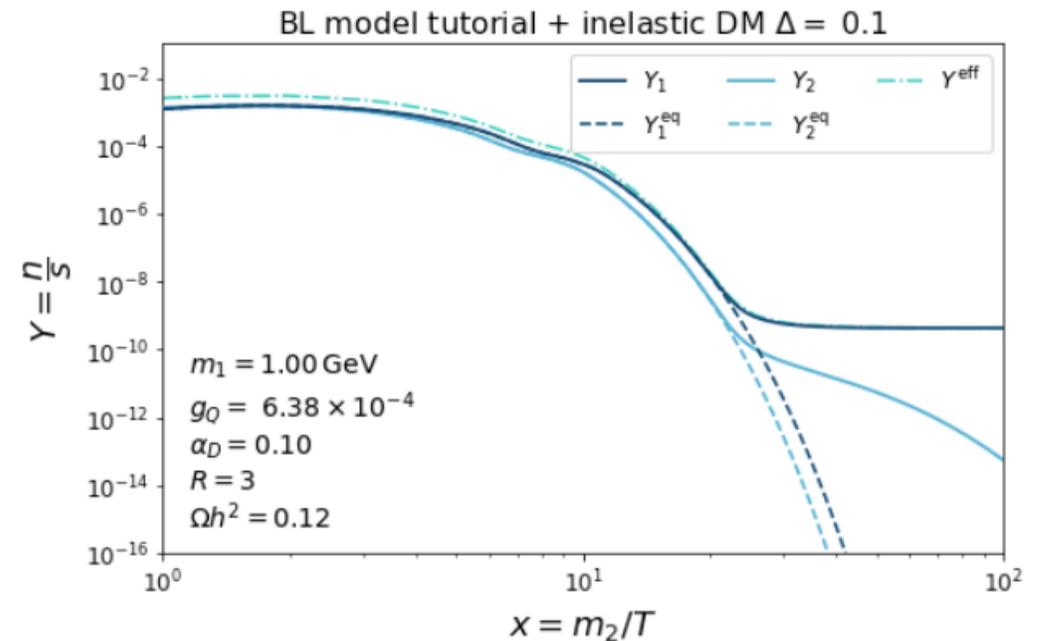
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→ **new version**:

- inclusion of DM candidates

} simplified DM models  
inelastic DM

- computation of **relic density** and **rates**



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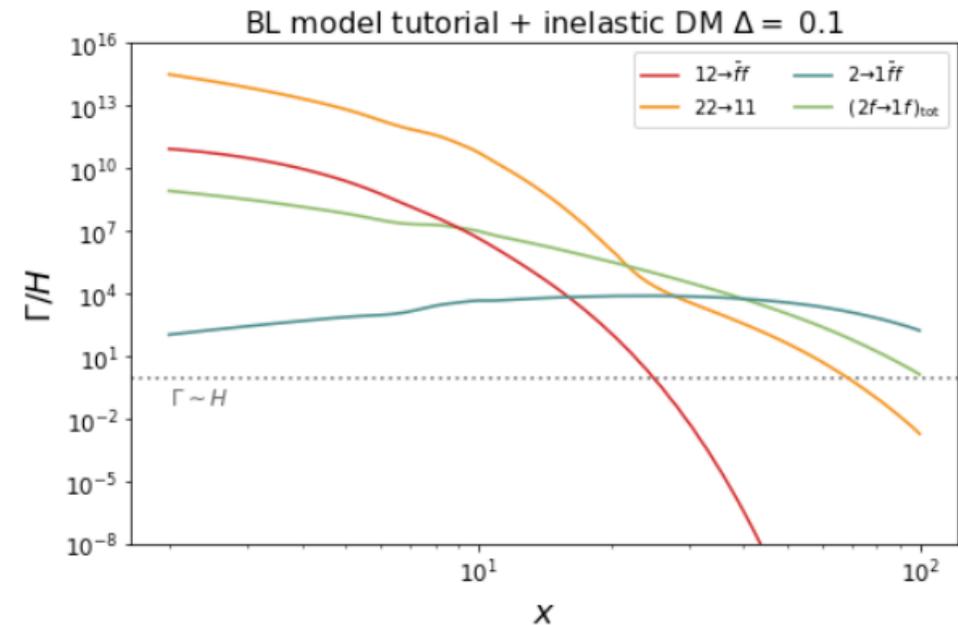
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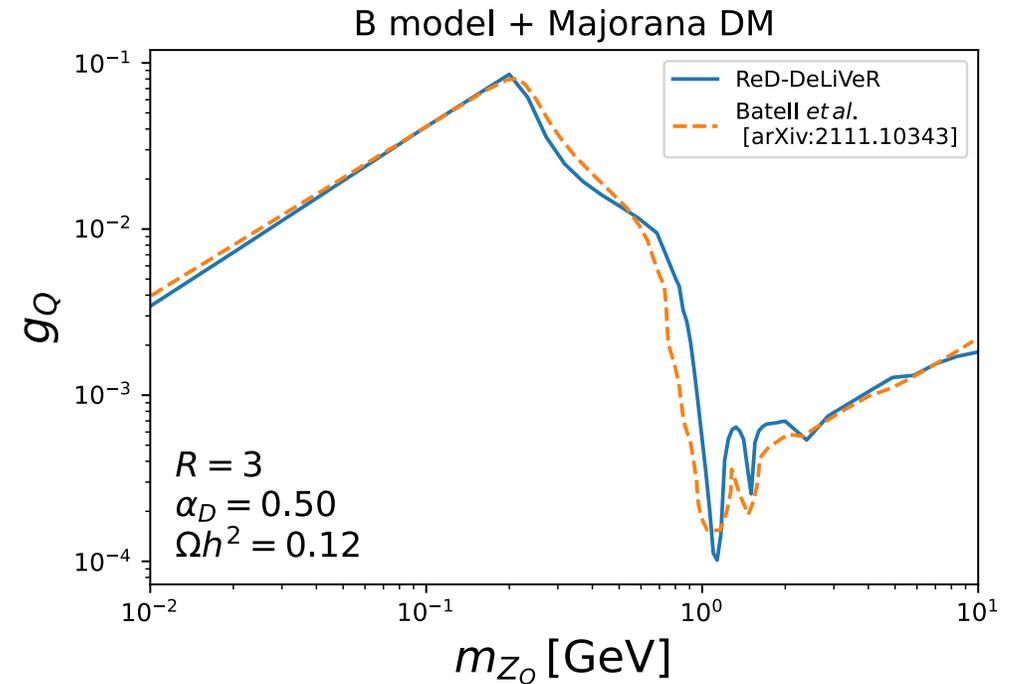
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specially for B-coupled models, it is very important to compute correctly the hadronic contributions

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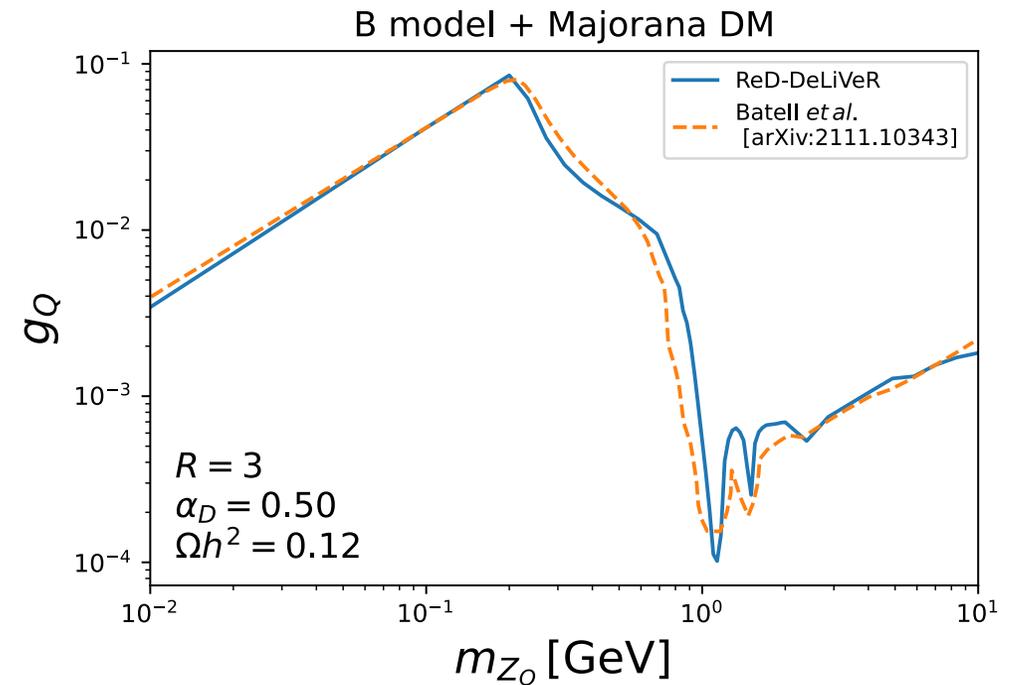
→ **publicly available** on GitHub together with a **Tutorial!**

<https://github.com/anafoguel/ReD-DeLiVeR>

### ReD-DeLiVeR

by Ana Luisa Foguel, Peter Reimitz, and Renata Zukanovich Funchal

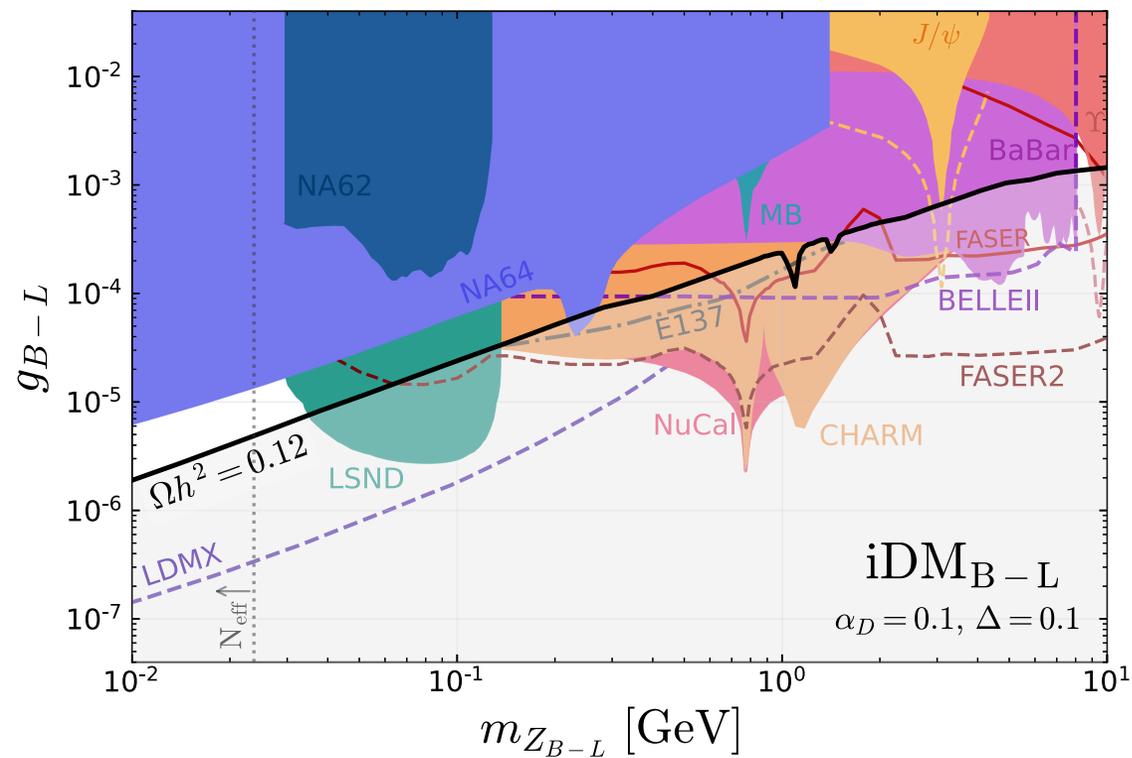
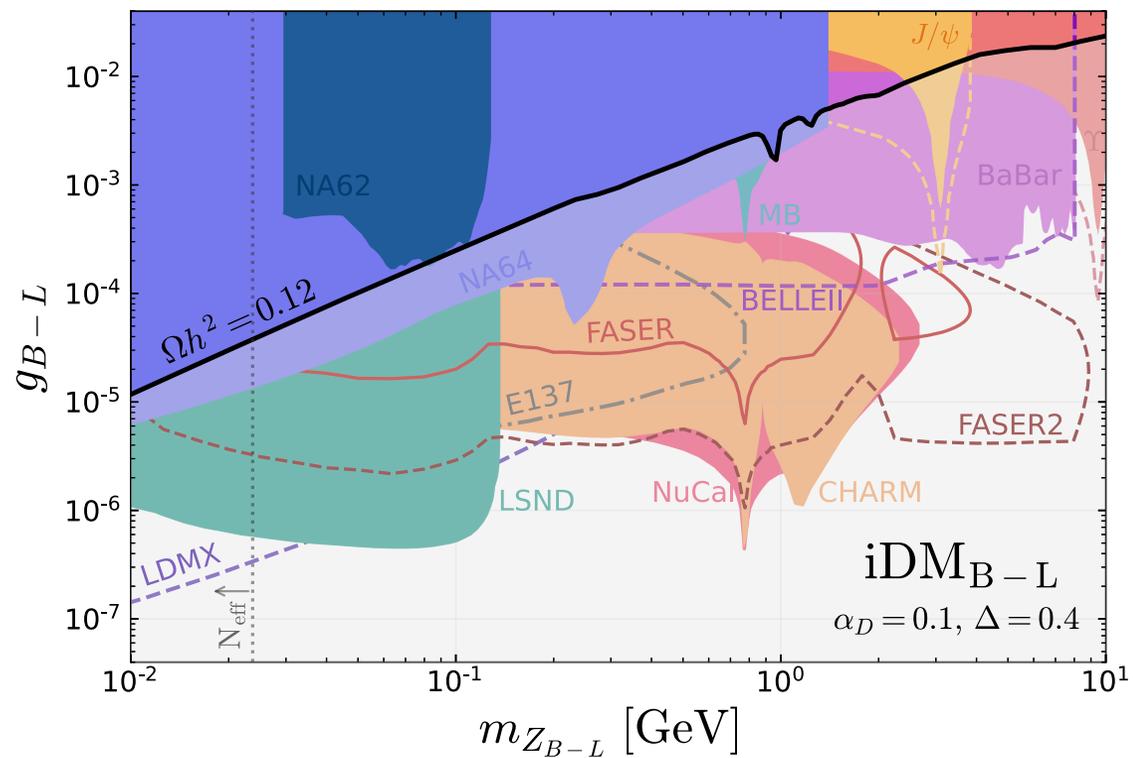
arXiv: 2410.00881



