

## Probing for $t \rightarrow ch^0$ at the LHC

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The Higgs boson  $h$  and the top quark  $t$  are the two most massive and most recently discovered particles. If  $t \rightarrow ch$  occurs at a couple of percent level, the observed  $ZZ^*$  and  $\gamma\gamma$  signal events for the Higgs boson may have accompanying  $cbW$  activity coming from  $t\bar{t}$  feeddown. A general two Higgs doublet model brings in new  $ct$ ,  $cc$  and  $tt$  couplings that modify the light neutral Higgs  $h^0$  properties, and  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  can be searched for via  $h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*$ ,  $\gamma\gamma$ ,  $WW^*$  and  $b\bar{b}$  (even  $\tau^+\tau^-$ ) modes in  $t\bar{t}$  events. We show that existing data should be able to push  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  down to below the percent level. Discovery would invalidate minimal SUSY, and imply flavor changing neutral Higgs couplings.

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## 1. Introduction

The top was discovered only in 1995, while the Higgs (denoted as  $h^0$ ) only 2012. These two are the heaviest particles we have found so far, and we believe that the top quark receives its mass through the Higgs boson. It is thus not only a curiosity, but in fact profound, if we were to discover the  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  decay process. The reason is that Flavor-Changing-Neutral-Higgs (FCNH) couplings are forbidden fruit not only in SM, but in fact also in the two standard types of two Higgs Doublet Models (2HDM I & II) that satisfy the NFC (Natural Flavor Conservation) condition Ref. [1].

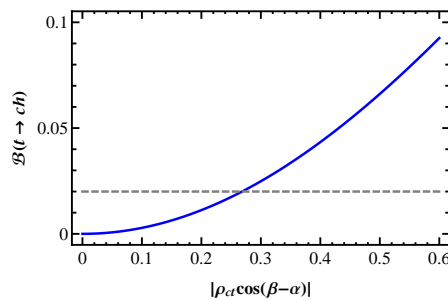
But the NFC condition was proposed almost 40 years ago, at a time when all fermions were lighter than several GeV, while facing rather stringent FCNC constraints. Given that the Higgs boson is the mass provider, while there is no natural restriction on the number of Higgs bosons, it seems natural to reopen the case for FCNH. In particular, the  $tch^0$  coupling is obviously the front runner for such a candidate, since constraints are weakest for the top quark, while mass generation itself provides a great motivation. In this context, the search for  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  and  $h^0 \rightarrow t\bar{c}$  were suggested [2] even before the discovery of the top quark itself. We shall use 2HDM III [3] to denote the 2HDM without NFC, and let data determine the strength of FCNC couplings. Such a Higgs sector may be called for by the BaBar ‘‘Anomaly’’ [4], which we shall discuss in the next Section. With or without this, we shall discuss the  $tch^0$  coupling of the observed neutral Higgs,

$$\rho_{ct} \cos(\beta - \alpha) \bar{c}t h^0 + \text{h.c.}, \quad (1.1)$$

which can induce  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  decay. Besides the raw FCNH coupling  $\rho_{ct}$ , the  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$  factor gives the exotic Higgs admixture of the 126 GeV boson  $h^0$ .

The work reported here arose from a numerical study of the  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  in the  $h^0 \rightarrow b\bar{b}$  mode in  $t\bar{t}$  pair production events at the LHC, where it was shown [5, 6] that with current data, the  $b\bar{b}$  mode could push  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  down to % level. We were then inspired [7] by the prowess of the  $h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*$  and  $\gamma\gamma$  modes in discovering the Higgs boson itself. We will argue that, given the aid of the associated other top, even the  $WW^*$  final state becomes an interesting search mode [8].

The game changer from a little over a year ago is: we now know the mass for  $h^0$ . We therefore plot  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  vs  $\rho_{ct} \cos(\beta - \alpha)$  in Fig. 1 and ask ‘‘How large can  $\rho_{ct} \cos(\beta - \alpha)$  be?’’, or ‘‘At what value of  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$ , above which we should not have missed already?’’



**Figure 1:**  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  vs  $\rho_{ct} \cos(\beta - \alpha)$ , with dashed line at 2% to guide the eye.

