

Evolution of the Nuclear Modification Factors with Rapidity and Centrality in $d + \text{Au}$ Collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200 \text{ GeV}$

I. Arsene,¹⁰ I. G. Bearden,⁷ D. Beavis,¹ C. Besliu,¹⁰ B. Budick,⁶ H. Bøggild,⁷ C. Chasman,¹ C. H. Christensen,⁷ P. Christiansen,⁷ J. Cibor,³ R. Debbé,¹ E. Enger,¹² J. J. Gaardhøje,⁷ M. Germinario,⁷ K. Hagel,⁸ H. Ito,¹ A. Jipa,¹⁰ F. Jundt,² J. I. Jørdre,⁹ C. E. Jørgensen,⁷ R. Karabowicz,⁴ E. J. Kim,^{1,11} T. Kozik,⁴ T. M. Larsen,¹² J. H. Lee,¹ Y. K. Lee,⁵ S. Lindal,¹² R. Lystad,⁹ G. Løvholden,¹² Z. Majka,⁴ A. Makeev,⁸ M. Mikelsen,¹² M. Murray,^{8,11} J. Natowitz,⁸ B. Neumann,¹¹ B. S. Nielsen,⁷ D. Ouerdane,⁷ R. Płaneta,⁴ F. Rami,² C. Ristea,¹⁰ O. Ristea,¹⁰ D. Röhrich,⁹ B. H. Samset,¹² D. Sandberg,⁷ S. J. Sanders,¹¹ R. A. Scheetz,¹ P. Staszczel,⁷ T. S. Tveter,¹² F. Videbæk,¹ R. Wada,⁸ Z. Yin,⁹ and I. S. Zgura¹⁰

(BRAHMS Collaboration)

¹Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, New York 11973, USA

²Institut de Recherches Subatomiques and Université Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg, France

³Institute of Nuclear Physics, Krakow, Poland

⁴Smoluchowski Institute of Physics, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

⁵Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland 21218, USA

⁶New York University, New York, New York 10003, USA

⁷Niels Bohr Institute, Blegdamsvej 17, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen 2100, Denmark

⁸Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas 17843, USA

⁹University of Bergen, Department of Physics, Bergen, Norway

¹⁰University of Bucharest, Romania

¹¹University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045, USA

¹²University of Oslo, Department of Physics, Oslo, Norway

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We report on a study of the transverse momentum dependence of nuclear modification factors R_{dAu} for charged hadrons produced in deuteron + gold collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200 \text{ GeV}$, as a function of collision centrality and of the pseudorapidity ($\eta = 0, 1, 2.2, 3.2$) of the produced hadrons. We find a significant and systematic decrease of R_{dAu} with increasing rapidity. The midrapidity enhancement and the forward rapidity suppression are more pronounced in central collisions relative to peripheral collisions. These results are relevant to the study of the possible onset of gluon saturation at energies reached at BNL RHIC.

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Studies of deep inelastic scattering of leptons on protons and nuclei have revealed a large component of gluons with small x (i.e., fraction of the nucleon momentum) that appears to diverge with decreasing x [1]. However, it has also been suggested that the density of gluons remains finite due to the increased role of gluon-gluon correlations (“gluon fusion”), forcing an upper limit on the total number of highly delocalized small- x gluons [2,3]. Phenomenological descriptions of DESY ep collider HERA and Fermilab results [4,5] based on gluon saturation appear to successfully describe the data. Consequently, nuclei at high energies may be thought of as highly correlated systems of small- x gluons. A QCD based theory for dense small- x systems, termed the color glass condensate (CGC) has been developed [6].

Collisions between hadronic systems at a center-of-mass energy $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200 \text{ GeV}$ at the BNL Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC) provide a window on the small- x gluon distributions of swiftly moving nuclei. In particular, collisions between deuterons and gold nuclei

in which hadrons with $p_T > 1 \text{ GeV}/c$, mostly produced by quark-gluon interactions, are detected close to the deuteron beam direction, allow for probing the small- x components of the wave function of the gold nuclei. It has been predicted that gluon saturation effects will manifest themselves as a suppression in the transverse momentum distribution below a value that sets the scale of the effect [6,7]. The transverse momentum scale for the onset of gluon saturation depends on the gluon density and thus on the number of nucleons, and is connected with the rapidity y of measured particles by $Q_s^2 \sim A^{1/3} e^{\lambda y}$, where $\lambda \sim 0.2\text{--}0.3$ is obtained from fits to HERA data. Thus saturation effects are most evident at large y or pseudorapidity η , i.e., at small angles relative to the beam direction. At RHIC energies and at midrapidity the saturation scale for Au ions is expected to be $\sim 2 \text{ GeV}^2$ [6,7].