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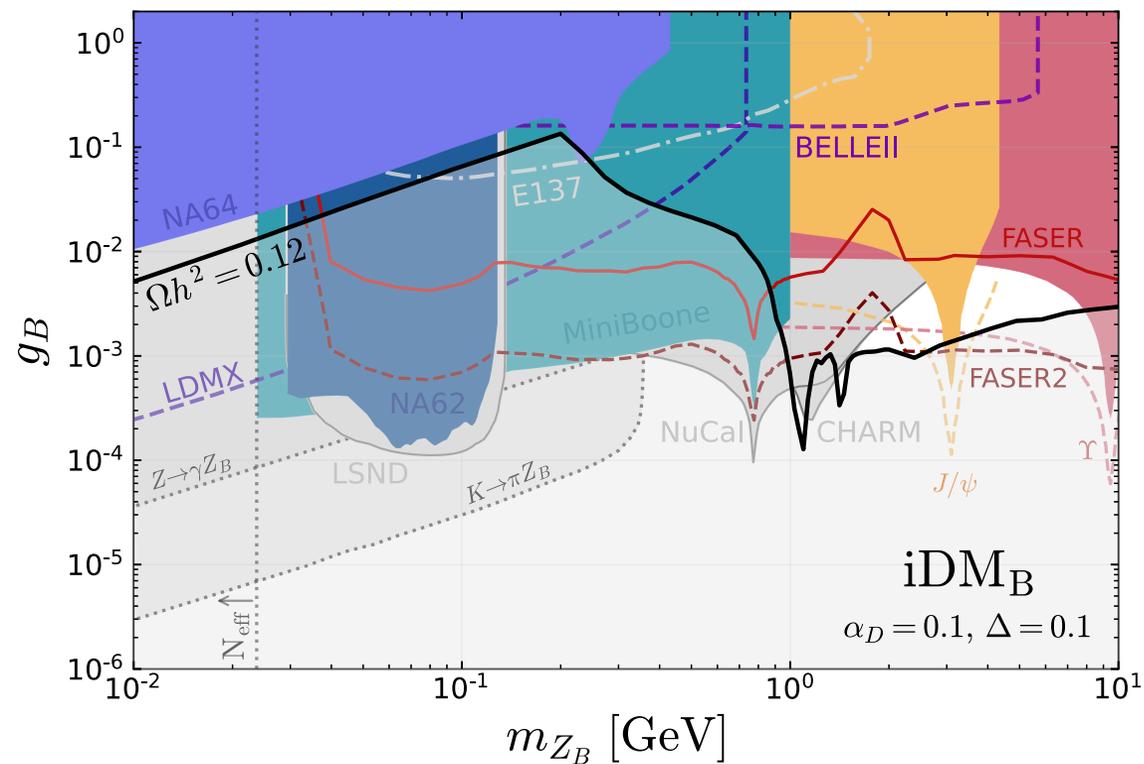
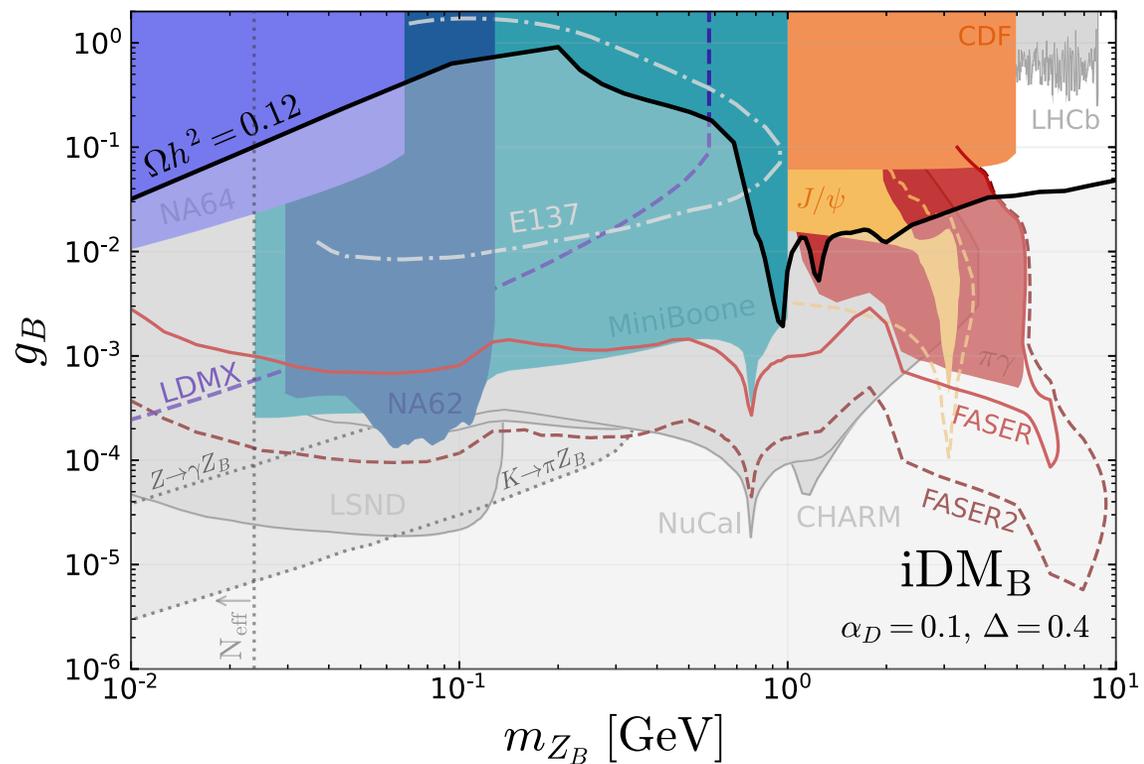
# Inelastic Dark Matter · Bounds

↪  $i\text{DM}_{B-L}$



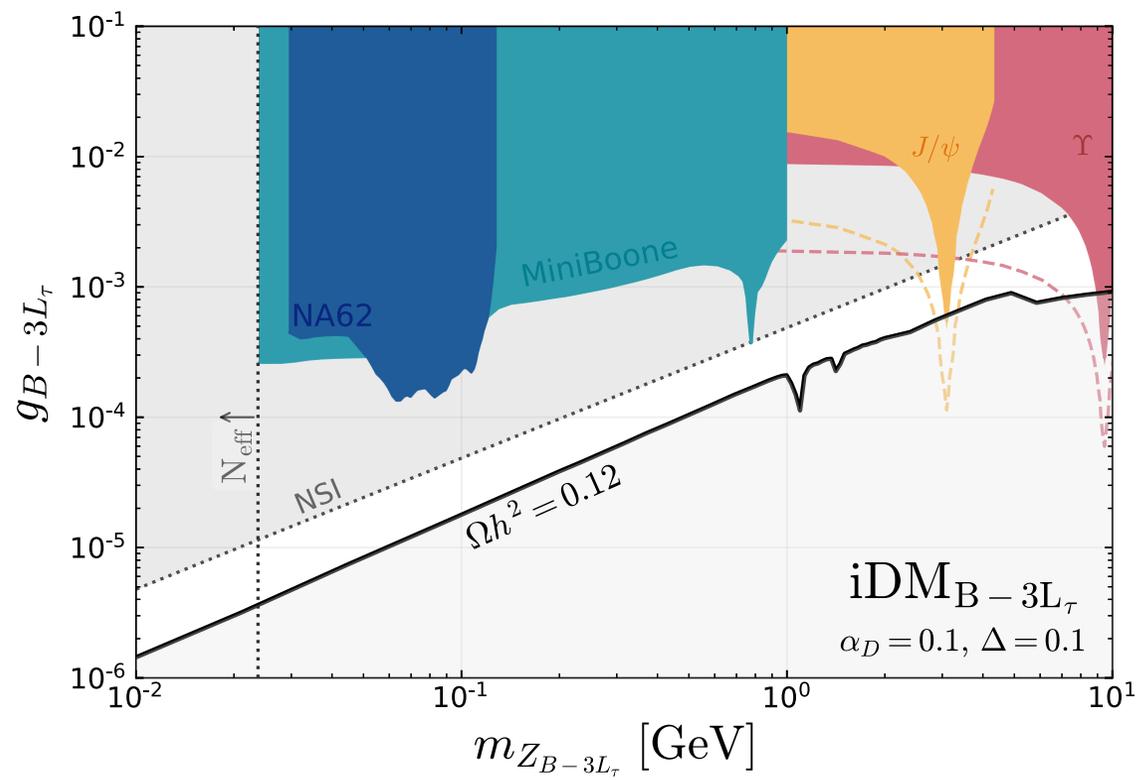
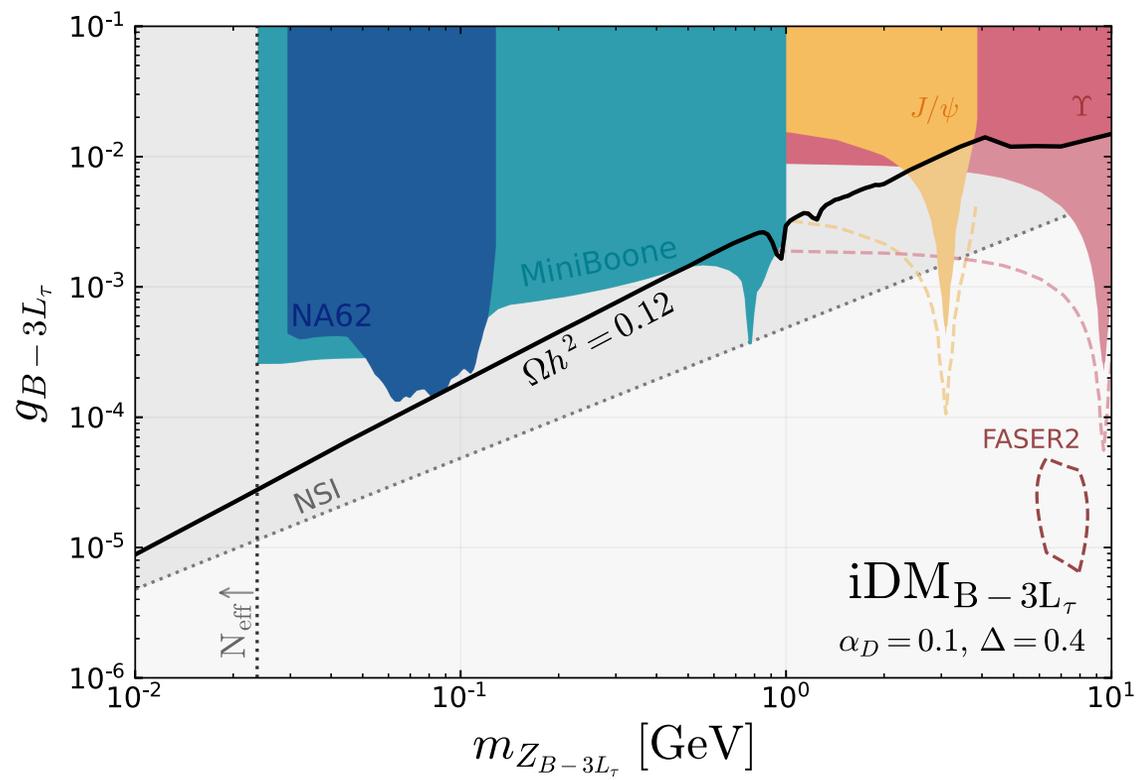
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↪  $iDM_B$



