

Search for the Standard Model Higgs Boson at CMS

Tommaso Dorigo¹ for the CMS collaboration

(1) INFN, Italy

Abstract

The prospects for the search of the Standard Model Higgs boson with the CMS experiment at the LHC are presented. The analyses rely on a full simulation of the detector response and emphasis is put on explicit strategies for the measurement of experimental and background systematics from data. The discovery reach is presented as a function of the Higgs boson mass. A new complete strategy is presented for the early searches and for the control of systematics at very low luminosities of $O(1fb^{-1})$.

1. Introduction

The Standard Model (SM) requires the existence of a scalar Higgs boson to break electroweak symmetry and provide mass terms to gauge bosons and fermion fields. Indirect constraints from radiative corrections to electroweak observables indicate for the Higgs boson mass the bound $M_H < 157 GeV$ [1], at 95% of Confidence Level (CL). Direct constraints from experimental searches at LEP II and Tevatron have determined that $M_H > 114.4 GeV$, with the exclusion of the range $160 GeV < M_H < 170 GeV$, at 95% CL [2].

The SM Higgs boson can be produced in proton-proton collisions at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) by several different mechanisms (Fig. 2.). The production by gluon-gluon fusion is the most frequent, with cross sections up to several tens of picobarns; smaller is the production by vector boson fusion (VBF), which however provides a striking signature of two forward quark jets. The two main production mechanisms have been investigated to assess the chances of an early detection of the Higgs boson with the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) detector [3].

Searches in three of the main signatures of Higgs production and decay are summarized below; these target the whole favourable range of M_H mass values, with the first two extending above $200 GeV$ and the third one covering the low-mass region of $M_H < 135 GeV$:

- $gg \rightarrow H \rightarrow WW^{(*)}$, with the decay of both W bosons to $e\nu$ or $\mu\nu$ pairs;
- $gg \rightarrow H \rightarrow ZZ^{(*)}$, with the decay of both Z bosons to e^+e^- or $\mu^+\mu^-$ pairs;
- $qq \rightarrow qqH$, with a decay $H \rightarrow \tau\tau$ accompanied by two forward hadronic jets.

2. The $H \rightarrow WW$ search

The search for the $WW^{(*)}$ decay mode at CMS [4] employs events containing exactly two opposite-charge leptons (e or μ) with transverse momenta $p_T > 10 GeV$ and pseudorapidity $|\eta| < 2.5$, with at least one of them having $p_T > 20 GeV$. The following additional pre-selection cuts are then applied: a jet veto ($N_{jet}^{E_T > 15 GeV} = 0$), large missing energy ($E_T^{miss} > 30 GeV$), and a dilepton mass above resonances ($m_{ll} > 12 GeV$).

Two separate search strategies are studied: a cut-based analysis and a Neural-Network-based analysis (NN). In both cases the selection is optimized using the

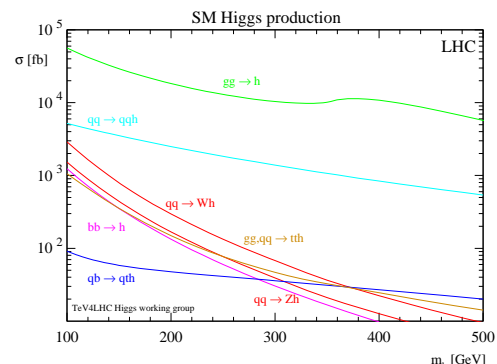


Fig. 1. Higgs production cross section in proton-proton collisions at $14 TeV$ centre-of-mass energy, in femtobarns, as a function of M_H [5]. The green curve shows the cross section of the gluon-fusion mechanism, the cyan curve the cross section of Higgs production by vector boson fusion.

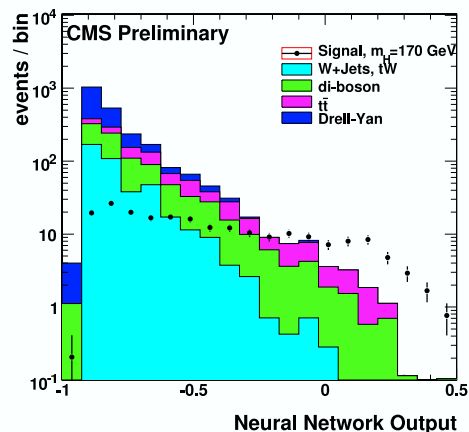


Fig. 2. Output of the Neural Network for $H \rightarrow WW$ signal (black points) and backgrounds (histograms) for a Higgs boson mass of $170 GeV$. A further optimized cut on the NN output is used to select the final candidates.

azimuthal angle between the leptons, an upper cut on the dilepton mass, and requirements on lepton momenta and missing energy. The NN analysis uses additional kinematic variables to separate the signal from the main backgrounds (Fig. 2.).

The analyses include complete techniques to determine background rates with control samples of data. The top-pair background can be sized up with events containing two additional jets, while the SM production of WW pairs can be normalized using data with $m_{ll} > 115 GeV$.

The modified frequentist CL_s method [5] is used to convert the number of expected signal and background events into a significance of the observable signal, as a function of the Higgs mass. A first evidence for the Higgs boson is likely achievable in $1fb^{-1}$ with the WW final state alone in the region of best sensitivity, $155 < M_H < 180 GeV$.

