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Identification of hadronic tau decays in CMS

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Abstract

The algorithm used for reconstruction and identification of hadronic tau decays by the CMS experiment at the LHC will be presented. The tau reconstruction in CMS takes advantage of the particle-flow algorithm which allows to reconstruct individual hadronic decay modes. The performance of the algorithm in terms of tau identification efficiency and in terms of the rates with which jets, electrons and muons are misidentified as hadronic tau decays, is measured in pp collision data recorded in 2012 at a center–of–mass energy of 8 TeV, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 19.7 fb^{-1}.

Keywords:

1. Introduction

Tau leptons constitute an important experimental signature for many physics analyses at the LHC [1, 2, 3, 4, 5].

Tau lepton decays in lighter leptons with a 18% branching ratio (BR). They decay hadronically with a 65% BR, typically into either one or three charged mesons (predominantly $\pi^{\pm}$) plus up to two neutral pions. The latter decay instantaneously via $\pi^0 \to \gamma\gamma$. As the electrons and muons originating from tau decays are difficult to distinguish from those produced in the primary pp interaction, the algorithms for tau reconstruction and identification aim at hadronic tau decays (τ_h).

2. CMS Experiment

The central feature of the CMS apparatus is a superconducting solenoid providing a magnetic field of 3.8 T. Within its volume are a silicon pixel and strip tracker, a lead tungstate crystal electromagnetic calorimeter, and a brass/scintillator hadron calorimeter. Muons are detected in gas-ionization chambers embedded in the steel flux return yoke outside the solenoid [6]. The CMS experiment uses a right-handed coordinate system, with the origin at the nominal interaction point, the x axis pointing to the centre of the LHC, the y axis pointing up (perpendicular to the LHC plane), and the z axis along the anticlockwise-beam direction. The polar angle θ is measured from the positive z axis and the azimuthal angle ϕ is measured in the transverse (x, y) plane. The pseudorapidity is defined as $\eta = -\log\tan(\theta/2)$. A particle-flow algorithm [7, 8] is used to combine information from all CMS subdetectors to identify and reconstruct individual particles in the event, namely muons, electrons, photons, charged hadrons, and neutral hadrons. The resulting particles are used to reconstruct jets, hadronically decaying tau leptons, and the missing transverse energy vector $\vec{E}_T^{miss}$, defined as the negative of the vector sum of the transverse momenta of all reconstructed particles, and its magnitude E_T^{miss}.

3. Tau Reconstruction in CMS

Hadronic decays of tau leptons are reconstructed and identified by the “Hadrons plus Strips” (HPS) algorithm, designed to reconstruct individual decay modes of the tau [9]. The HPS algorithm is seeded by jets reconstructed using the anti-kT algorithm with a distance parameter R=0.5 [10]. Reconstruction of the tau decay mode requires reconstruction of the neutral pions.

The pions decay into pairs of photons which have a high probability to convert into electron-positron pairs when traversing the tracking detector. The bending of the e^+e^- pairs by the magnetic field is accounted for by clustering the photon constituents of the jet that seeds the tau reconstruction into "strips" that are narrow in η and wide in ϕ direction. Strips containing one or more photons are kept as π^0 candidates. τ_h candidates are built by combining the strips with the charged particle constituents of the jet . The combinations considered by the algorithm are:

- *One Prong*: one charged hadron reconstructed by the PF algorithm without any strips.
- *One Prong Plus One* π^0: combination of one charged hadron plus one strip, whose mass fulfills the requirement $0.3 < M < 1.3 \cdot \sqrt{p_T/100}$ GeV.
- *Three Prongs* : three charged hadrons originating from the same vertex whose invariant mass fulfills the requirement 0.8 < M < 1.5 GeV.

All tau decay products are required to be within a narrow cone. Finally the four-momentum of the tau is computed as the sum of charged particles plus strips included in the respective combination. Figure 1 shows the distribution of τ_h candidate mass in $Z \to \tau\tau \to \mu\tau_h$ events. The $Z \to \tau\tau \to \mu\tau_h$ contribution is split according to the tau decay mode reconstructed by the HPS algorithm. The good agreement between data and simulation demonstrates the performance of the HPS algorithm in the reconstruction of the different hadronic tau decay modes.

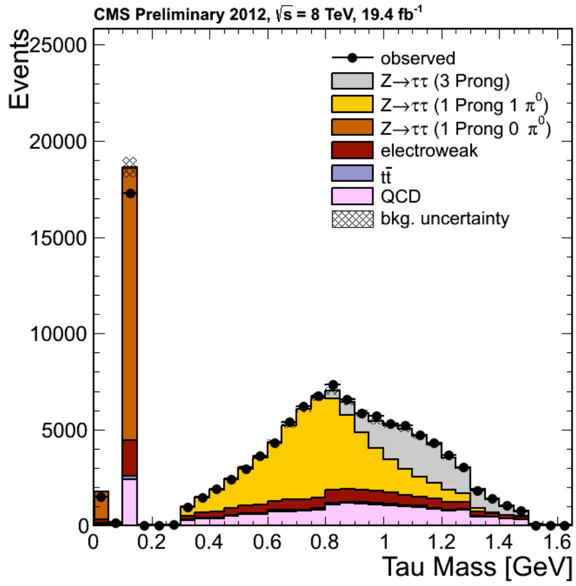

Figure 1: Observed and expected distribution of τ_h candidate visible mass in $Z \to \tau\tau \to \mu\tau_h$ events after the full selection applied. *One prong* τ_h contribution is shown in orange, *One Prong plus One* π^0 is in yellow and *Three prongs* τ_h contribution is in grey.