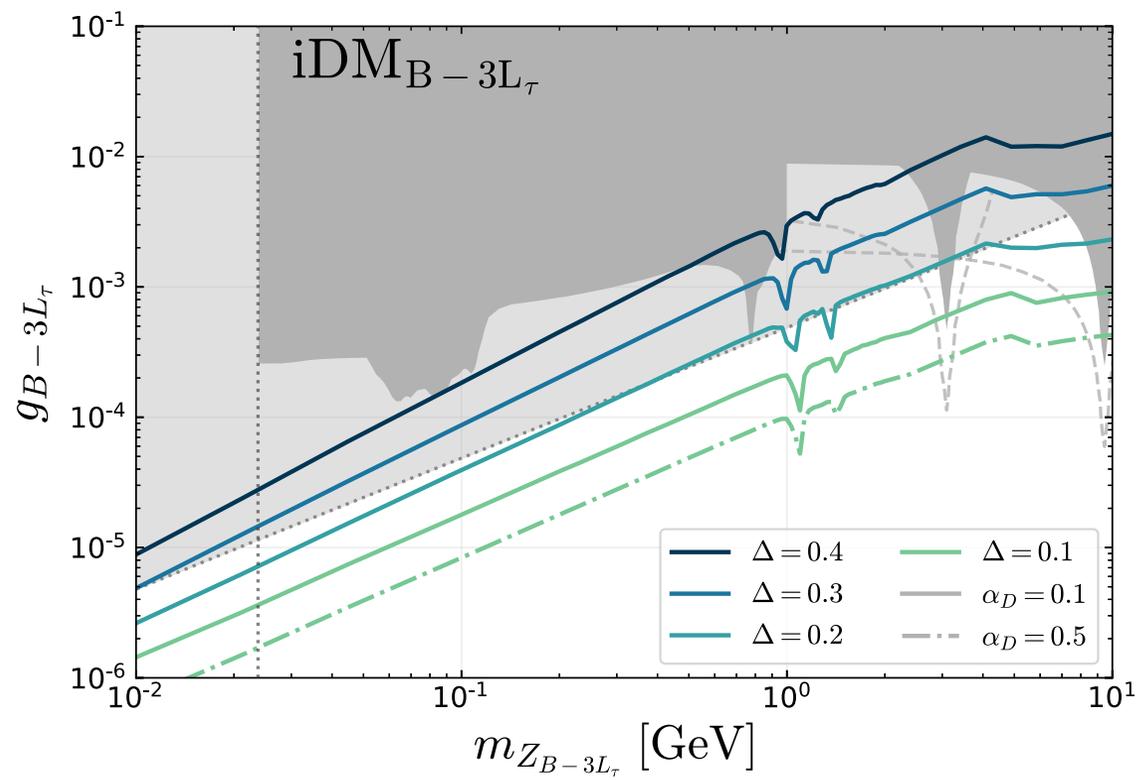
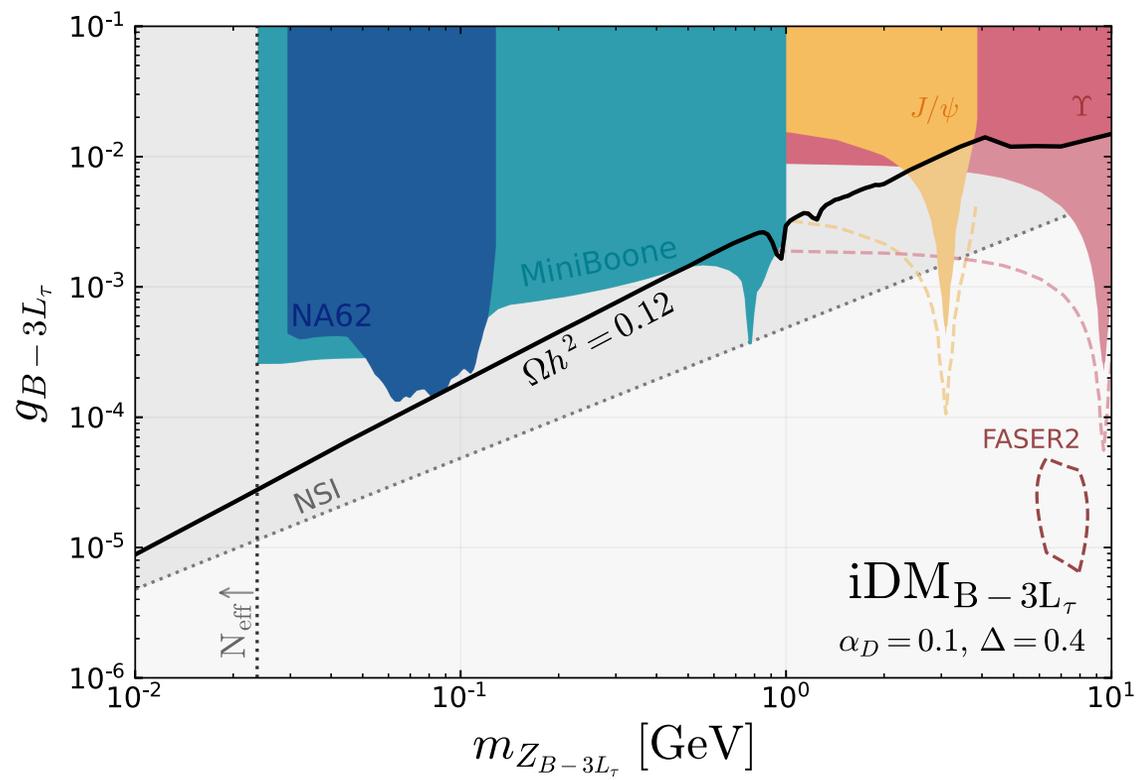
# Inelastic Dark Matter · Bounds

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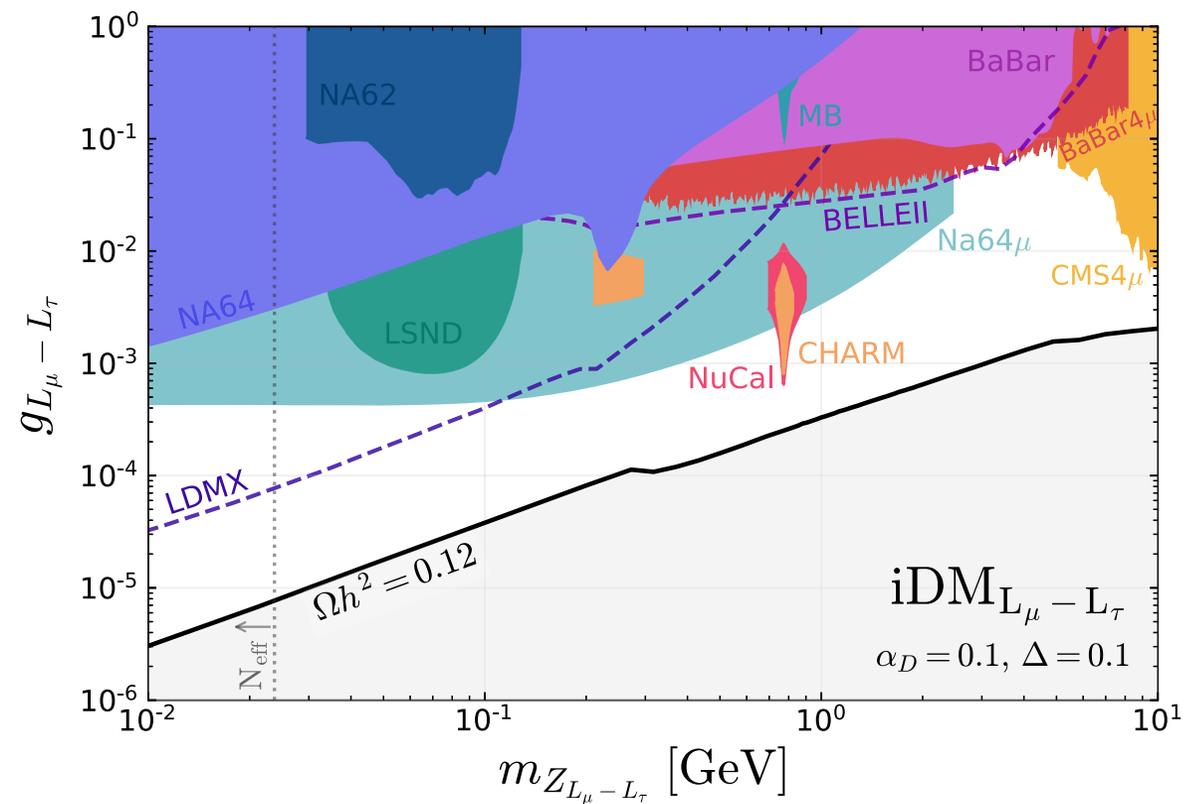
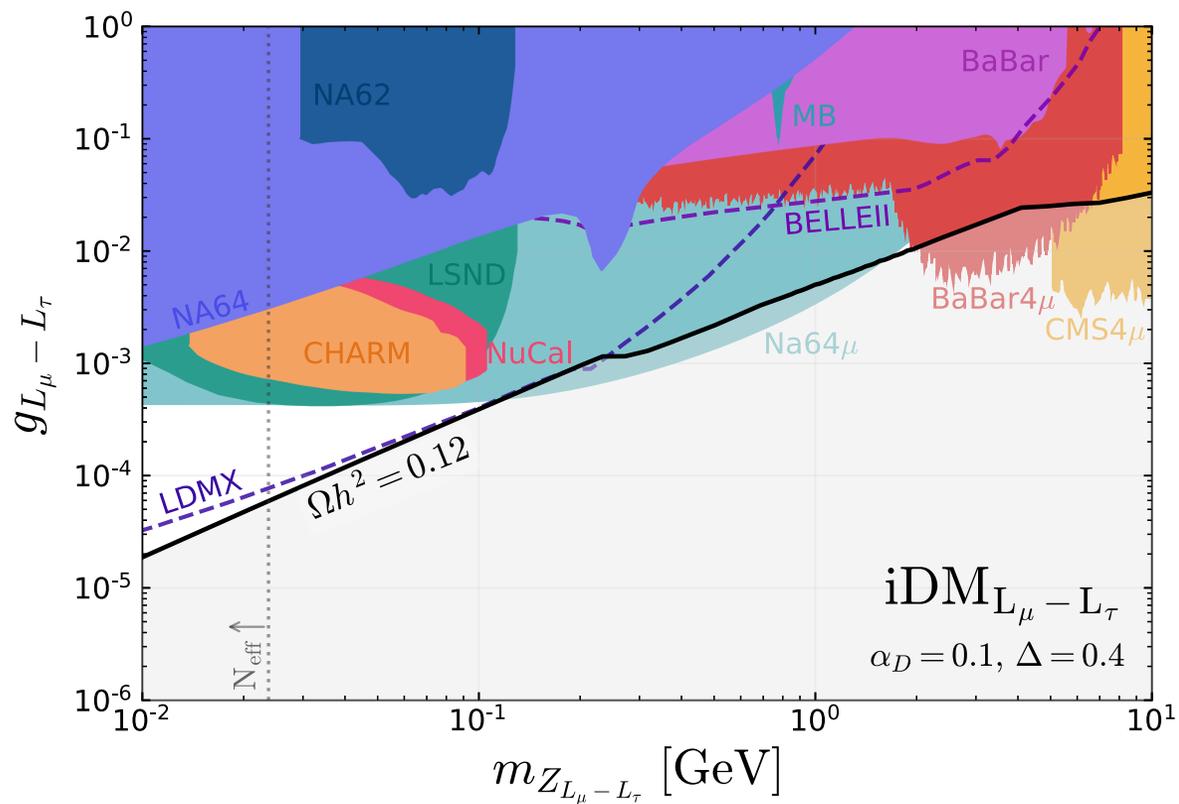
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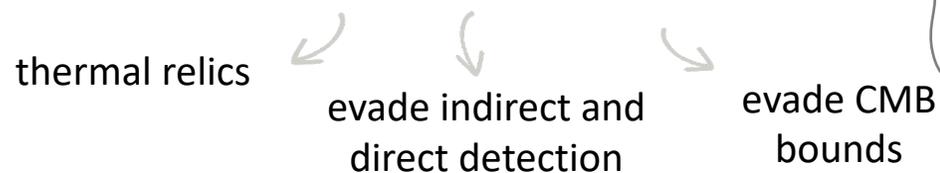
# Inelastic Dark Matter · Bounds

