

Consider muon decay, $\mu^- \rightarrow e^- \bar{\nu}_e \nu_\mu$. Since neutrinos are hard to detect experimentally, the readily measurable quantities for this process are the total muon decay rate $\Gamma_\mu = 1/\tau_\mu$ and the energy distribution of electrons produced by decaying muons; the latter is known to have a maximum at the highest kinematically allowed value of E_e .

According to the Fermi theory of weak interactions, the matrix element for muon decay is

$$\langle e^-, \bar{\nu}_e, \nu_\mu | \mathcal{M} | \mu^- \rangle = \frac{G_F}{\sqrt{2}} [\bar{u}(\nu_\mu)(1 - \gamma^5)\gamma^\alpha u(\mu^-)] \times [\bar{u}(e^-)(1 - \gamma^5)\gamma_\alpha v(\bar{\nu}_e)]. \quad (1)$$

The modern Standard Model of particle interactions produces essentially the same answer at the tree level of the perturbation theory.

1. Show that

$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{\text{all spins}} |\langle e^-, \bar{\nu}_e, \nu_\mu | \mathcal{M} | \mu^- \rangle|^2 = 64G_F^2 (p_\mu \cdot p_{\bar{\nu}}) (p_e \cdot p_\nu). \quad (2)$$

2. Now calculate the $d\Gamma/dE_e$ and the Γ_{tot} in the muon's rest frame. This is a straightforward but non-trivial exercise because of three particles in the final state, with momenta subject to constraints

$$\mathbf{p}_e + \mathbf{p}_\nu + \mathbf{p}_{\bar{\nu}} = \mathbf{0}, \quad E_e + E_\nu + E_{\bar{\nu}} = M_\mu \approx 105.66 \text{ MeV}. \quad (3)$$

Fortunately, the neutrinos are massless while the electron may be approximated as massless because in most decay events the electron's energy $E_e = O(M_\mu) \gg m_e$. You are advised to take this approximation $m_e \approx 0$ as it simplifies the calculation quite a bit.