BABAR-CONF-02/10
SLAC-PUB-9315
hep-ex/0207085
July 2002

Measurement of the $B^0 \to D^{*-} a_1^+$ Branching Fraction with Partially Reconstructed D^*

The *BABAR* Collaboration

July 25, 2002

Abstract

The $B^0 \to D^{*-} a_1^+$ branching fraction has been measured with data collected by the *BABAR* experiment in 1999 and 2000 corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 20.6 fb^{-1}. Signal events have been selected using a partial reconstruction technique, in which only the a_1^+ and the slow pion (π_s) from the D^{*-} decay are identified. A signal yield of 18400 ± 1200 events has been found, corresponding to a preliminary branching fraction of $(1.20 \pm 0.07(\text{stat}) \pm 0.14(\text{syst}))\%$.

Contributed to the 31st International Conference on High Energy Physics,
7/24—7/31/2002, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94309

Work supported in part by Department of Energy contract DE-AC03-76SF00515.

The *BABAR* Collaboration,

B. Aubert, D. Boutigny, J.-M. Gaillard, A. Hicheur, Y. Karyotakis, J. P. Lees, P. Robbe, V. Tisserand, A. Zghiche

Laboratoire de Physique des Particules, F-74941 Annecy-le-Vieux, France

A. Palano, A. Pompili

Università di Bari, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-70126 Bari, Italy

J. C. Chen, N. D. Qi, G. Rong, P. Wang, Y. S. Zhu

Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing 100039, China

G. Eigen, I. Ofte, B. Stugu

University of Bergen, Inst. of Physics, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

G. S. Abrams, A. W. Borgland, A. B. Breon, D. N. Brown, J. Button-Shafer, R. N. Cahn, E. Charles, M. S. Gill, A. V. Gritsan, Y. Groysman, R. G. Jacobsen, R. W. Kadel, J. Kadyk, L. T. Kerth, Yu. G. Kolomensky, J. F. Kral, C. LeClerc, M. E. Levi, G. Lynch, L. M. Mir, P. J. Oddone, T. J. Orimoto, M. Pripstein, N. A. Roe, A. Romosan, M. T. Ronan, V. G. Shelkov, A. V. Telnov, W. A. Wenzel

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA

T. J. Harrison, C. M. Hawkes, D. J. Knowles, S. W. O'Neale, R. C. Penny, A. T. Watson, N. K. Watson

University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom

T. Deppermann, K. Goetzen, H. Koch, B. Lewandowski, K. Peters, H. Schmuecker, M. Steinke

Ruhr Universität Bochum, Institut für Experimentalphysik 1, D-44780 Bochum, Germany

N. R. Barlow, W. Bhimji, J. T. Boyd, N. Chevalier, P. J. Clark, W. N. Cottingham, C. Mackay, F. F. Wilson

University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TL, United Kingdom

K. Abe, C. Hearty, T. S. Mattison, J. A. McKenna, D. Thiessen

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z1

S. Jolly, A. K. McKemey

Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom

V. E. Blinov, A. D. Bukin, A. R. Buzykaev, V. B. Golubev, V. N. Ivanchenko, A. A. Korol, E. A. Kravchenko, A. P. Onuchin, S. I. Serednyakov, Yu. I. Skovpen, A. N. Yushkov

Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk 630090, Russia

D. Best, M. Chao, D. Kirkby, A. J. Lankford, M. Mandelkern, S. McMahon, D. P. Stoker

University of California at Irvine, Irvine, CA 92697, USA

C. Buchanan, S. Chun

University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90024, USA

H. K. Hadavand, E. J. Hill, D. B. MacFarlane, H. Paar, S. Prell, Sh. Rahatlou, G. Raven, U. Schwanke, V. Sharma

University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093, USA

J. W. Berryhill, C. Campagnari, B. Dahmes, P. A. Hart, N. Kuznetsova, S. L. Levy, O. Long, A. Lu, M. A. Mazur, J. D. Richman, W. Verkerke