↪  $i\text{DM}_{L_\mu - L_\tau}$



# Conclusions

- **Light Feebly Interacting Particles** can shed light in several unanswered questions of the SM
- As experiments increase their **luminosities**, and we enter the **intensity frontier** era of particle physics, we increase the capabilities to probe new light sectors.
- As a guiding principle, we consider different **portals** between the **Dark Sector** and the **SM**
- In this work we considered a **vector portal** to a fermionic **inelastic Dark Matter** sector



general vector mediators

$iDM_Q$

- We developed a code that computes the relic density **ReD-DeLiVeR**
- With general mediators, we showed that we can **unlock new regions of the parameter space** of the vanilla dark photon model

$$\curvearrowright B - 3L_\tau \quad \curvearrowright L_\mu - L_\tau$$

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thermal relics      evade indirect and direct detection      evade CMB bounds

general vector mediators

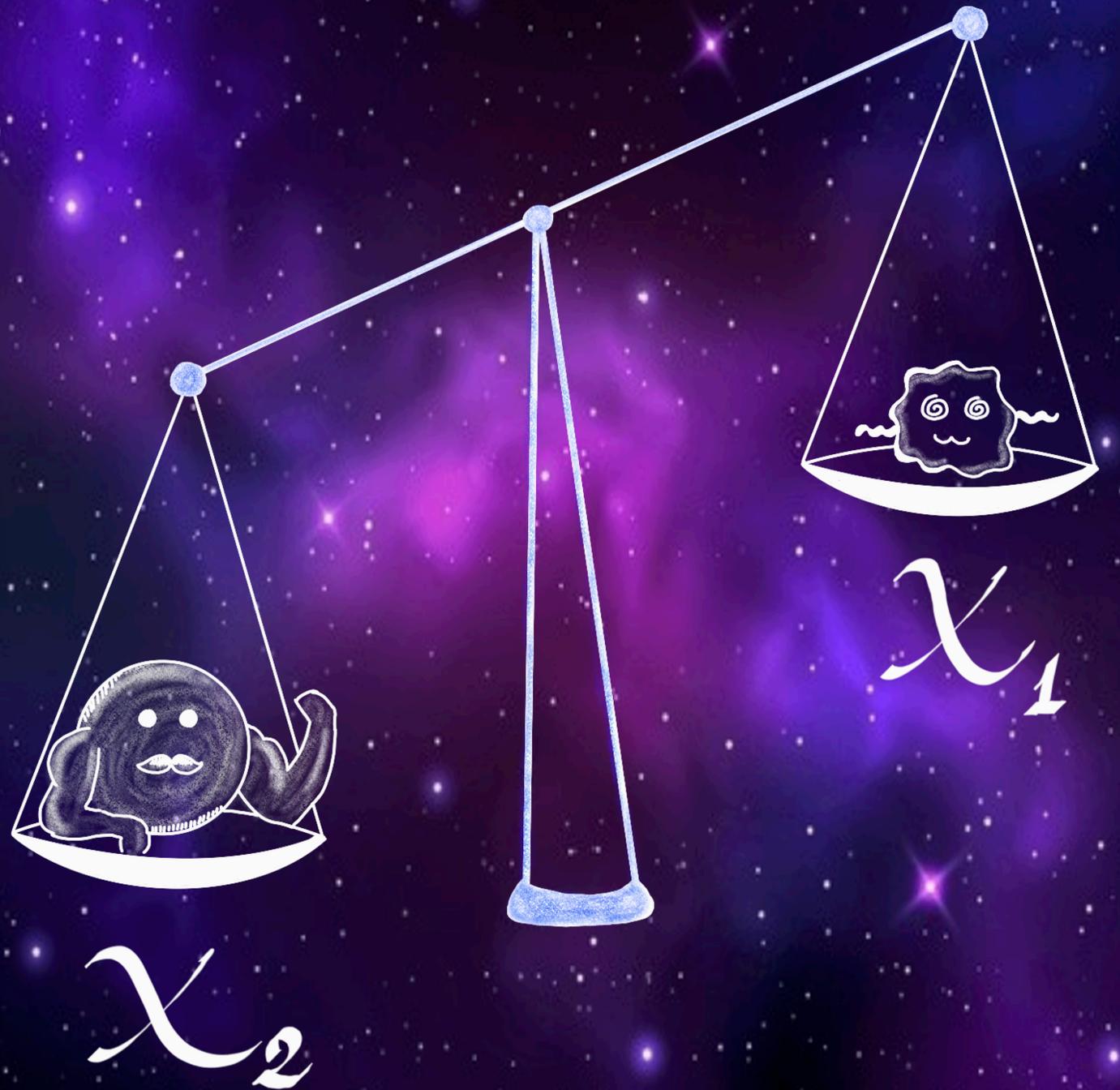
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$$\rightarrow B - 3L_\tau \quad \rightarrow L_\mu - L_\tau$$

Thank you for your  
kind attention!

Thank you  
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BACKUP

# Inelastic Dark Matter

DM Thermal Freeze-out · WIMP miracle

We know that freeze-out happens when  $\Gamma \sim H$

$$m_\chi \sim \alpha_{\text{eff}} \sqrt{T_{\text{eq}} M_{\text{Pl}}} \sim \alpha_{\text{eff}} \times 30 \text{ TeV}$$

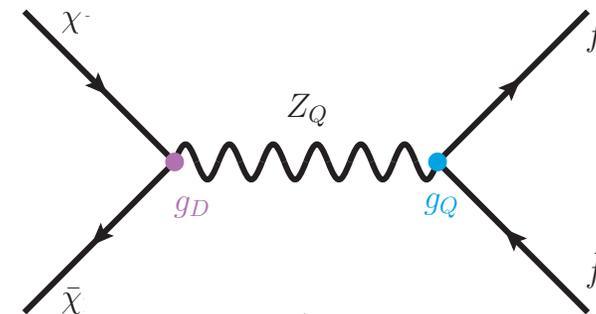
WIMP miracle

↪ For couplings similar to the electroweak coupling ( $\alpha_{\text{eff}} \sim 10^{-2}$ ) ⇒ EW scale emerges naturally

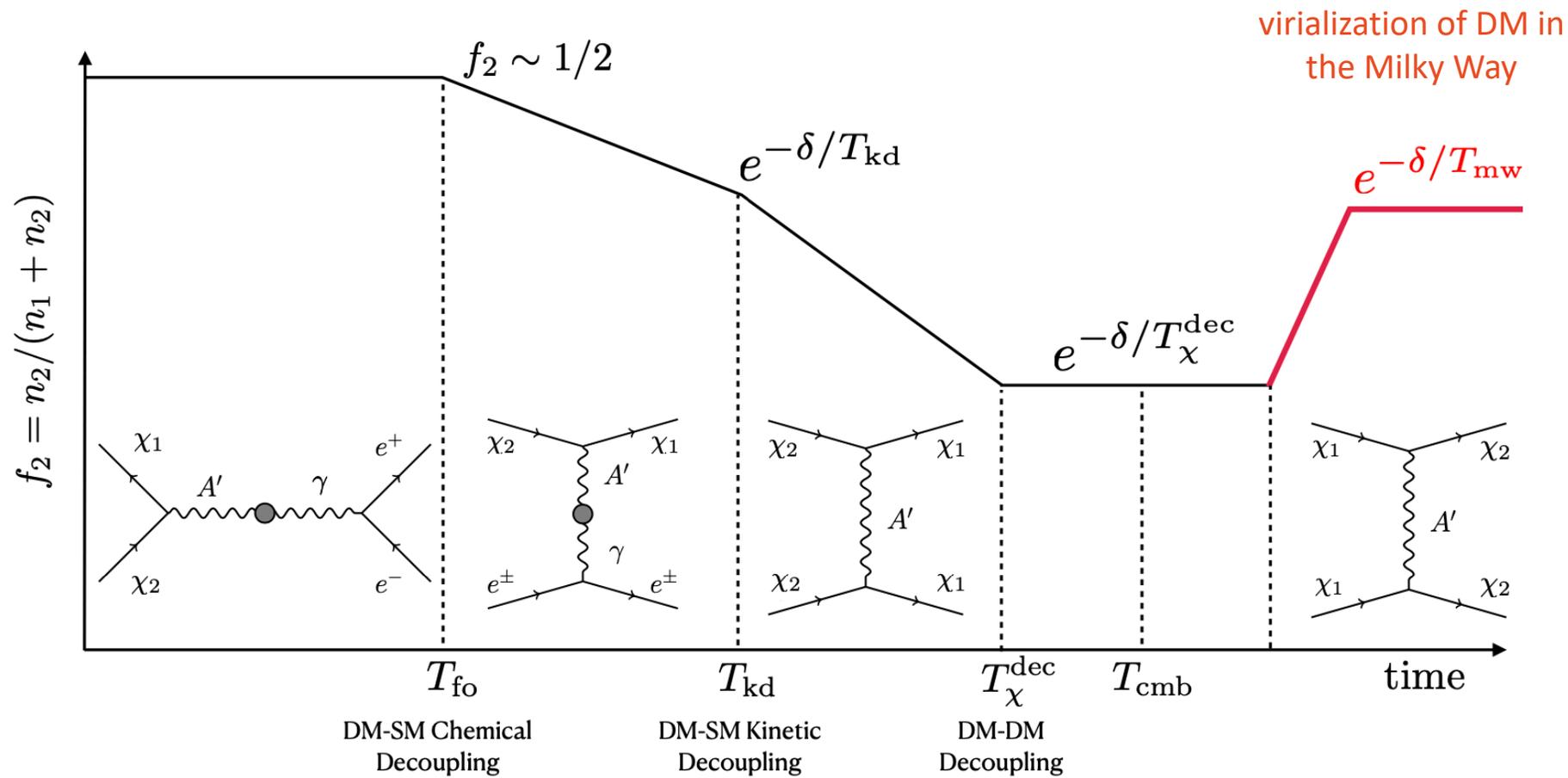
However, this also implies that

$$m_{\text{DM}} \gtrsim \frac{m_Z^2}{(T_{\text{eq}} m_{\text{Pl}})^{1/2}} \sim \text{GeV}.$$

Hence, sub-GeV DM motivates the presence of new light mediators



# Inelastic Dark Matter



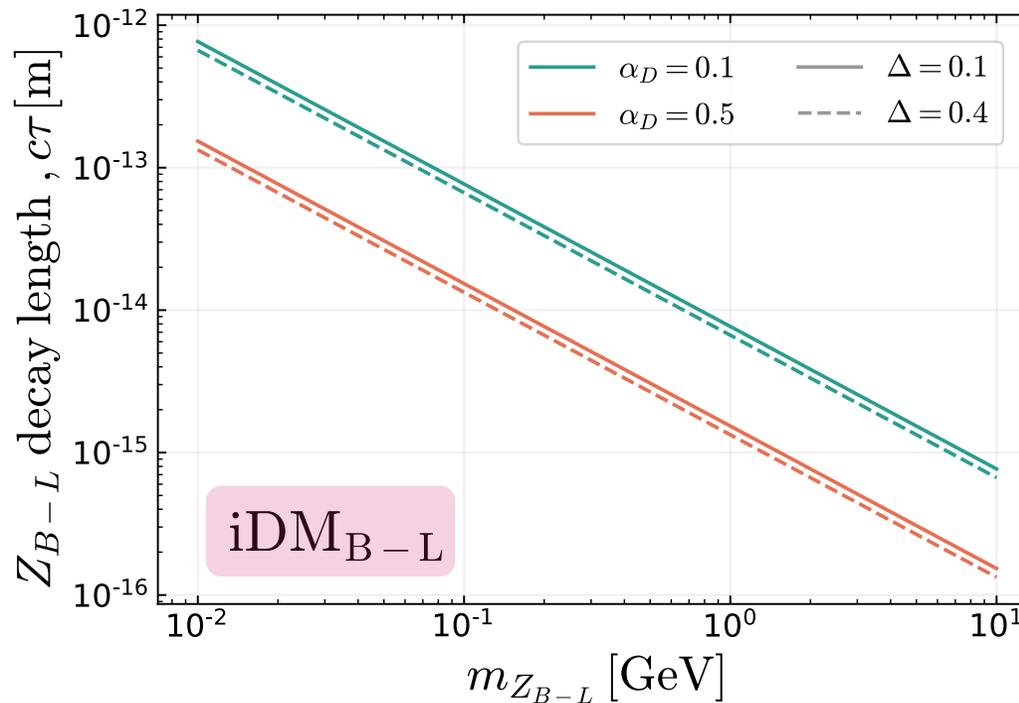
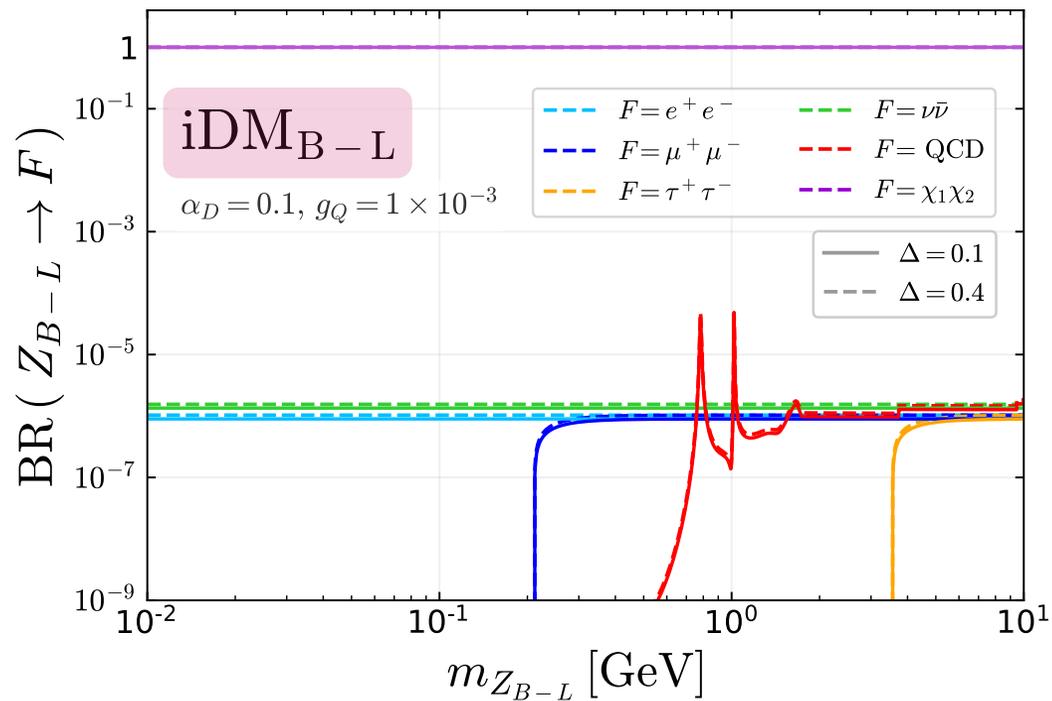
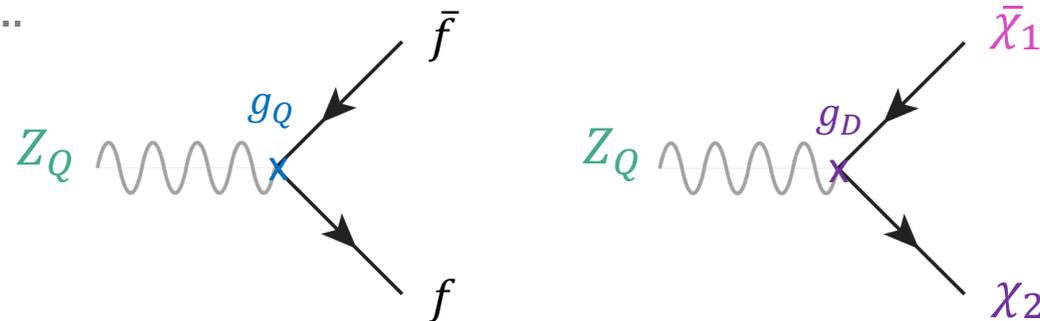
arXiv:2311.00032v1 [hep-ph]