4. Tau Isolation

The main challenge in identifying τ_h is the discrimination from quark and gluon jets whose cross-section exceeds by many orders of magnitude the rate with which tau leptons are produced at the LHC. The HPS algorithm exploits the main features of τ_h compared to quark and gluon jets: low multiplicity, long lifetime, high collimation and the isolation with respect to other particles in the event. A cut based and a multivariate (MVA) approach have been developed.

Cut-Based Isolation The isolation is computed as the sum of the energy deposits of charged and neutral particles around the τ_h candidate, within an isolation cone of size $\Delta R = 0.5$. The charged hadrons used to built the τ_h as well as photons used to built any of the strips are excluded from the isolation p_T sum. A correction is introduced to mitigate the contribution of pile–up interaction ($\delta\beta$ correction). It consist in computing the sum of the transverse momenta of charged particles associated to pile-up interactions and scaling the sum by a factor of 0.4576, that has been chosen to make the identification efficiency independent of pile-up

MVA Isolation A multivariate discriminator has been trained that combines isolation variables and τ_h lifetime information to enhance the discriminating power to separate genuine τ_h candidates from quark and gluon jets. For τ_h candidates reconstructed in the decay modes *One Prong* or *One Prong Plus One* π^0 the transverse impact parameter with respect to the primary event vertex and its significance are used as input of the MVA discriminator. For τ_h candidates reconstructed in the *Three Prongs* decay mode the distance between the primary vertex and the tau decay vertex together with its significance are used in the final discriminator computation.

The inclusion of tau lifetime information in the MVA discriminator reduces the jet $\to \tau_h$ fake-rate by about a factor two, for the same tau identification efficiency, compared to the cut based tau isolation discriminator.

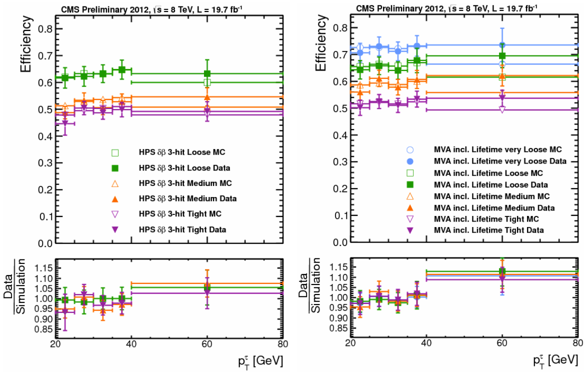

Figure 2: Tau identification efficiency in data and in Monte Carlo simulations in bins of hadronic tau p_T for the HPS cut-based isolation with $\delta\beta$ correction (left), and MVA based tau identification discriminators that include tau lifetime information (right).

5. Discriminators against electrons and muons

Electrons and muons have a high probability to be reconstructed in the *One Prong* decay mode or, in case of electrons that radiate a Bremsstrahlung photon which subsequently converts, in the decay mode *One Prong Plus One* π^0. Dedicated discriminators have been developed to distinguish light leptons from genuine τ_h. Both cut–based and MVA approaches have been used and several working points are provided. The performance of these discriminators have been measured in data and simulation with the *Tag&Probe* technique in $Z \to ee$ and $Z \to \mu\mu$ events. The MVA–based discriminator against electrons reduces the $e \to \tau_h$ fake–rate to a few permille for an efficiency of 80%. The measured $\mu \to \tau_h$ fake–rates are on the level of one permille for an efficiency of 98%.

6. Tau Identification Performance

The τ_h identification performance has been measured in terms of efficiency and fake-rate, using the data collected in 2012 at $\sqrt{s}$=8 TeV corresponding to an integrated luminosity of L=19.7 fb^{-1}. The τ_h identification efficiency has been measured with the *Tag&Probe* technique in selected $Z \to \tau\tau \to \mu\tau_h$ events. The identification efficiency is obtained by measuring the number of $Z \to \tau\tau$ events passing and failing the tau identification discriminator under study. The yield of the $Z \to \tau\tau$ signal and the contribution of backgrounds is determined by a fit of the distribution of muon plus tau visible mass. The results are shown graphically in Figs. 2. Data and Monte Carlo simulation agree within uncertainties, typically amounting to 5%.

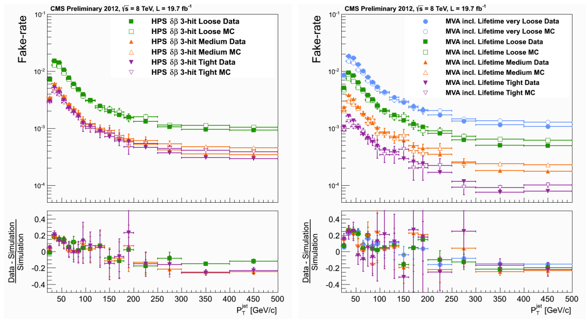

Figure 3: Probabilities for quark and gluon jets in QCD multi–jet events to pass the cut-based discriminator (left) and the MVA based tau identification discriminator that includes tau lifetime information (right), as function of jet p_T.

The rate with which quark or gluon jet are misidentified as hadronic taus (fake-rate) are measured in QCD multi–jet events. Events are selected by requiring at least two jets of $p_T > 20$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.5$. The jet $\to \tau_h$ fake-rates measured as function of jet p_T are shown in Fig. 3. Measured fake–rates are compared to the Monte Carlo simulation. The probability for quark and gluon jets in QCD multi–jet events to pass the tau identification discriminators typically decreases as function of jet p_T. The maximum jet $\to \tau_h$ fake–rate amounts to 2% for jets of $P_T \approx 50$ GeV that pass the Loose working point of the cut based isolation. A minimal fake–rate on the level of 10^{-4} is achieved for jets of $p_T \approx 500$ GeV by the MVA based tau identification discriminator that includes tau lifetime information.

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