## 2. BaBar “Anomaly”, 2HDM III and $tch^0$ Coupling

The B factories have reported numerous “anomalies”, most of which have disappeared, or otherwise not more than  $2\sigma$  level. But more than a year ago, from a detailed study of  $B \rightarrow D\tau\nu$  and  $D^*\tau\nu$  decays, normalized to  $B \rightarrow D^{(*)}\ell\nu$  counterparts, the BaBar experiment reported that the resulting  $R(D)$  and  $R(D^*)$  ratios differed from SM expectations, with a combined significance of  $3.4\sigma$ . More astounding is that the two measured values, interpreted under 2HDM II (version from minimal SUSY), gave disparate  $\tan\beta/m_{H^+}$  values, which would exclude 2HDM II at greater than 99.8% level [4], for any value of  $m_{H^+}$ . Furthermore, value of  $\tan\beta/m_{H^+}$  for either case would over-enhance  $B \rightarrow \tau\nu$ , which is more or less in agreement now with SM expectation.

Ref. [3] then pointed out that in 2HDM III, i.e. removing the NFC condition, one could possibly explain the BaBar result. One needs a new  $c$ - $t$  coupling (and a separate  $u$ - $t$  coupling to address  $B \rightarrow \tau\nu$ ) that enters the  $H^+$  coupling, absent if NFC is enforced, to be of order 1, while for the lepton side, Ref. [3] continued to assume the usual 2HDM-II coupling, i.e.  $\rho_{\tau\tau} = -\tan\beta\sqrt{2}m_\tau/v$ , where  $v$  is the weak scale.

To explain this, using the notation of Ref. [9], the Yukawa couplings for 2HDM III are,

$$-\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sum_{f=u,d,\ell} \bar{f} \left[ (\kappa^f s_{\beta-\alpha} + \rho^f c_{\beta-\alpha}) h^0 + (\kappa^f c_{\beta-\alpha} - \rho^f s_{\beta-\alpha}) H^0 - i \text{sgn}(Q_f) \rho^f \gamma_5 A^0 \right] f - \left[ \bar{u} \left( V \rho^d R - \rho^u V L \right) d H^+ + \bar{\nu} \rho^\ell R \ell H^+ + \text{h.c.} \right], \quad (2.1)$$

where we have kept  $s_{\beta-\alpha} \equiv \sin(\beta - \alpha)$  and  $c_{\beta-\alpha} \equiv \cos(\beta - \alpha)$  in the 2HDM II notation. It should be clear that, except for the first  $h^0$  term, the rest arise from the exotic, presumably heavy doublet. The diagonal  $\kappa$  terms are related to mass generation, while  $\rho$  can have off-diagonal terms as allowed by data. The superscript  $f$  can be dropped once we consider elements of  $\rho$ . It is the combined effect of  $\rho_{ct}$  and  $\rho_{\tau\tau}$ , both entering through the  $H^+$  couplings, that can account [3] for  $B \rightarrow D^{(*)}\tau\nu$ . But stringent constraints from down quark sector imply that only  $\rho_{bb}$  needs to be considered, which can combine with the CKM matrix  $V$  to induce  $b \rightarrow c\tau\nu$  also.

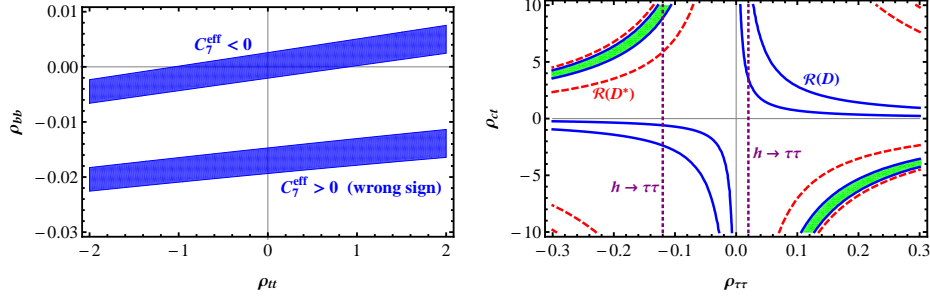
Ref. [3] tacitly assumed the decoupling limit, or  $\sin(\beta - \alpha) \rightarrow 1$  and  $\cos(\beta - \alpha) \rightarrow 0$ , hence  $h^0$  is just the SM Higgs boson. To have  $t \rightarrow ch^0$ , we need nondecoupling, then  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$  gives the exotic component of  $h^0$ , hence Eq. (1.1). As we will see in the next section, not only  $\rho_{bb}$  but also  $\rho_{\tau\tau}$  are constrained by data to be small. However, considering  $\rho_{ct}$  together with the diagonal elements  $\rho_{tt}$  and  $\rho_{cc}$ , a finite  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  is still allowed, independent of the link with  $B \rightarrow D^{(*)}\tau\nu$ .