We report measurements of transverse momentum spectra of hadrons from $p + p$ and $d + \text{Au}$ collisions at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200 \text{ GeV}$ in four pseudorapidity ranges around $\eta = 0, 1, 2.2,$ and 3.2 (rapidities of the deuteron and gold

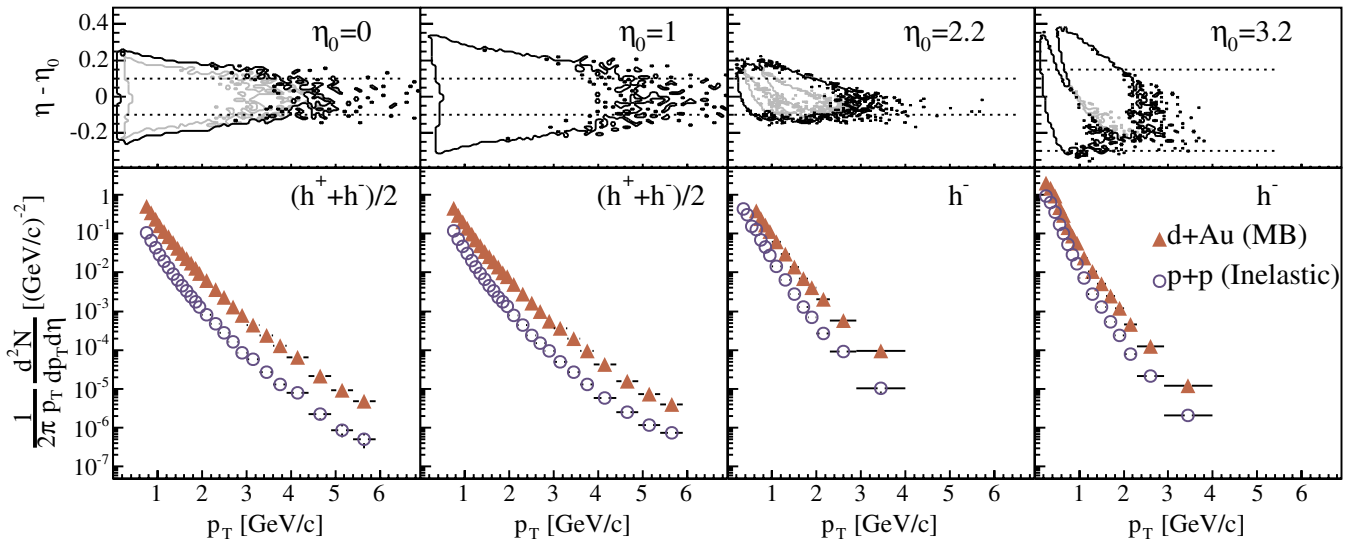


FIG. 1 (color online). Bottom row: Invariant yield distributions for charged hadrons produced in $d + Au$ and $p + p$ collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 200$ GeV at pseudorapidities $\eta = 0, 1.0, 2.2, 3.2$. Horizontal lines indicate bin width. Top row: Outline of the data samples in η vs p_T collected with the BRAHMS spectrometers at the various angle and magnetic field settings (shifted in η); gray lines are used to indicate the overlap of the settings. The dotted lines indicate the cuts applied in η .

nuclei are $+5.4$ and -5.4 , respectively). A pion with transverse momentum $p_T = 2$ GeV/ c , at these rapidities, probes the gluon distribution in the gold nuclei down to x values that range from 0.01 at $\eta = 0$ to 4×10^{-4} at $\eta = 3.2$. We compare the yields from $d + Au$ collisions to those from $p + p$, scaled by the average number of binary collisions $\langle N_{coll} \rangle$ in a $d + Au$ event. Results around midrapidity have previously been reported [8,9].