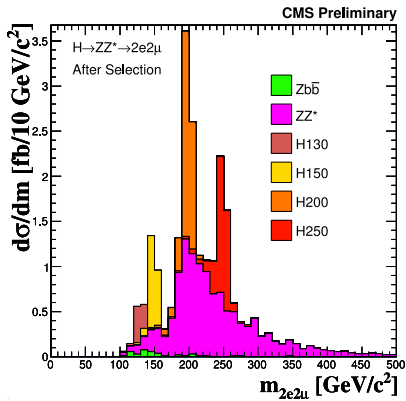


Fig. 3. Effective cross section as a function of the four-lepton invariant mass after the signal selection, in the mixed $ee\mu\mu$ channel of the $H \rightarrow ZZ$ search. Four different signal distributions (for masses of 130, 150, 200 and 250 GeV) are compared to residual backgrounds. The latter are essentially due to SM ZZ production (in purple) and Zbb production (in green).

3. The $H \rightarrow ZZ$ search

In the $H \rightarrow ZZ^{(*)}$ search [6] events are selected to contain four charged leptons ($e^+e^-e^+e^-$, $e^+e^-\mu^+\mu^-$, or $\mu^+\mu^-\mu^+\mu^-$), with pair masses $m_{ll} > 12 GeV$. To remove the Zbb and $t\bar{t}$ backgrounds further, CMS uses the combined isolation of the two least-isolated leptons, and the significance of their impact parameter with respect to the primary vertex. The reconstructed mass of the dilepton pairs is requested to lay in the windows $[50 - 100]$ and $[20 - 100] GeV$.

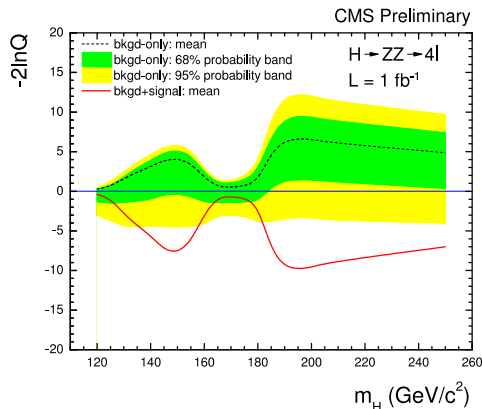


Fig. 4. Values of the log-likelihood ratio discriminant resulting from the combination of the four-lepton final states studied in the search. The dashed black curve shows the expected distribution of the discriminant in the absence of signal as a function of Higgs mass, while the red curve shows the observable value of the ratio in the presence of the Higgs boson.

After the selection, backgrounds are almost exclusively due to SM $ZZ^{(*)}$ production. The four-body mass provides further discrimination, as shown in Fig. 3. Mass window cuts allow to obtain a signal-to-noise ratio larger than 1.0 throughout the $120 - 250 GeV$ Higgs mass region considered in the search.

The CL_s method allows to estimate the significance of the extractable signal with $1fb^{-1}$ of $14TeV$ collision (Fig. 4). A sensitivity at the 2σ level can be obtained for favourable mass values.

4. The $qqH \rightarrow qq\tau\tau$ search

A study of the observability of the VBF signature $qqH \rightarrow qq\tau\tau$, for Higgs masses between 115 and 145 GeV , has been performed [7] using events containing one leptonic τ -decay candidate ($\tau \rightarrow e\nu\nu$ or $\tau \rightarrow \mu\nu\nu$), collected by a low- p_T electron or muon trigger. A second τ -lepton candidate is required to produce a narrow $E_T > 30 GeV$ jet containing one track with $p_T > 6 GeV$ within its core.

The two forward jets characteristic of VBF processes are used to reduce backgrounds, mainly coming from QCD multijet production and $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ decays. The mass of two forward jets with $E_T > 30 GeV$ has to exceed 400 GeV , and they must be separated in pseudorapidity by more than 2.5 units.

Backgrounds amount to 31.8 events, with 0.6 – 1.6 expected from the Higgs signal, depending on M_H . The sensitivity of this search channel is found to be insufficient to provide an independent evidence of the SM H boson in early LHC data.

5. Combination of $H \rightarrow ZZ$, $H \rightarrow WW$ searches

An additional study was carried out for a combination of the WW and ZZ channels to determine the range of Higgs boson masses that CMS is likely to exclude at 95% C.L. in the absence of a signal, using the results of [4] and [6]. The combination was performed with both the CL_s and a Bayesian method; in general the two methods were found to agree within 10%, which is also a measure of the typical variation in their difference.

Fig. 5. shows the limit which can be obtained with luminosity of $1fb^{-1}$ at $14TeV$ together with the result of considering a modified scenario, in which $1fb^{-1}$ of collisions is produced at the reduced energy of 10 TeV .

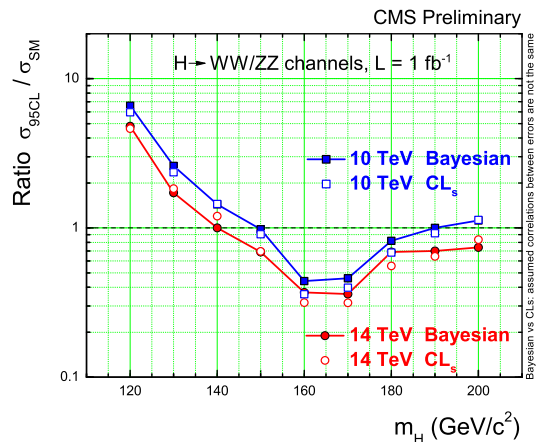


Fig. 5. Predicted limits on H cross section in units of σ_{SM} as a function of M_H for $1fb^{-1}$ at 10 and 14 TeV , obtained by combining $H \rightarrow WW$ and $H \rightarrow ZZ$ search results.

6. Acknowledgements

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