## 3. B Physics and $H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ Constraints

It is well known that  $b \rightarrow s\gamma$  provide stringent constraints to many BSM models. Since  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$  is rather large, one has to be careful. We now show that, if one takes  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ , the well-known  $b \rightarrow s\gamma$  process constrains  $\rho_{bb}$  to be rather tiny. This was noted recently [10] in a different way.

In the notation of Ref. [11], the  $H^+$  loop gives the correction

$$\delta\mathcal{C}_{7,8} \simeq \frac{1}{3} \left( \rho_{tt} + \frac{V_{cs}^*}{V_{ts}^*} \rho_{ct} \right) \left( \rho_{tt}^* + \frac{V_{cb}}{V_{tb}} \rho_{ct}^* \right) \frac{F_{7,8}^{(1)}(y)}{2m_t^2/v^2} - \left( \rho_{tt} + \frac{V_{cs}^*}{V_{ts}^*} \rho_{ct} \right) \rho_{bb} \frac{F_{7,8}^{(2)}(y)}{2m_t m_b / v^2}, \quad (3.1)$$



**Figure 2:** (left) Constraint on  $\rho_{bb}$  from  $b \rightarrow s\gamma$ , assuming  $\rho_{ct} = 1$ ,  $\rho_{cc} = 0.2$  [12]; (right) allowed  $\rho_{\tau\tau} - \rho_{ct}$  region for 2HDM-III to solve the  $B \rightarrow D^{(*)}\tau\nu$  anomaly. In both cases, we take  $m_{H^+} = 700$  GeV. For the second plot,  $\rho_{bb} = 0$  is assumed. The shaded-green area is the combined result from  $\mathcal{B}(D)$  (solid-blue lines) and  $\mathcal{B}(D^*)$  (dashed-red lines), while the dotted-purple lines illustrate the  $h^0 \rightarrow \tau\tau$  bound by taking  $c_{\beta-\alpha} = 0.2$  in Eq. (4).

evaluated at matching scale  $\mu_W \sim M_W$ , where  $y = m_t^2/M_{H^+}^2$  and  $F_{7,8}^{(1,2)}(y)$  are given in Ref. [11]. The effect through  $\rho_{bb}$  is enhanced by  $m_t/m_b$  as well as quark mixing elements. Together, these act as lever arms, such that even a tiny  $\rho_{bb}$  could affect  $b \rightarrow s\gamma$ . We illustrate  $\rho_{bb}$  vs  $\rho_{tt}$  in the left plot of Fig. 2, where we take  $\rho_{ct} = +1$ ,  $m_{H^+} = 700$  GeV, and constrain  $\mathcal{B}(B \rightarrow X_s\gamma)$  to be within 50% of SM expectation. The “wrong-sign”  $C_7^{\text{eff}}$  case has been included for comparison. Assuming  $C_7^{\text{eff}}$  does not change sign,  $|\rho_{bb}|$  is constrained to be considerably less than 0.01.