# Inelastic Dark Matter · Decay Rates

## Decay rates · Mediator

→ Hierarchy  $m_{Z_Q} > m_1 + m_2$

→ Limit  $g_D \gg g_Q$

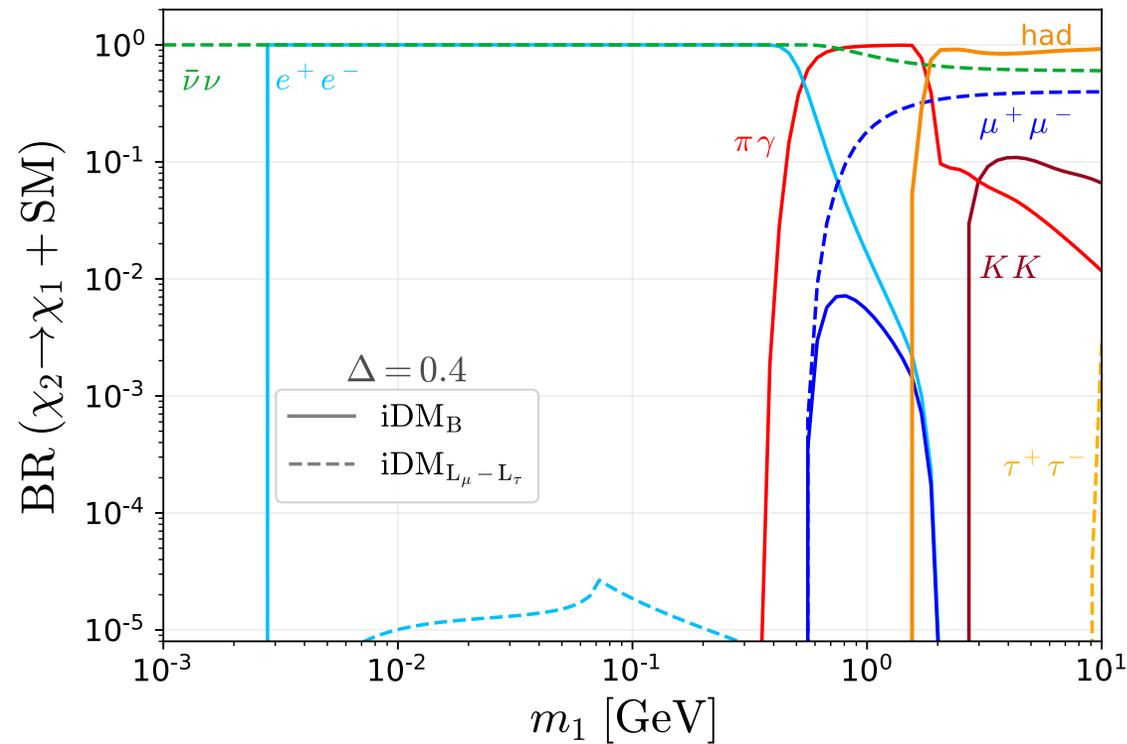
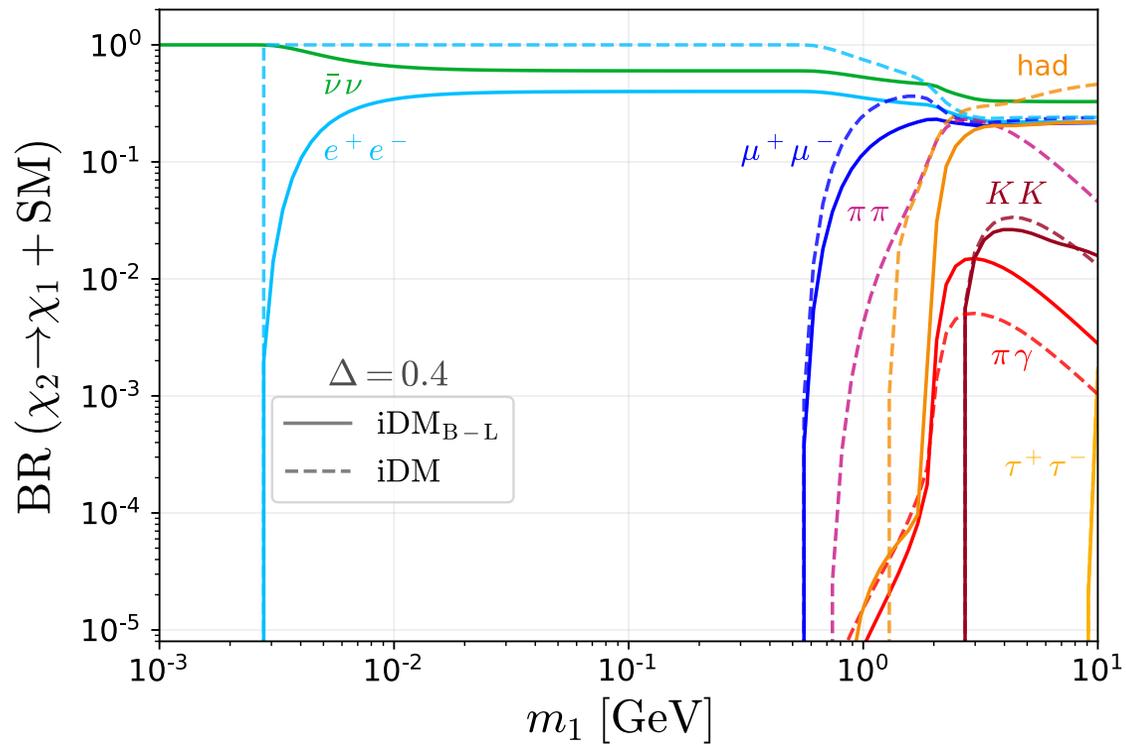
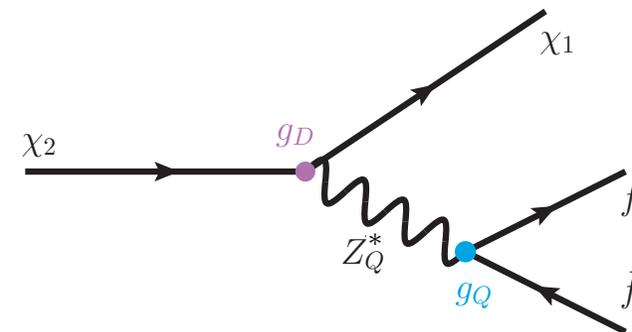


prompt-decay

# Inelastic Dark Matter · Decay Rates

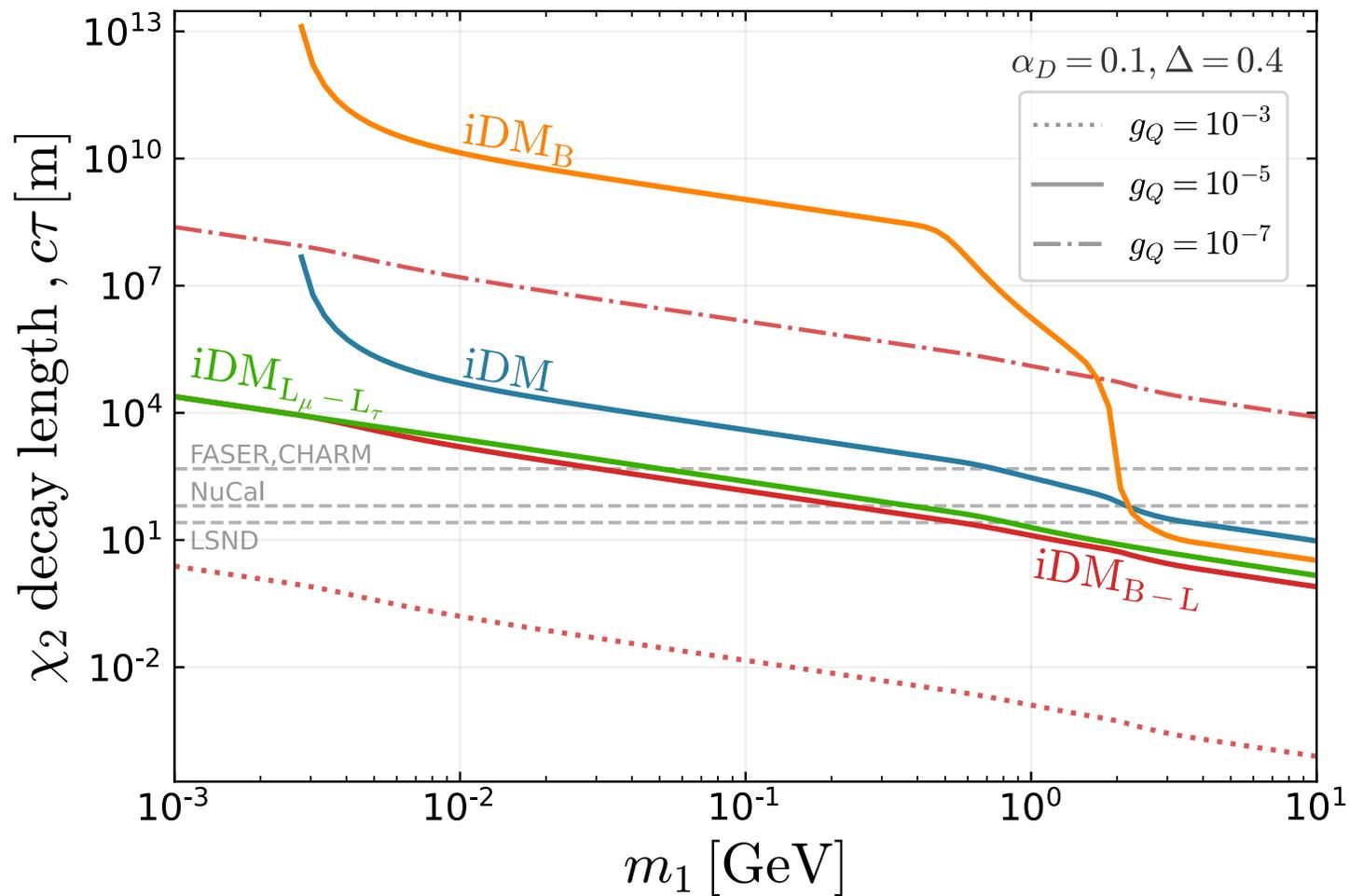
Decay rates · Dark fermion  $\chi_2$

$$\Gamma(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \bar{f} f) \simeq \frac{4 \alpha_Q \alpha_D \Delta^5 m_{Z_Q}}{15 \pi R^5}$$