University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA

J. Beringer, A. M. Eisner, M. Grothe, C. A. Heusch, W. S. Lockman, T. Pulliam, T. Schalk, R. E. Schmitz, B. A. Schumm, A. Seiden, M. Turri, W. Walkowiak, D. C. Williams, M. G. Wilson

University of California at Santa Cruz, Institute for Particle Physics, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, USA

E. Chen, G. P. Dubois-Felsmann, A. Dvoretskii, D. G. Hitlin, F. C. Porter, A. Ryd, A. Samuel, S. Yang

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91125, USA

S. Jayatilleke, G. Mancinelli, B. T. Meadows, M. D. Sokoloff

University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221, USA

T. Barillari, P. Bloom, W. T. Ford, U. Nauenberg, A. Olivas, P. Rankin, J. Roy, J. G. Smith, W. C. van Hoek, L. Zhang

University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, USA

J. L. Harton, T. Hu, M. Krishnamurthy, A. Soffer, W. H. Toki, R. J. Wilson, J. Zhang

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, USA

D. Altenburg, T. Brandt, J. Brose, T. Colberg, M. Dickopp, R. S. Dubitzky, A. Hauke, E. Maly, R. Müller-Pfefferkorn, S. Otto, K. R. Schubert, R. Schwierz, B. Spaan, L. Wilden

Technische Universität Dresden, Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, D-01062 Dresden, Germany

D. Bernard, G. R. Bonneaud, F. Brochard, J. Cohen-Tanugi, S. Ferrag, S. T'Jampens, Ch. Thiebaux, G. Vasileiadis, M. Verderi

Ecole Polytechnique, LLR, F-91128 Palaiseau, France

A. Anjomshoaa, R. Bernet, A. Khan, D. Lavin, F. Muheim, S. Playfer, J. E. Swain, J. Tinslay

University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom

M. Falbo

Elon University, Elon University, NC 27244-2010, USA

C. Borean, C. Bozzi, L. Piemontese, A. Sarti

Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy

E. Treadwell

Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL 32307, USA

F. Anulli,[1] R. Baldini-Ferroli, A. Calcaterra, R. de Sangro, D. Falciai, G. Finocchiaro, P. Patteri, I. M. Peruzzi,[1] M. Piccolo, A. Zallo

Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati dell'INFN, I-00044 Frascati, Italy

S. Bagnasco, A. Buzzo, R. Contri, G. Crosetti, M. Lo Vetere, M. Macri, M. R. Monge, S. Passaggio, F. C. Pastore, C. Patrignani, E. Robutti, A. Santroni, S. Tosi

Università di Genova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-16146 Genova, Italy

[1]Also with Università di Perugia, I-06100 Perugia, Italy

S. Bailey, M. Morii
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA

R. Bartoldus, G. J. Grenier, U. Mallik
University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, USA

J. Cochran, H. B. Crawley, J. Lamsa, W. T. Meyer, E. I. Rosenberg, J. Yi
Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3160, USA

M. Davier, G. Grosdidier, A. Höcker, H. M. Lacker, S. Laplace, F. Le Diberder, V. Lepeltier, A. M. Lutz, T. C. Petersen, S. Plaszczynski, M. H. Schune, L. Tantot, S. Trincaz-Duvoid, G. Wormser
Laboratoire de l'Accélérateur Linéaire, F-91898 Orsay, France

R. M. Bionta, V. Brigljević , D. J. Lange, K. van Bibber, D. M. Wright
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, CA 94550, USA

A. J. Bevan, J. R. Fry, E. Gabathuler, R. Gamet, M. George, M. Kay, D. J. Payne, R. J. Sloane, C. Touramanis
University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 3BX, United Kingdom

M. L. Aspinwall, D. A. Bowerman, P. D. Dauncey, U. Egede, I. Eschrich, G. W. Morton, J. A. Nash, P. Sanders, D. Smith, G. P. Taylor
University of London, Imperial College, London, SW7 2BW, United Kingdom