Ref. [3] treated the lepton part of  $b \rightarrow c\tau\nu$  the same as for 2HDM II, which in our notation means  $\rho_{\tau\tau} \sim 1$  also. Since we are concerned with  $t \rightarrow ch^0$ , hence nondecoupling of the light SM Higgs from the exotic Higgs doublet, we need to check against  $h^0 \rightarrow \tau\tau$  data. Currently, combining CMS and ATLAS, there is some hint for this process. But it certainly is not greatly enhanced, as would be the case if  $\rho_{\tau\tau} \sim 1$ . For illustration, we take  $h^0 \rightarrow \tau\tau$  to be within a factor of 2 of SM,

$$|s_{\beta-\alpha} + (\rho_{\tau\tau}v/\sqrt{2}m_\tau)c_{\beta-\alpha}| \lesssim \sqrt{2}. \tag{3.2}$$

and plot in Fig. 2 the range for  $\rho_{\tau\tau} - \rho_{ct}$  allowed by BaBar anomaly for the typical value of  $m_{H^+} = 700$  GeV. The point  $\rho_{\tau\tau} \simeq -0.5$ ,  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$  of Ref. [3], far outside the plot, would require  $c_{\beta-\alpha}$  to be rather small. If we take  $c_{\beta-\alpha} = 0.2$  (i.e.  $s_{\beta-\alpha} \simeq 0.98$ ) in Eq. (4), then  $-0.12 < \rho_{\tau\tau} < 0.02$  would push  $\rho_{ct}$  to become very large.

Thus,  $h^0 \rightarrow \tau\tau$  data imply either one goes to the decoupling limit of  $c_{\beta-\alpha} \rightarrow 0$ , where  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  vanishes, or one has to entertain nonperturbative values for  $\rho_{ct}$ . We note that further analysis [13] of  $q^2$  ( $\tau\nu$  pair mass) dependence of  $B \rightarrow D\tau\nu$  by BaBar favors New Physics from spin-1 particles. Hence, with great regret, we shall detach from the BaBar anomaly, although it motivated the possibility of  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ . We now focus on probing  $tch^0$  coupling directly at the LHC.

#### 4. $t \rightarrow ch^0$ Search at the LHC

It should be stressed that the juicy  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  entry in the PDG is waiting to be filled. So, how large can  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  be? If  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ , what constraint do we have on  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$ ? A sizable rate could affect top quark measurements. We will skip the argument [7], but using the currently best

measured  $\sigma_{t\bar{t}}$  in dilepton final states and comparing with NNLO results, one infers that  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  cannot be more than a few %, thereby our line of 2% in Fig. 1. We now illustrate that, even a 2% value, because of the large  $t\bar{t}$  cross section, the observed  $ZZ^*$  events for Higgs discovery could contain “contamination” of  $t\bar{t}$  feeddown through  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  decay! This concept was already explored in Ref. [8] for  $h^0 \rightarrow WW^*$  case, exploiting a SUSY-based CMS analysis of multileptons with 2011 data. The advantage is it also takes in  $h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*$  and  $\tau\tau$  events also. A bound of 2.7% was found, but the analysis assumed SM branching fractions, and has no mass resolution.

What has been observed so far at the LHC for  $h^0$  discovery in  $ZZ^*$  channel is

$$\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0} \cdot \frac{\Gamma_{h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*}}{\Gamma_{h^0}^{\text{SM}}} \cdot \frac{\Gamma_{h^0}^{\text{SM}}}{\Gamma_{h^0}} \simeq [\sigma \cdot \mathcal{B}]_{ZZ^*}^{\text{SM}}, \quad (4.1)$$

where we assume  $h^0$  is produced dominantly through gluon-gluon fusion. We have separated respective pieces where  $h^0$ -properties may deviate from SM. Both experiments find 15–20  $\ell\ell'\ell'$  signal events consistent with full 2011–2012 data expectations, with little background. However,  $\sigma_{t\bar{t}}$  is of order 220 pb at 8 TeV [14]. If one takes  $\mathcal{B}_{ch} \simeq 2.7\%$ , this amounts to  $\sim 12$  pb into  $t\bar{t} \rightarrow ch^0bW$ , which should be compared with  $\sim 22$  pb for  $gg$ -fusion production of a 126 GeV SM Higgs boson! Given the largely inclusive nature of the experimental search, we could have already observed  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  via the  $ZZ^*$  mode, except that each of the three product factors in Eq. (4.1) could deviate from SM. For example,  $\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0}$  may be smaller, or  $\Gamma_{h^0} > \Gamma_{h^0}^{\text{SM}}$  might dilute direct production.