# Inelastic Dark Matter · Decay Rates

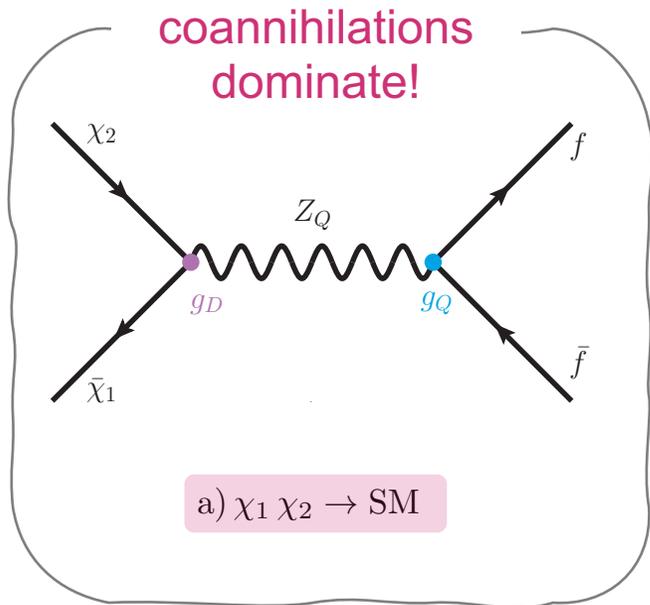
Decay rates · Dark fermion  $\chi_2$



# Inelastic Dark Matter · Relic Density Computation

## Boltzmann Equation

$$\frac{dY_{1,2}}{dx} = \frac{s}{Hx} \left[ -\langle\sigma v\rangle_{12\rightarrow ff} (Y_1 Y_2 - Y_1^{\text{eq}} Y_2^{\text{eq}}) \pm 2 \langle\sigma v\rangle_{22\rightarrow 11} \left( (Y_2)^2 - \left( Y_1 \frac{Y_2^{\text{eq}}}{Y_1^{\text{eq}}} \right)^2 \right) \right. \\ \left. \pm \left( \langle\sigma v\rangle_{2f\rightarrow 1f} Y_f^{\text{eq}} + \frac{1}{s} \langle\Gamma\rangle_{2\rightarrow 1ff} \right) \left( Y_2 - Y_1 \frac{Y_2^{\text{eq}}}{Y_1^{\text{eq}}} \right) \right],$$

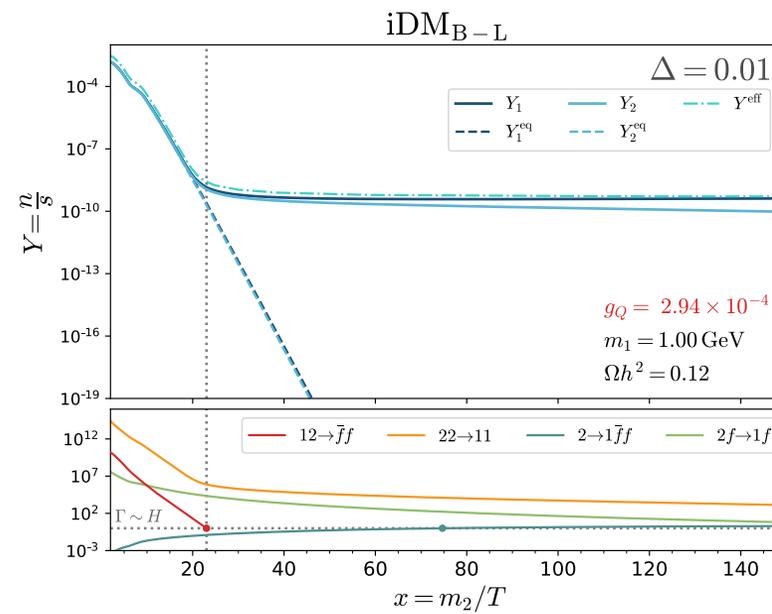
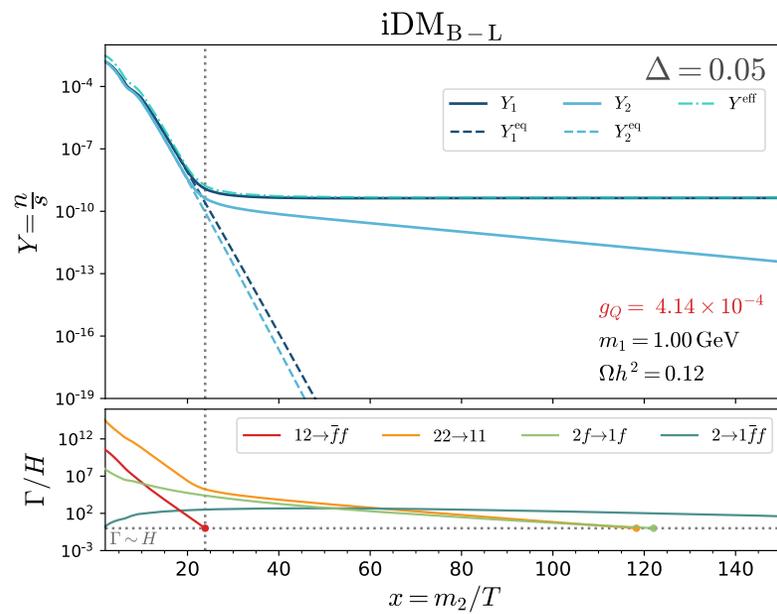
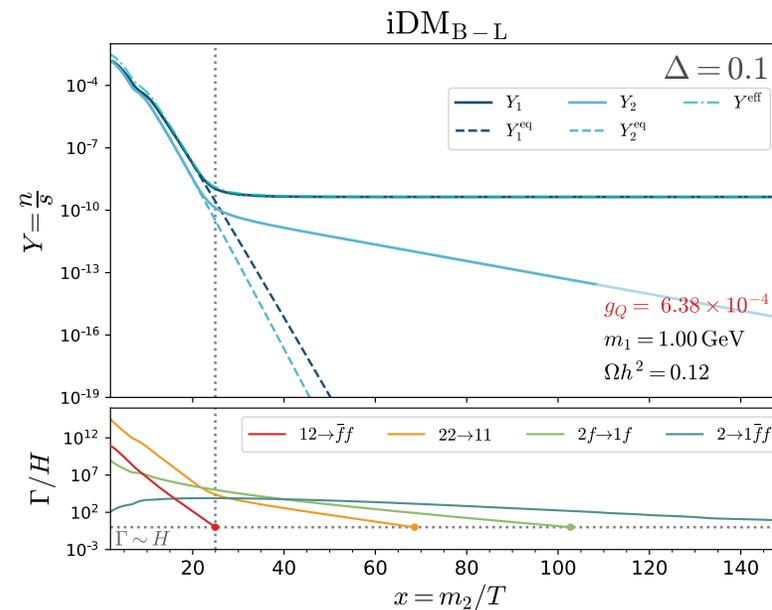
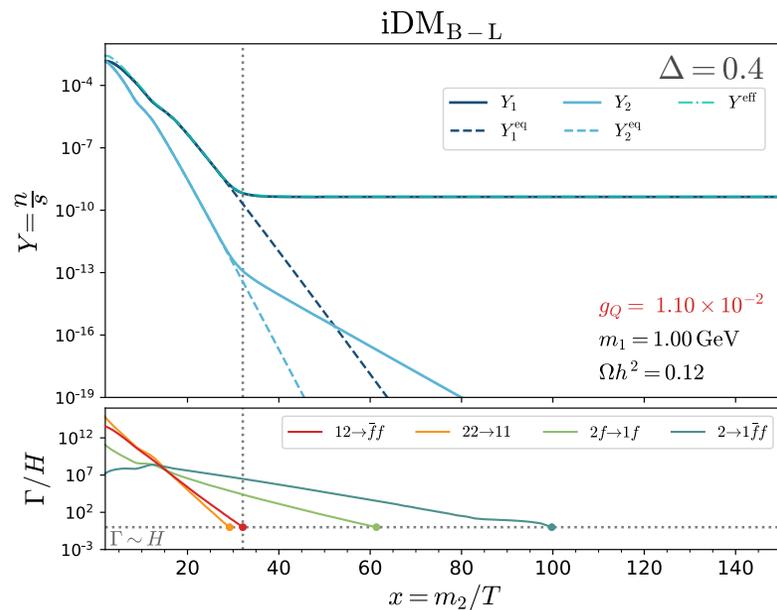


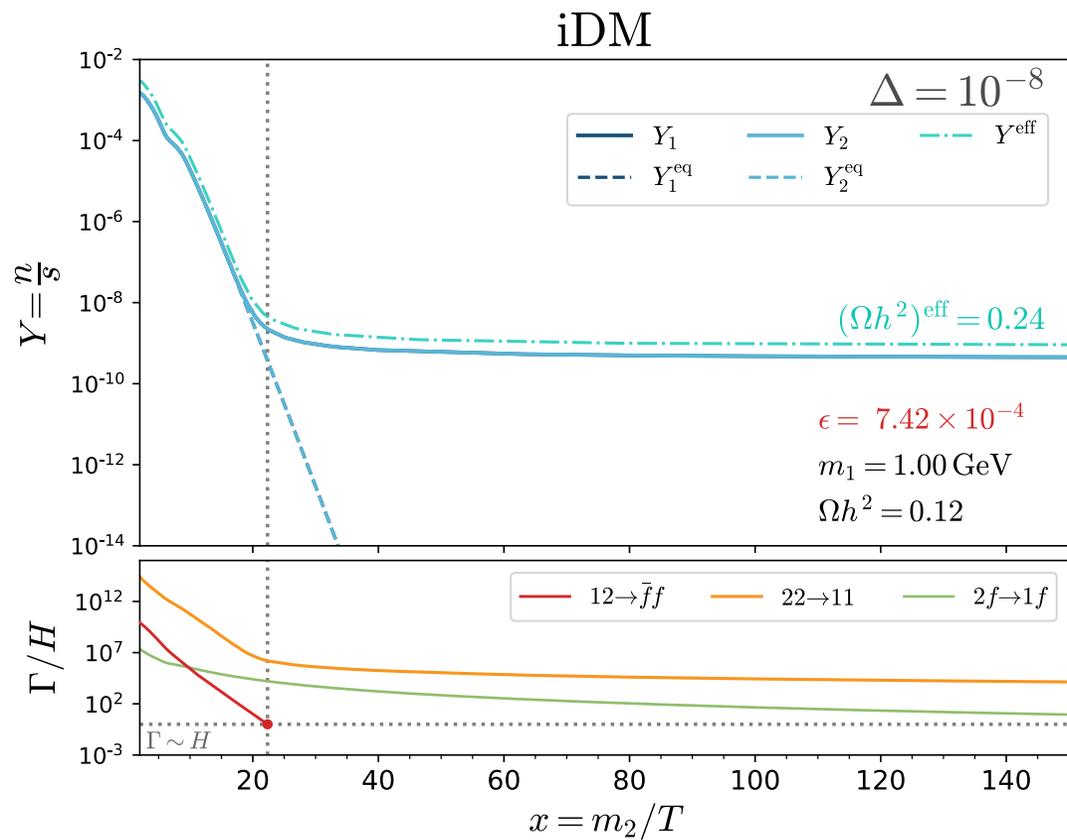
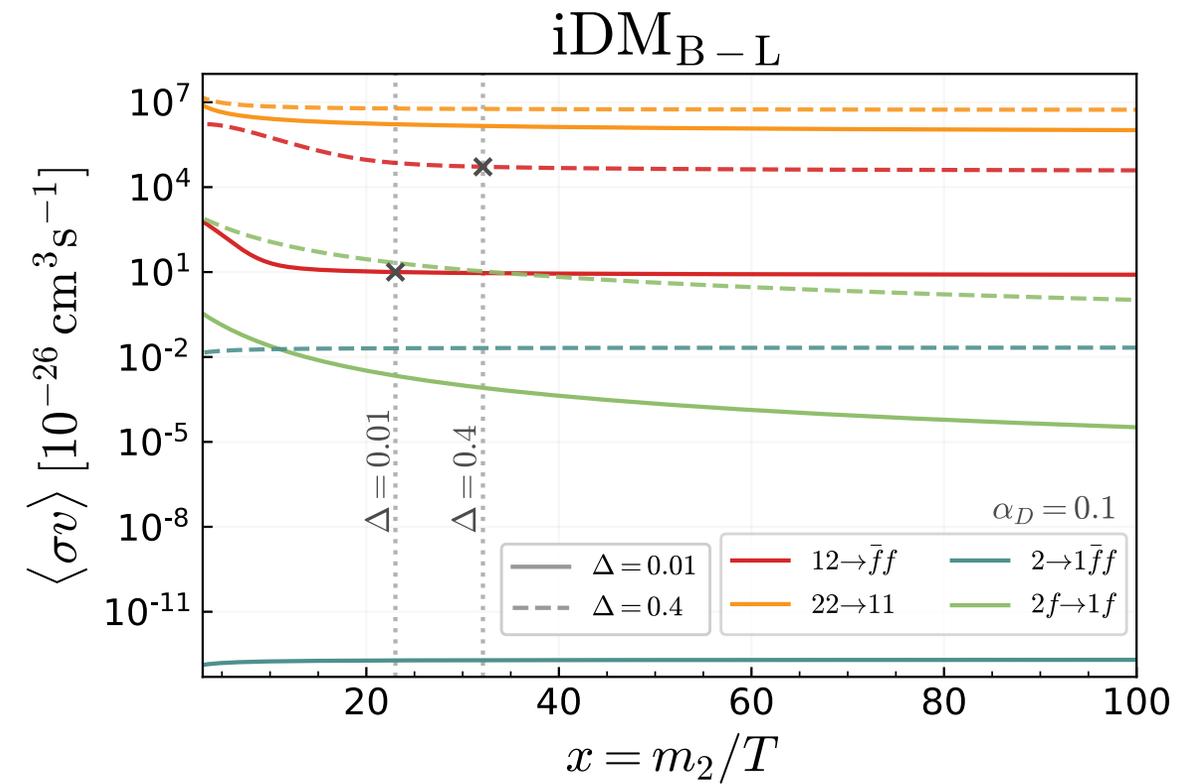
we can simplify by considering