J. J. Back, G. Bellodi, P. Dixon, P. F. Harrison, R. J. L. Potter, H. W. Shorthouse, P. Strother, P. B. Vidal
Queen Mary, University of London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom

G. Cowan, H. U. Flaecher, S. George, M. G. Green, A. Kurup, C. E. Marker, T. R. McMahon, S. Ricciardi, F. Salvatore, G. Vaitsas, M. A. Winter
University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom

D. Brown, C. L. Davis
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292, USA

J. Allison, R. J. Barlow, A. C. Forti, F. Jackson, G. D. Lafferty, A. J. Lyon, N. Savvas, J. H. Weatherall, J. C. Williams
University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom

A. Farbin, A. Jawahery, V. Lillard, D. A. Roberts, J. R. Schieck
University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA

G. Blaylock, C. Dallapiccola, K. T. Flood, S. S. Hertzbach, R. Kofler, V. B. Koptchev, T. B. Moore, H. Staengle, S. Willocq
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003, USA

B. Brau, R. Cowan, G. Sciolla, F. Taylor, R. K. Yamamoto
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Nuclear Science, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA

M. Milek, P. M. Patel
McGill University, Montréal, QC, Canada H3A 2T8

F. Palombo

Università di Milano, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-20133 Milano, Italy

J. M. Bauer, L. Cremaldi, V. Eschenburg, R. Kroeger, J. Reidy, D. A. Sanders, D. J. Summers

University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677, USA

C. Hast, P. Taras

Université de Montréal, Laboratoire René J. A. Lévesque, Montréal, QC, Canada H3C 3J7

H. Nicholson

Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA 01075, USA

C. Cartaro, N. Cavallo, G. De Nardo, F. Fabozzi, C. Gatto, L. Lista, P. Paolucci, D. Piccolo, C. Sciacca

Università di Napoli Federico II, Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche and INFN, I-80126, Napoli, Italy

J. M. LoSecco

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA

J. R. G. Alsmiller, T. A. Gabriel

Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, TN 37831, USA

J. Brau, R. Frey, M. Iwasaki, C. T. Potter, N. B. Sinev, D. Strom, E. Torrence

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, USA

F. Colecchia, A. Dorigo, F. Galeazzi, M. Margoni, M. Morandin, M. Posocco, M. Rotondo, F. Simonetto, R. Stroili, C. Voci

Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-35131 Padova, Italy

M. Benayoun, H. Briand, J. Chauveau, P. David, Ch. de la Vaissière, L. Del Buono, O. Hamon, Ph. Leruste, J. Ocariz, M. Pivk, L. Roos, J. Stark

Universités Paris VI et VII, Lab de Physique Nucléaire H. E., F-75252 Paris, France

P. F. Manfredi, V. Re, V. Speziali

Università di Pavia, Dipartimento di Elettronica and INFN, I-27100 Pavia, Italy

L. Gladney, Q. H. Guo, J. Panetta

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA

C. Angelini, G. Batignani, S. Bettarini, M. Bondioli, F. Bucci, G. Calderini, E. Campagna, M. Carpinelli, F. Forti, M. A. Giorgi, A. Lusiani, G. Marchiori, F. Martinez-Vidal, M. Morganti, N. Neri, E. Paoloni, M. Rama, G. Rizzo, F. Sandrelli, G. Triggiani, J. Walsh

Università di Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore and INFN, I-56010 Pisa, Italy

M. Haire, D. Judd, K. Paick, L. Turnbull, D. E. Wagoner

Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, TX 77446, USA

J. Albert, G. Cavoto,[2] N. Danielson, P. Elmer, C. Lu, V. Miftakov, J. Olsen, S. F. Schaffner, A. J. S. Smith, A. Tumanov, E. W. Varnes

Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544, USA

[2]Also with Università di Roma La Sapienza, Roma, Italy

F. Bellini, D. del Re, R. Faccini,[3] F. Ferrarotto, F. Ferroni, E. Leonardi, M. A. Mazzoni, S. Morganti, G. Piredda, F. Safai Tehrani, M. Serra, C. Voena

Università di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-00185 Roma, Italy

S. Christ, G. Wagner, R. Waldi

Universität Rostock, D-18051 Rostock, Germany

T. Adye, N. De Groot, B. Franek, N. I. Geddes, G. P. Gopal, S. M. Xella

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX, United Kingdom

R. Aleksan, S. Emery, A. Gaidot, P.-F. Giraud, G. Hamel de Monchenault, W. Kozanecki, M. Langer, G. W. London, B. Mayer, G. Schott, B. Serfass, G. Vasseur, Ch. Yeche, M. Zito

DAPNIA, Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique/Saclay, F-91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France

M. V. Purohit, A. W. Weidemann, F. X. Yumiceva

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, USA

I. Adam, D. Aston, N. Berger, A. M. Boyarski, M. R. Convery, D. P. Coupal, D. Dong, J. Dorfan, W. Dunwoodie, R. C. Field, T. Glanzman, S. J. Gowdy, E. Grauges , T. Haas, T. Hadig, V. Halyo, T. Himel, T. Hryn'ova, M. E. Huffer, W. R. Innes, C. P. Jessop, M. H. Kelsey, P. Kim, M. L. Kocian, U. Langenegger, D. W. G. S. Leith, S. Luitz, V. Luth, H. L. Lynch, H. Marsiske, S. Menke, R. Messner, D. R. Muller, C. P. O'Grady, V. E. Ozcan, A. Perazzo, M. Perl, S. Petrak, H. Quinn, B. N. Ratcliff, S. H. Robertson, A. Roodman, A. A. Salnikov, T. Schietinger, R. H. Schindler, J. Schwiening, G. Simi, A. Snyder, A. Soha, S. M. Spanier, J. Stelzer, D. Su, M. K. Sullivan, H. A. Tanaka, J. Va'vra, S. R. Wagner, M. Weaver, A. J. R. Weinstein, W. J. Wisniewski, D. H. Wright, C. C. Young

Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford, CA 94309, USA

P. R. Burchat, C. H. Cheng, T. I. Meyer, C. Roat

Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-4060, USA

R. Henderson

TRIUMF, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 2A3

W. Bugg, H. Cohn

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996, USA

J. M. Izen, I. Kitayama, X. C. Lou

University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX 75083, USA

F. Bianchi, M. Bona, D. Gamba

Università di Torino, Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale and INFN, I-10125 Torino, Italy

L. Bosisio, G. Della Ricca, S. Dittongo, L. Lanceri, P. Poropat, L. Vitale, G. Vuagnin

Università di Trieste, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-34127 Trieste, Italy

R. S. Panvini

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37235, USA

[3]Also with University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093, USA

S. W. Banerjee, C. M. Brown, D. Fortin, P. D. Jackson, R. Kowalewski, J. M. Roney
University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada V8W 3P6

H. R. Band, S. Dasu, M. Datta, A. M. Eichenbaum, H. Hu, J. R. Johnson, R. Liu, F. Di Lodovico, A. Mohapatra, Y. Pan, R. Prepost, I. J. Scott, S. J. Sekula, J. H. von Wimmersperg-Toeller, J. Wu, S. L. Wu, Z. Yu
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706, USA

H. Neal
Yale University, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

1 Introduction

A partial reconstruction technique has been used in the past to select large samples of reconstructed B mesons with a D^{*-} in the final state [1] and to measure properties of the B^0 meson. In this method the $\overline{D}^0$ is not reconstructed, but its four-momentum is inferred from the kinematics of the a_1^+, the slow pion (π_s) from D^{*-} decay and the decay constraints. The measurement of the branching fraction for $B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$ is performed as a first step in demonstrating that the partial reconstruction method may offer a means of determining the combination of Cabibbo-Kobayashi-Maskawa [2] unitarity triangle angles $\sin(2\beta+\gamma)$ using this channel[1].