We can now use Eq. (2.1) to discuss  $h^0$ -properties with  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ , hence understand what SM-like observation of  $ZZ^*$  may imply. Our study also illustrates how 2HDM III with FCNH could alter several Higgs properties, driving in the importance of their measurement.

With  $h^0$  dominantly the SM Higgs boson (we are close to decoupling limit), its decay rate into  $WW^*$  and  $ZZ^*$  is proportional to  $\sin^2(\beta - \alpha)$  and can hardly be changed. Likewise, the  $h^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$  rate, dominated by  $W$ -loop, is also SM-like. For fermions, the mass generating  $\kappa$  terms are close to SM, while a small  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$  dilutes the effect of  $\rho$ -type couplings. The consistency of  $h^0 \rightarrow \tau\tau$  with SM constrains  $\rho_{\tau\tau}$  to be small, while  $\rho_{bb}$  is constrained by  $b \rightarrow s\gamma$  to be tiny if  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ . Further diluted by  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$ , the  $b\bar{b}$  rate arises from  $\kappa_{bb}$  and is SM-like.

We are left with potential  $\rho_{cc}$  and  $\rho_{tt}$  effects. The  $c\bar{c}$  mode is extremely hard to search for, hence there are no limits so far. With  $\cos(\beta - \alpha) \sim 0.2$ ,  $\rho_{cc} \sim 0.2$  [12] would bring  $\Gamma_{c\bar{c}} \sim \Gamma_{b\bar{b}} \simeq \Gamma_{b\bar{b}}^{\text{SM}}$ , and the enhanced  $\Gamma_{h^0}$  would dilute the Higgs signal. This can be partially compensated for by  $\rho_{tt}$ , as this parameter should naturally be of order 1 if  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ , since  $\kappa_{tt} \simeq 1$  also. With some suppression by  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$ , nevertheless it could bring  $\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0}$  up or down by a factor of  $\sim 2$ .

We summarize in Table I possible effects of our constrained 2HDM III (with  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ ). While  $\Gamma_{h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*} / \Gamma_{h^0}^{\text{SM}}$  is similar to  $\mathcal{B}_{ZZ^*}^{\text{SM}}$ ,  $\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0}$  could change by a factor of 2 and  $\Gamma_{h^0}$  could be enhanced. We note that for enhanced  $\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0}$ , then dilution of  $\mathcal{B}_{ZZ^*}$  would be necessary, implying enhanced  $h^0 \rightarrow c\bar{c}$ . However, if  $\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0}$  is suppressed, or  $\mathcal{B}_{ZZ^*}$  is diluted, then more  $ZZ^*$  events may come from  $t\bar{t}$  feeddown! We stress that these are the effects of the new parameters  $\rho_{cc}$ ,  $\rho_{tt}$  and  $\rho_{ct}$ , and of course the Higgs mixing parameter  $\cos(\beta - \alpha)$ . It highlights a new sector to be probed at the LHC.

As already mentioned, the CMS and ATLAS search for the  $ZZ^*$  model in 4 lepton final state is done inclusively, without looking into any associated activity. Could there be any  $t\bar{t} \rightarrow ch^0bW$  “contamination”? One should check whether there are some  $\ell\ell'\ell' + cbW$  events, with up to 4 jets.

	$\mathcal{B}^{\text{SM}}$	$\Gamma^{\text{SM}}$	$\Gamma$	Comment
$WW^*$	21.5%	0.98	hard to change	$\sin(\beta - \alpha) \simeq 1$
$ZZ^*$	2.7%	0.12	hard to change	$\sin(\beta - \alpha) \simeq 1$
$\gamma\gamma$	0.24%	0.011	hard to change	$W$ -loop dom.
$bb$	59.4%	2.70	hard to change	$b \rightarrow s\gamma$
$\tau\tau$	5.7%	0.26	within fac. 2	direct
$cc$	2.6%	0.12	up to $\sim \Gamma_{b\bar{b}}$	not measured ( $\rho_{cc} \lesssim 0.2$ )
$gg$	7.7%	0.35	up to fac. 2	$\rho_{tt} \sim 1$

**Table 1:**  $h^0$  properties in 2HDM III with  $\rho_{ct} \sim 1$ . Widths are in MeV units, with  $\Gamma_{h^0}^{\text{SM}} \simeq 4.55$  MeV.