$$n = n_1 + n_2$$

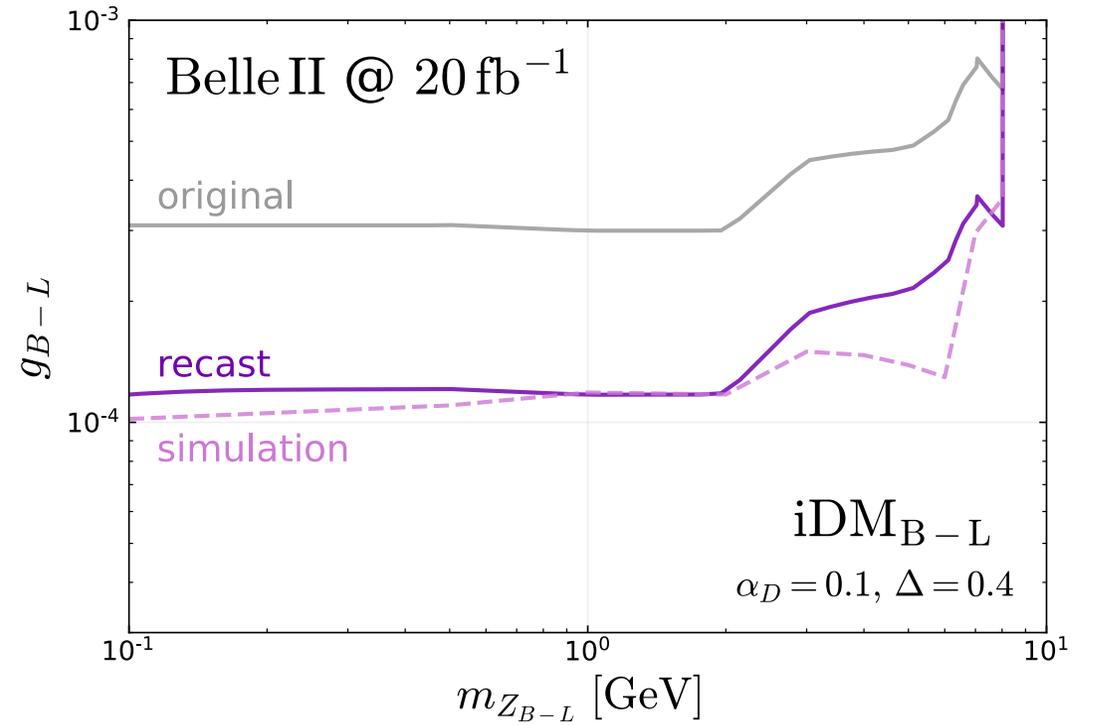
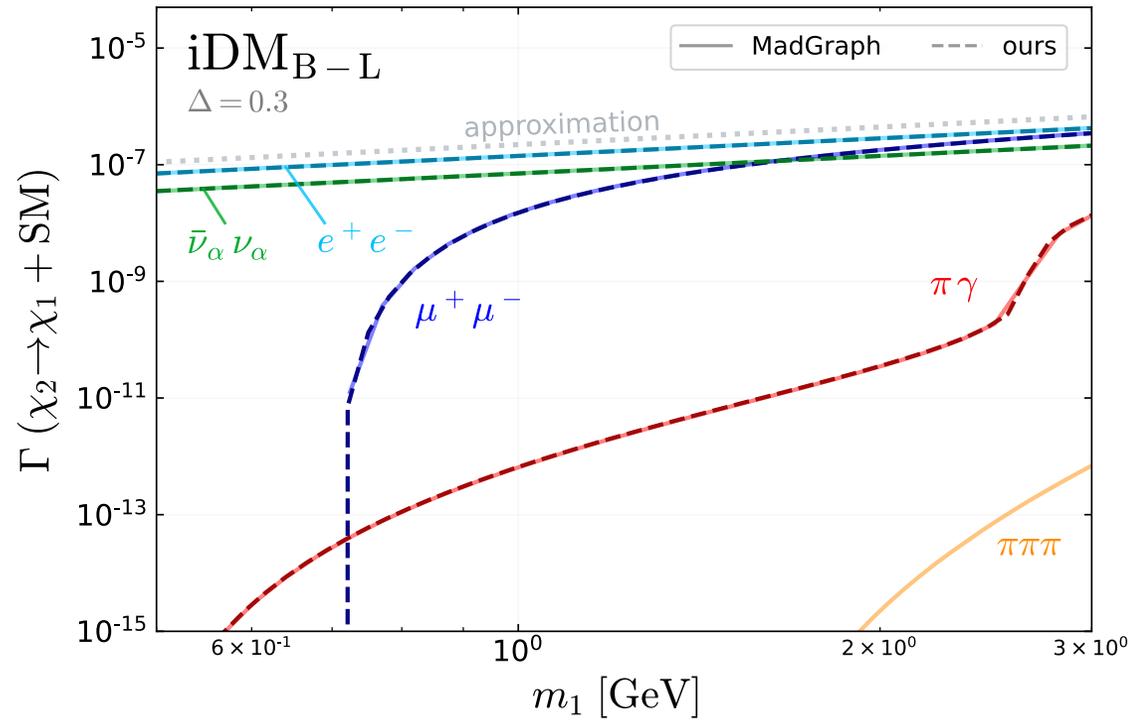
$$\frac{dY}{dx} = -2 \frac{s}{xH} \langle\sigma v\rangle_{\text{eff}} (Y^2 - Y_{\text{eq}}^2)$$

$$\langle\sigma v\rangle_{\text{eff}} = \langle\sigma v\rangle_{12\rightarrow ff} \frac{n_1^{\text{eq}} n_2^{\text{eq}}}{(n^{\text{eq}})^2}$$

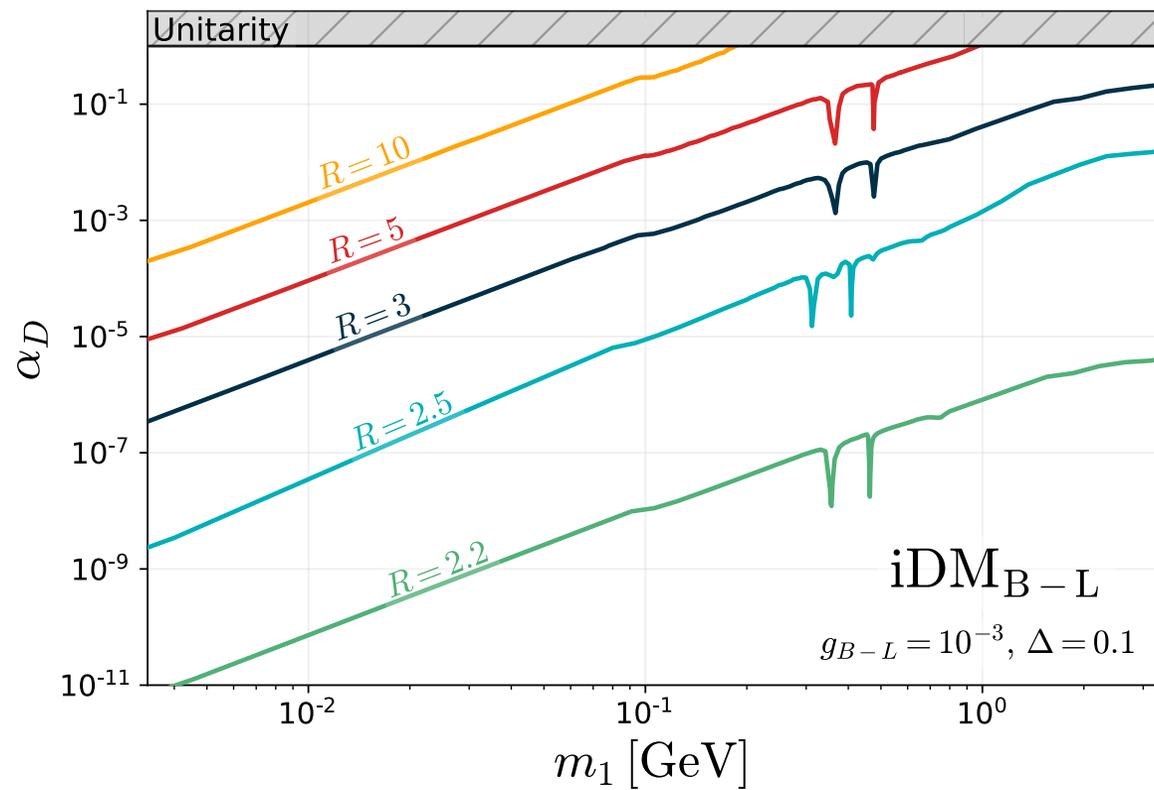
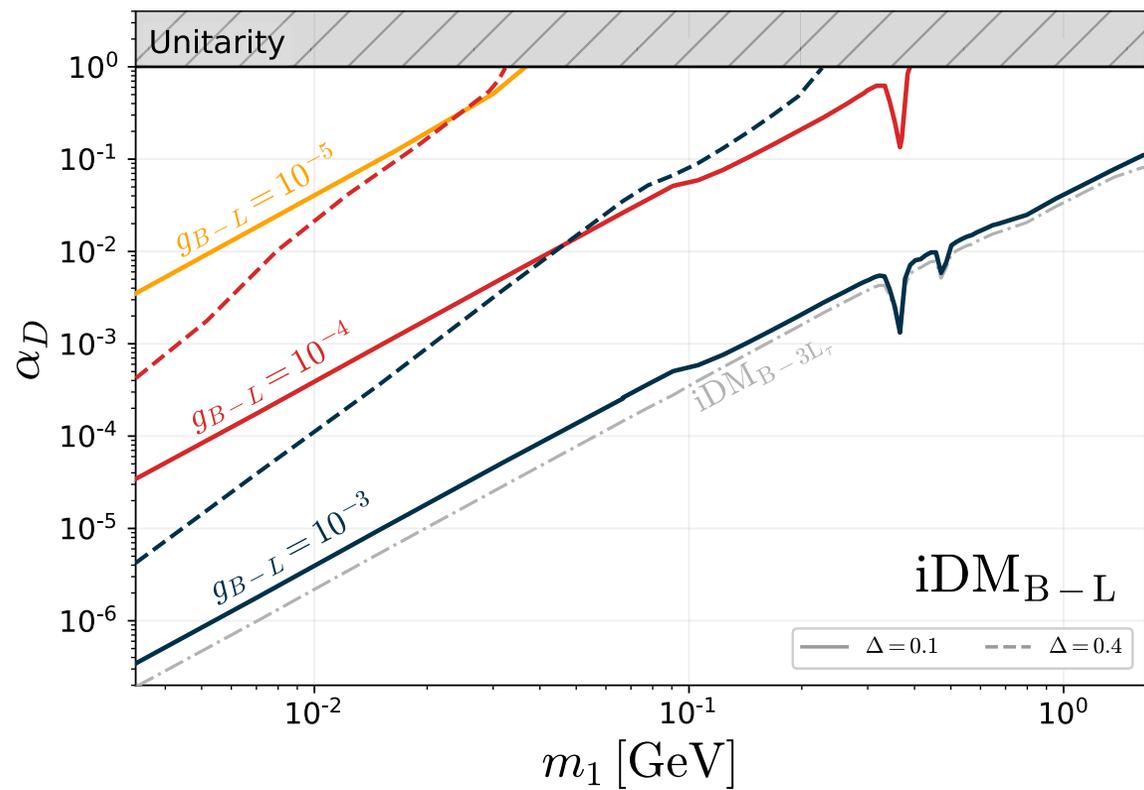




