Centrality and Collision System Dependence of Antiproton Production from p+A to Au+Au Collisions at AGS Energies

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Antiproton production in 11.7 A-GeV/c Au+Au collisions over a wide transverse-mass coverage was studied in the AGS-E866. The inverse slope parameter increases rapidly as a function of centrality. Antiproton yields in Si+A and Au+Au collisions are consistent with
the scaling with the 2/3 power of the number of participant nucleons. Transverse-mass spectra are similar to those of protons from peripheral to central Au+Au collisions.

1. Introduction

Antiproton (\(\bar{p}\)) production in heavy ion collisions reflects subtle interplay between initial production and absorption by nucleons. Because the AGS energies (10–20 A \(\cdot\) GeV/c) are close to the \(\bar{p}\) production threshold, \(\bar{p}\) may be sensitive to cooperative processes such as QGP [1] and hadronic multi-step processes [2]. On the other hand, \(\bar{p}\) has been proposed as a probe of baryon density due to large \(NN\) annihilation cross sections [3]. Cascade models [4–6] predict the maximum baryon density reaches about 10 times the normal nucleus density in central Au+Au collisions, where the strong \(\bar{p}\) absorption is expected. In this paper, we show systematic studies of \(\bar{p}\) production from p+A to Au+Au collisions.

2. Analysis in AGS-E866 Experiment

The AGS-E866 experiment is aimed at studies of particle production in 10–12 A-GeV/c Au+Au collisions as a function of centrality. The experimental setup is described elsewhere [7,8]. In this analysis, data taken in 1994 in the Forward Spectrometer are used. Centrality is defined with the zero-degree calorimeter (ZCAL). The kinematic coverage for \(\bar{p}\) is \(1.0 < y < 2.2\) and \(0 < m_t - m_p < 1.2\) [GeV/c\(^2\)], where \(y\), \(m_t\), and \(m_p\) denote rapidity, transverse mass, and \(\bar{p}\) mass, respectively. About 800 \(\bar{p}\) candidates were extracted out of about 15 million minimum-bias collisions.

3. Results

Fig. 1 shows \(m_t\) spectra in minimum-bias events. Kinematic reflections of the spectra in each rapidity are consistent within statistical uncertainties. E886 [9] and E878 [10] results at \(p_t \simeq 0\) agree with our data. Fig. 2 shows \(m_t\) spectra in \(1.0 < y < 2.2\) in centrality windows of \(0 - 8\) %, \(8 - 23\) %, \(23 - 38\) %, and \(38 - 77\) % (zero corresponds to most central). Inverse slope parameters increase rapidly as a function of centrality from 0.18 to 0.28 GeV/c\(^2\). E864 [11] and E878 [10] data at \(p_t \simeq 0\) agree with our data except for in the most centrality window, where the E864 point is 4 times larger than the E878 point, and the exponential extrapolation of our data comes between them. It is an open question whether this is due to acceptance difference of the \(\bar{p}\) decaying from \(\Lambda\). The acceptance in our spectrometer is estimated to be 42 % including the branching ratio of 64 %.

Fig. 3 shows comparison of \(dN/dy\) among p+A [12], Si+Al and Si+Au data [13] at 14.6 A-GeV/c in \(y_{NN} - 0.6 < y < y_{NN}\) and Au+Au data at 11.7 A-GeV/c in \(|y - y_{NN}| < 0.6\) as a function of the number of participants (\(N_{\text{part}}\)). The \(N_{\text{part}}\) was calculated with FRITIOF 1.7 [14]. A beam energy correction factor of 0.47 is applied to p+A and Si+A data. Si+A and Au+Au data are consistent with the \(N_{\text{part}}^{2/3}\) scaling.

These data are compared with RQMD (solid line) and the first collision model (dashed line). RQMD calculations are from Ref. [15] for p+A and were done with version 2.3 for Si+A and 2.1 for Au+Au. In RQMD, initial \(\bar{p}\) production is enhanced by multi-step processes and free \(NN\) annihilation cross sections are used. The first collision model gives \(\bar{p}\) yields as \(dN/dy = dN/dy_{p+p} \cdot N_f\), where \(dN/dy_{p+p}\) is \(dN/dy\) in p+p collisions, and \(N_f\)
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is the number of binary collisions between unstruck nucleons. No absorption is assumed. Both models reproduce p+A data, and the scaling of $N_{\text{part}}^{2/3}$ from Si+A to Au+Au data.

In Fig. 4, $m_t$ spectra are compared with those of protons. For all centrality windows, their shapes appear similar, but more data are needed for a quantitative evaluation.

4. Conclusions and Outlook

E866 measured $\bar{p}$ production in Au+Au collisions at 11.7 A·GeV/c in wide transverse mass coverage. The $dN/dy$ from Si+A to Au+Au collisions scales with $N_{\text{part}}^{2/3}$. Both RQMD and the first collision model reproduce the global system dependence of $\bar{p}$ yields. However, by construction, the latter cannot reproduce the rapid development of the inverse slope parameter with centrality in Au+Au collisions. This observation implies that it is important to investigate $m_t$ spectra to explore $\bar{p}$ production mechanisms. The $m_t$ spectra of $\bar{p}$ are similar to those of the proton from peripheral to central Au+Au events, and this will be investigated in more detail with a larger data sample in 1995, as well as the data in E866's large angle spectrometer, Henry Higgins.

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Figure 3. The $dN/dy$ in p+A, Si+A and Au+Au collisions as a function of $N_{part}$. See text for details.

Figure 4. Comparison of $m_t$ spectra between $\bar{p}$ (scaled by 4000) and the proton in Au+Au collisions. See text for details.

REFERENCES