The CMS preliminary result with full 7 and 8 TeV data [15] shows 13, 8, and 4 events with 0, 1, and 2 jets, respectively, after selecting events with  $m_{4\ell} \in (121.5, 130.5)$  GeV. There is no indication for higher associated jet activity. To extract a bound on  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$ , we assume  $\sigma_{gg \rightarrow h^0} \cdot \mathcal{B}(h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*)$  takes SM value. By inserting the CMS data points, together with the background histograms provided in the same plot [15], and jet multiplicity distribution from top events, an upper limit on the top-Higgs contribution is estimated based on the standard CL<sub>s</sub> method [16] used at the LHC. The resulting 95% confidence level limit on the relative signal strength between  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  and inclusive Higgs production is around 31%, which can be converted to a limit of 6.5 pb on the effective cross section of  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  at 8 TeV, or a branching ratio limit around 1.5%. A genuine analysis is best left to the experiments, as data is already at hand.

Intriguingly, ATLAS does have one  $ee\mu\mu + 4j$  event! This is an event that in fact passed VBF (vector boson fusion) selection, and is in Fig. 38 (in “extra”) of ATLAS-CONF-2013-013 [17]. A question [18] can then be raised that, could some bias creep into even  $ZZ^*$ ? That is, could there have been some inadvertent cut on jet activity? This highlights the need for a dedicated search. Short of that, we just place the single event in the  $4j$  bin of CMS (keeping  $3j$  bin empty) and refit with CL<sub>s</sub>. We find that the bound on  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  is raised from 1.5% to 2.2%.

Our discussion of the  $ZZ^*$  mode highlights the need to broaden our scope for Higgs search. The  $t\bar{t}$  feeddown can in fact make  $t \rightarrow ch^0$  rather attractive for  $h^0$  decay to:

- $WW^*$ , where the study of Ref. [8] should be performed with full data;
- $b\bar{b}$ , where Ref. [5] demonstrated that one can probe down to  $\sim 1\%$ ;
- $\gamma\gamma$ , where mass resolution offers incentive;
- $\tau\tau$ .

Let us offer two comments. For  $\gamma\gamma$  in the Higgs mass window, one should consider both  $\gamma\gamma + 4j$  and  $\gamma\gamma + jj\ell\nu$ . We note that, because of background concerns for the  $h^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$  search period, these type of events may have been rejected by  $\Delta\eta$  cuts, or VBF selection when extra jets exist. With  $b$  tagging and top mass in the backdrop, we would say that even the study of such background may be interesting. For the  $WW^*$  mode, the disadvantage is that one does not have mass reconstruction. However, it is a good search mode, i.e. for setting limits [19], as one can see from Ref. [8] for multilepton study. It clearly can be improved at both CMS and ATLAS.

## 5. Conclusion

It is of great interest to search for the link between top and Higgs. With the intense effort of Higgs search in past two years, one can push the bound on  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0)$  to below % level in multiple channels. These can be done, with varying levels of difficulty, in the  $h^0 \rightarrow ZZ^*$ ,  $\gamma\gamma$ ,  $WW^*$  and  $b\bar{b}$  channels. A combined study should reach considerably below 1%. It is quite amazing that this should be quickly achieved, compared to the years taken for the  $t \rightarrow cZ$  study to reach below  $10^{-3}$ .

What is truly attractive is that, if instead one makes a *discovery*, it would imply the existence of not only an extended Higgs sector, but one beyond the usual 2HDM II of minimal SUSY. One would have discovered the new phenomena of Flavor Changing Neutral Higgs, with an enlarged and enriched Higgs sector.

**Epilogue.** Immediately after the EPS HEP meeting, ATLAS reported [20] at Higgs Hunting 2013 a limit of  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0) < 0.83\%$  via the  $\gamma\gamma$  channel, while CMS reported [21] at SUSY2013 the limit of  $\mathcal{B}(t \rightarrow ch^0) < 0.31\%$  via the multilepton channel. This progress is simply astounding.

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