The data presented here were collected with the BRAHMS detector system [10], consisting of event characterization detectors and two rotatable magnetic spectrometers: the forward spectrometer (FS) and the midrapidity spectrometer (MRS). For the present studies the MRS was positioned at 90 and 40 degrees and the FS at 12 and 4 degrees with respect to the deuteron direction. The experimental method and analysis techniques employed here are similar to those used for the study of $d + Au$ and $Au + Au$ collisions [9], except that the present data at $\eta = 2.2$ and $\eta = 3.2$ were analyzed using the front part of the FS detector systems only. The minimum-bias trigger is estimated to select $91\% \pm 3\%$ of the $d + Au$ inelastic cross section and $71\% \pm 5\%$ of the total inelastic proton-proton cross section of 41 mb. The $p + p$ yields have been corrected for trigger bias. Our trigger selects nonsingle-diffractive events and we estimate using the PYTHIA model that the correction should be $13 \pm 5\%$, approximately independent of p_T and η .

Figure 1 shows the invariant yields of charged hadrons obtained from $d + Au$ collisions and $p + p$ collisions in narrow pseudorapidity intervals around $\eta = 0, 1, 2.2$, and 3.2 . The spectra at $\eta = 2.2$ and 3.2 are for negative hadrons only. Each distribution was constructed from independent measurements at several magnetic field set-

tings, as shown in the upper panels of Fig. 1 and is corrected for the spectrometer acceptance and tracking efficiency. The FS acceptance ranges from 2 – 4% and is known with an accuracy that ranges from 3 – 5% of those values. No corrections for the finite momentum resolution, binning effects, absorption or weak decays have been applied; the 15% systematic error on the spectra includes the contribution from these effects. However, at the overlap between field settings at four degrees (between one and 2 GeV/ c), the systematic error is 20% . The momentum resolution of the spectrometers at the maximum magnetic field setting is $\delta p/p = 0.0077p$ for the MRS and $\delta p/p = 0.0018p$ for the FS, (with p in GeV/ c).

Figure 2 compares the $d + Au$ spectra to $p + p$ distributions using the nuclear modification factor defined by

$$R_{dAu} \equiv \frac{1}{\langle N_{coll} \rangle} \frac{d^2 N^{d+Au}/dp_T d\eta}{d^2 N_{inel}^{p+p}/dp_T d\eta}. \quad (1)$$

For the minimum-bias sample we estimate the mean number of binary collisions $\langle N_{coll} \rangle = 7.2 \pm 0.3$, using the HIJING v.1.383 event generator [11] and a GEANT based Monte Carlo simulation of the experiment. In these ratios most systematic errors cancel. Remaining systematic errors arising from variations in collision vertex distributions, trigger efficiencies, background conditions, etc., are estimated to be less than 10% at $\eta = 0$ and less than 15% at all other angle settings.

Figure 2 reveals a clear variation of the R_{dAu} as a function of pseudorapidity. At midrapidity, $R_{dAu}(p_T > 2 \text{ GeV}/c) > 1$ shows a Cronin type enhancement [12] as compared to the binary scaling limit. At $\eta = 1$ the

