

“Neutron Stars as a Laboratory for the Nuclear Symmetry Energy”

Prof. Andrew W. Steiner

(Institute for Nuclear Theory, University of Washington / JUSTIPEN)

Neutron stars provide an exciting laboratory for the physics of matter at extreme densities. I show how neutron star mass and radius measurements are providing a constraint on the equation of state of matter, moving us closer to the elusive answer to the question, “What are neutron stars made of?” The first quantitative statistical analysis these equation of state constraints will be presented, and it will be shown that several oft-used theoretical models are ruled out by the data. The nuclear symmetry energy is a quantity of fundamental importance for nuclear physics and astrophysics. Combining these mass and radius observations with recent quantum Monte Carlo calculations of pure neutron matter provides an exciting constraint on the nuclear symmetry energy.

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Contact: RIBF Nuclear Physics Seminar Organizer
npsoc@ribf.riken.jp
<http://ribf.riken.jp/~seminar/>