# Simulation Checks

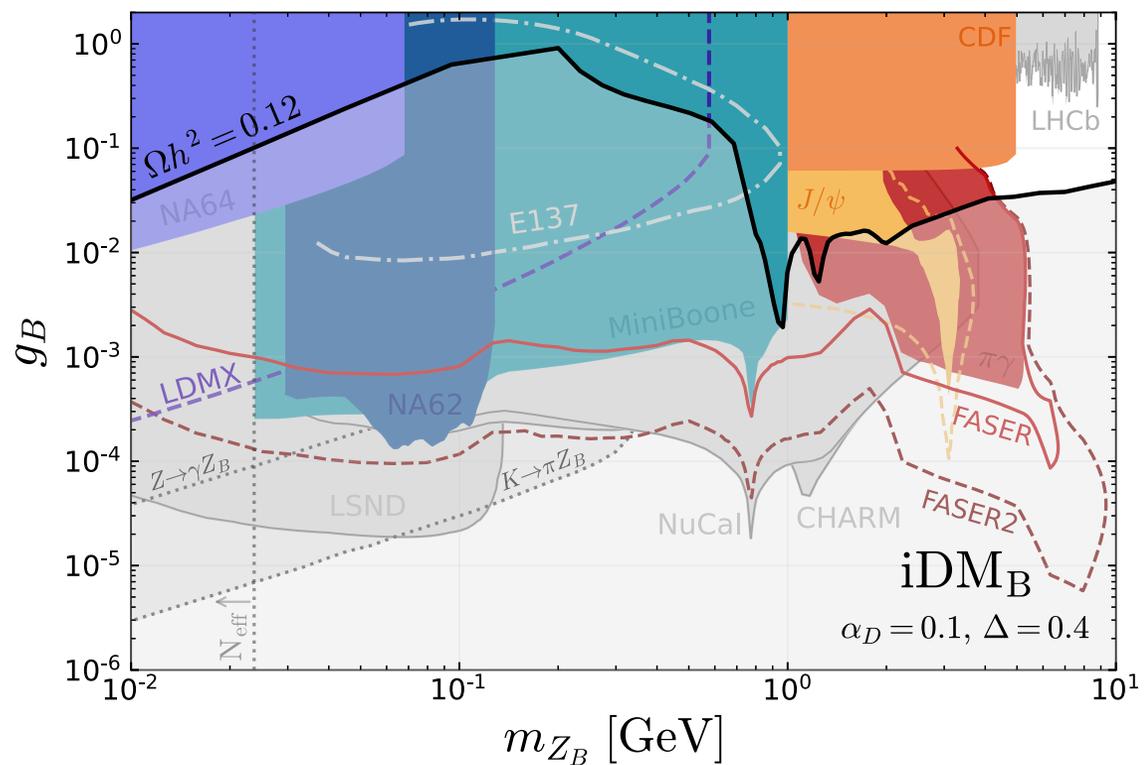


# Different thermal targets

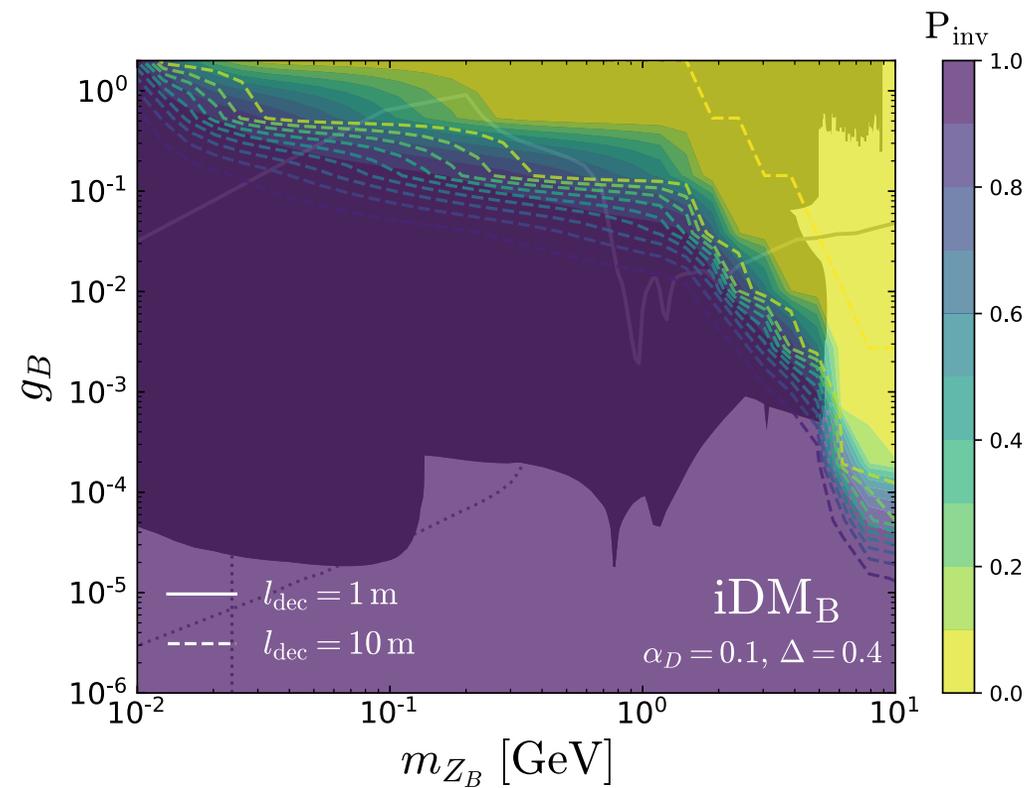


# Inelastic Dark Matter · Bounds

→  $iDM_B$



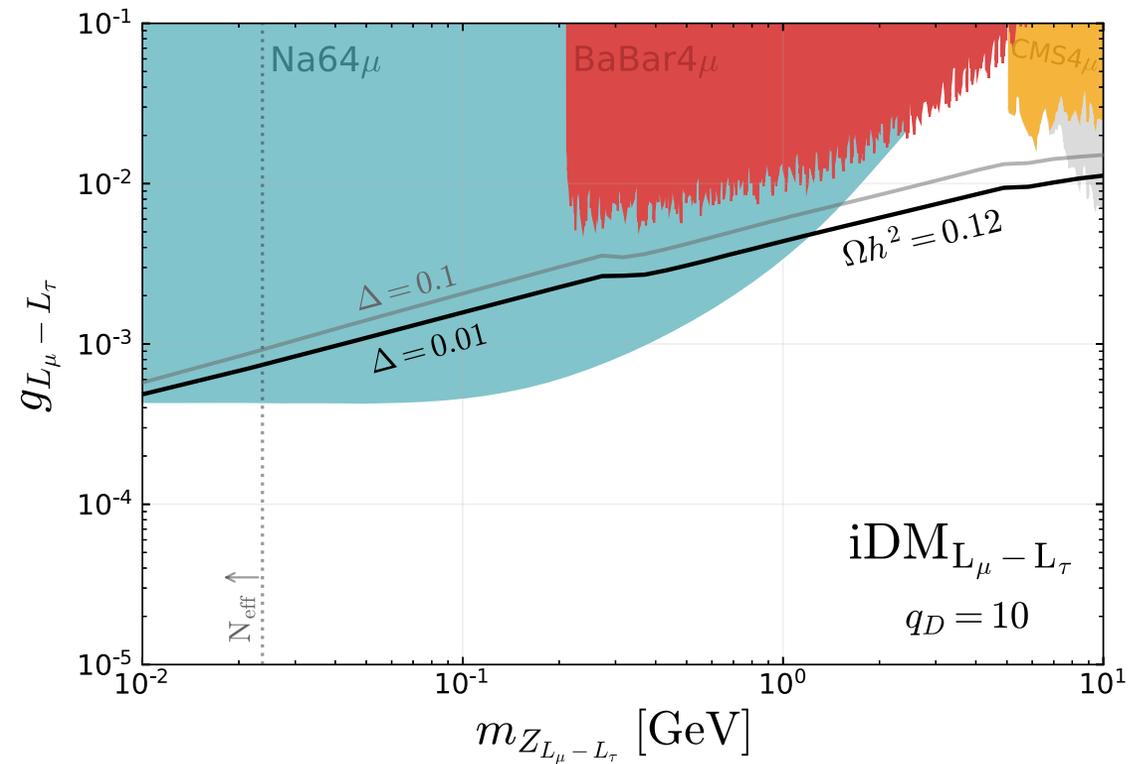
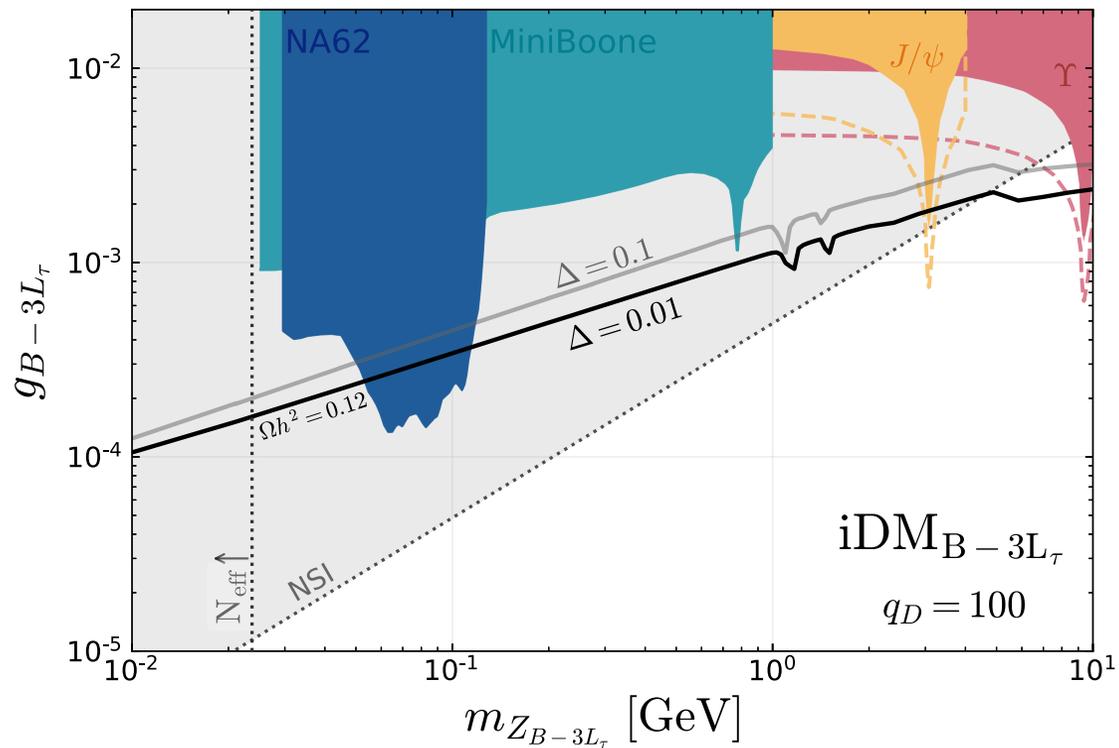
⇒



# Fixed Dark Charges

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{int}}^{\text{D}} = i g_D Z_{Q\mu} \bar{\chi}_2 \gamma^\mu \chi_1 + \text{h.c.}$$

$$g_D \equiv g_Q q_D$$



# Details on the Experimental Limits

- Invisible searches

BaBar, Belle II, LDMX, NA62 and NA64-*e*

$$\frac{\sigma_{Z_Q}}{\sigma_{Z_\gamma}} \{ \text{BR}(Z_Q \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_2) [ \text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \bar{\nu} \nu) + P_{\text{out}}^{\chi_2} \text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 + \text{vis}) ] + \text{BR}(Z_Q \rightarrow \bar{\nu} \nu) \} - 1 = 0$$

$$P_{\text{out}}^{\chi_2} = e^{-L_{\text{out}}/\lambda_{\chi_2}}$$

↪ recast from invisible Dark photon limits

- Semi-visible searches

E137, CHARM, NuCal and LSND

$$\frac{\sigma_{Z_Q}}{\sigma_{Z_\gamma}} \left( \frac{\text{BR}(Z_Q \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_2)}{\text{BR}(Z_\gamma \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_2)} \right) \left( \frac{\text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow Z_Q^* \rightarrow \chi_1 e^+ e^-)}{\text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow Z_\gamma^* \rightarrow \chi_1 e^+ e^-)} \right) \left( \frac{\varepsilon_Q(\tau_{\chi_2})}{\varepsilon_\gamma(\tau_{\chi_2})} \right) - 1 = 0$$

↪ recast from the original iDM limits

# Details on the Experimental Limits

- 4μ searches from BaBar and CMS

↪ constrained  $L_\mu - L_\tau$  mediators,

$$\frac{g_Q}{g_{L_\mu - L_\tau}^{\text{exp}}} \left[ \frac{\text{BR}(Z_Q \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-) + \text{BR}(Z_Q \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_2) \text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \mu^+ \mu^-) P_{\text{in}}^{\chi_2}}{\text{BR}(Z_{L_\mu - L_\tau} \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-)} \right] - 1 = 0$$

$$P_{\text{in}}^{\chi_2} = e^{-L_{\text{in}}/\lambda_{\chi_2}} - e^{-L_{\text{out}}/\lambda_{\chi_2}}$$

- Meson decays

$J/\Psi$  and  $\Upsilon$  invisible decay searches

$$\frac{\text{BR}(J/\Psi \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_2)}{\text{BR}(J/\Psi \rightarrow e^+ e^-)} = \frac{\alpha_D}{\alpha_e} \left( \frac{q_Q^c g_Q}{q_{\text{em}}^c e} \right)^2 \frac{m_V^4}{(m_{Z_Q}^2 - m_V^2)^2 + m_{Z_Q}^2 \Gamma_{Z_Q}^2} \\ \times \left( 1 - \frac{\Delta^2}{R^2} m_r^2 \right)^{3/2} \left( 1 + \frac{m_r^2 (\Delta + 2)^2}{2R^2} \right) \sqrt{1 - \frac{m_r^2 (\Delta + 2)^2}{R^2}}$$

$$\text{BR}(V \rightarrow \text{inv})|_{\text{iDM}_Q} = \text{BR}(V \rightarrow \chi_1 \chi_2) [\text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 \bar{\nu} \nu) + P_{\text{out}}^{\chi_2} \text{BR}(\chi_2 \rightarrow \chi_1 + \text{vis})] \\ + \text{BR}(V \rightarrow Z_Q^* \rightarrow \bar{\nu} \nu). \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{BR}(V \rightarrow \text{inv})|_{\text{iDM}_Q} < \text{BR}(V \rightarrow \text{inv})|_{\text{exp}}$$