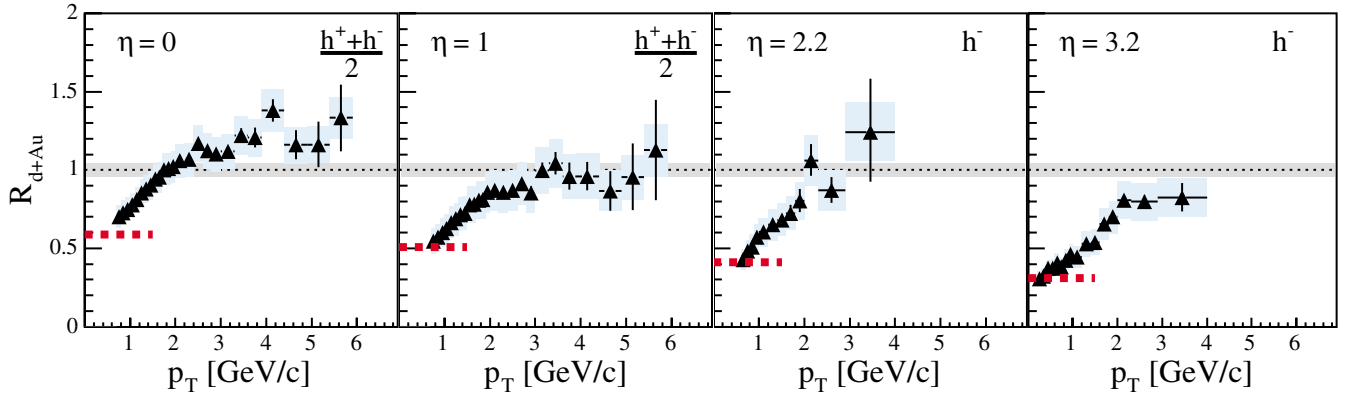


FIG. 2 (color online). Nuclear modification factor for charged hadrons at pseudorapidities $\eta = 0, 1.0, 2.2, 3.2$. One standard deviation statistical errors are shown with error bars. Systematic errors are shown with shaded boxes with widths set by the bin sizes. The shaded band around unity indicates the estimated error on the normalization to $\langle N_{coll} \rangle$. Dashed lines at $p_T < 1.5$ GeV/c show the normalized charged-particle density ratio $\frac{1}{\langle N_{coll} \rangle} \frac{dN/d\eta(\text{Au})}{dN/d\eta(pp)}$.

Cronin peak is not present and at more forward rapidities ($\eta = 3.2$) the data show a suppression at all p_T . The values of the R_{dAu} ratios at low p_T are observed to be similar to the ratio of charged-particle pseudorapidity densities in $d + \text{Au}$ [13] and $p + p$ collisions [14] $\frac{1}{\langle N_{coll} \rangle} \times \frac{dN/d\eta(\text{Au})}{dN/d\eta(pp)}$ shown in Fig. 2 with dashed lines at $p_T < 1.5$ GeV/c.

Figure 3 shows the ratio R_{cp} of yields from collisions of a given centrality class (0–20% or 30–50%) to yields from more peripheral collisions (60–80%), scaled by the mean number of binary collisions in each sample. The centrality selection is based on charged-particle multiplicity in the range $-2.2 < \eta < 2.2$ as described in [13]. Since the peripheral collisions are similar to $p + p$, the R_{cp} is dominated by the nuclear effects in the more central collisions, making the nuclear modification independent of the $p + p$ reference spectrum. The data from the different centrality classes are obtained from the same collider run. The ratios shown in Fig. 3 are therefore largely free of systematic errors associated with run-by-

run collider and detector performance, and wide η bins can be used for each spectrometer setting. In contrast, the ratios shown in Fig. 2 must be constructed from two collider runs with different species. Smaller η bins must then be used in order to include detailed acceptance corrections leading to larger fluctuations. The dominant systematic error in the R_{cp} ratios comes from the determination of $\langle N_{coll} \rangle$ in the centrality bins. Shaded bands in Fig. 3 indicate the uncertainty in the calculation of $\langle N_{coll} \rangle$ in the peripheral collisions (12%). We estimate the mean number of binary collisions in the three centrality classes to be $\langle N_{coll}^{0-20\%} \rangle = 13.6 \pm 0.3$, $\langle N_{coll}^{30-50\%} \rangle = 7.9 \pm 0.4$, and $\langle N_{coll}^{60-80\%} \rangle = 3.3 \pm 0.4$.

There is a substantial change in R_{cp} between $\eta = 0$ and the forward rapidities. At low pseudorapidity, the central-to-peripheral collisions ratio is larger than the semicentral-to-peripheral ratio, suggesting the increased role of Cronin-like multiple scattering effects in the more violent collisions. Conversely, at forward pseudorapidities, the more central ratio is the smallest, indicating a

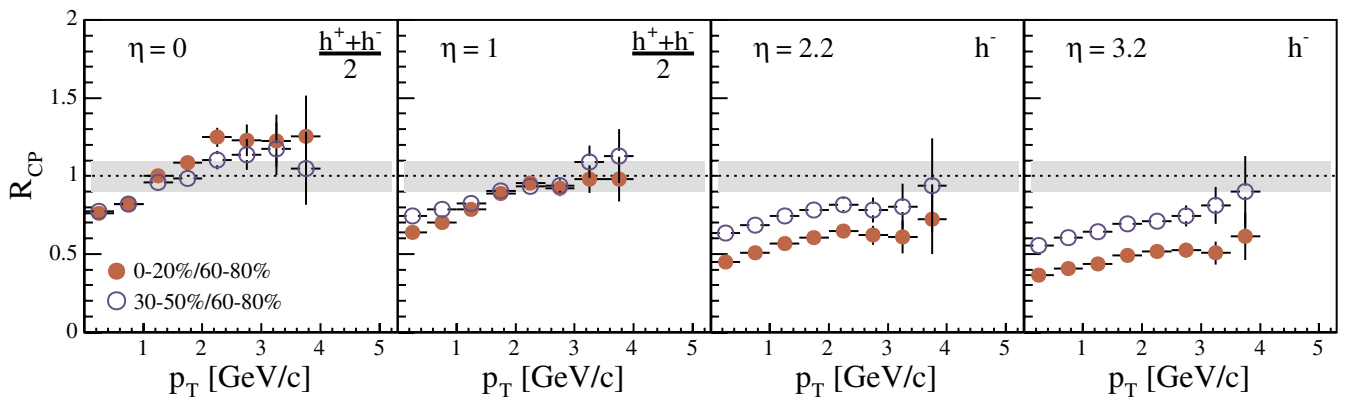


FIG. 3 (color online). Central (filled circles) and semicentral (empty circles) R_{cp} ratios (see text for details) at pseudorapidities $\eta = 0, 1.0, 2.2, 3.2$. Systematic errors ($\sim 5\%$) are smaller than the symbols.

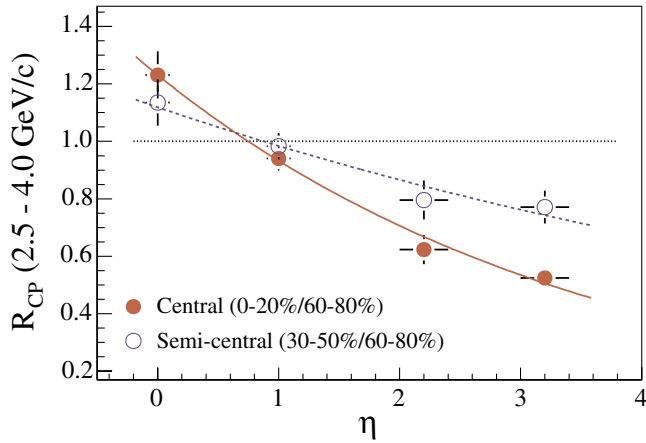


FIG. 4 (color online). Evolution of the central/peripheral (filled circles) and semicentral/peripheral (empty circles) R_{CP} ratios on pseudorapidity.

suppression mechanism that depends on the centrality of the collision. In Fig. 4 we show R_{CP} for the transverse momentum interval $p_T = 2.5-4.0$ GeV/c. A fit to $R_{CP} \sim e^{\alpha\eta}$ yields $\alpha = -0.28 \pm 0.03$ for the central-to-peripheral ratio, a similar η dependence as Q_s^2 from HERA [5], and $\alpha = -0.13 \pm 0.03$ for the semicentral-to-peripheral ratio.

The observed suppression of yield in $d + Au$ collisions (as compared to $p + p$ collisions) has been qualitatively predicted by several authors [15–17] within the framework of gluon saturation that includes the effects of “quantum evolution” with rapidity. However, no detailed numerical predictions are yet available. These approaches also predict the observed centrality dependence of the suppression at different pseudorapidities. Other authors [18,19] have based their predictions on the two component microscopic HIJING model that includes a parametrization of perturbative QCD and string breaking as a mechanism to account for soft coherent particle production and “gluon shadowing” as a method for reducing the number of effective gluon-gluon collisions. The HIJING model has been shown to give a good description of the overall charged-particle distribution in $d + Au$ collisions [13,20], and thus the low- p_T behavior of R_{dAu} with pseudorapidity.

In summary, we have observed a significant reduction of the yield of charged hadrons measured in $d + Au$ collisions, as compared to scaled $p + p$ collisions at forward pseudorapidities. This suppression for $p_T > 2$ GeV/c, which is absent at midrapidity [9,21], increases smoothly as the difference in rapidity between the detected particles and the gold ion increases. Also, the change from mid- to forward rapidities is stronger for central collisions than for semicentral collisions, indicating a dependence on the geometry of the collision. Such

effects are consistent with the onset of saturation in the Au nuclei gluon density at small x values which modifies the shapes and magnitudes of the R_{dAu} and R_{CP} ratios at all transverse momenta.

These results highlight opportunities for studying saturation phenomena in nuclei at RHIC.

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