2 The *BABAR* detector

The *BABAR* experiment is located at the PEP-II storage ring at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. A detailed description of the detector and of the algorithms used for the track reconstruction and selection of $B\overline{B}$ events can be found in Ref. [3]. For the partial reconstruction analysis of $B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$ only charged tracks are used: particles with transverse momentum $p_T > 170$ MeV/c are reconstructed by matching hits in the Silicon Vertex Tracker (SVT) with track segments in the Drift Chamber (DCH). Tracks with lower p_T do not penetrate a significant distance in the DCH and are reconstructed using only the information from the SVT.

Electron, muon and kaon identification is used in the analysis as a veto in the selection of pions forming the a_1 candidates. Electron candidates are identified by the ratio of the energy deposited in the electromagnetic calorimeter (EMC) to the track momentum (E/p) and by the energy loss in the DCH (dE/dx). Muons are primarily identified by the measured number of hadronic interaction lengths traversed from the outside radius of the DCH through the iron of the instrumented flux return (IFR). Kaons are distinguished from pions and protons on the basis of dE/dx in the SVT and DCH, and the number of Cherenkov photons and the Cherenkov angle in the Detector for Internally Reflected Cherenkov radiation (DIRC).

3 Data sample

The data used in this analysis were collected with the *BABAR* detector in 1999 and 2000. These data correspond to an integrated luminosity of 20.6 fb^{-1} recorded at the $\Upsilon(4S)$ resonance and, for background studies, 2.6 fb^{-1} collected at 40 MeV below the resonance ("off-resonance" sample). Monte Carlo samples of $B\overline{B}$ and continuum events were reconstructed and analyzed using the same procedure as the data. The equivalent luminosity of the generic simulated data is approximately one fourth of the on-resonance data, while the number of signal $B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$ Monte Carlo (MC) events is approximately ten times the number expected in the on-resonance data.

4 The partial reconstruction technique

In the partial reconstruction of the decay chain $B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$, followed by $D^{*-} \to \overline{D}^0\pi_s^-$, only the a_1 and the π_s from D^* decay are required. For this analysis the a_1 is reconstructed via the

[1] Since the selection of $D^{*-}a_1^+$ and $D^{*+}a_1^-$ are identical, the charge conjugate state is implied throughout the paper.

decay chain $a_1^+ \to \rho^0\pi^+$. The angle between the momentum vectors of the B and the a_1 in the center-of-mass frame (CM) is then computed:

$$\cos\theta_{Ba_1} = \frac{M_{D^{*-}}^2 - M_{B^0}^2 - M_{a_1}^2 + E_{CM}E_{a_1}}{2P_B|\vec{p}_{a_1}|} \tag{1}$$

where M_x is the mass of particle x, E_{a_1} and $\vec{p}_{a_1}$ are the measured CM energy and momentum of the a_1, E_{CM} is the total CM energy of the beams and $P_B = \sqrt{E_{CM}^2/4 - M_{B^0}^2}$. Given $\cos\theta_{Ba_1}$ and the measured four-momenta of the π_s and the a_1, the B four-momentum can be calculated up to an unknown azimuthal angle ϕ around $\vec{p}_{a_1}$. For every value of ϕ, the expected $\overline{D}^0$ four-momentum, $P_{\overline{D}^0}$, is determined from four-momentum conservation and the ϕ-dependent "missing mass" is calculated, $m_{\text{miss}}(\phi) \equiv \sqrt{|P_{\overline{D}^0}|^2}$. Defining m_{min} and m_{max} to be the minimum and maximum values of $m_{\text{miss}}(\phi)$ obtained by varying ϕ over the allowed range, the missing mass is calculated as $m_{\text{miss}} \equiv \frac{1}{2}(m_{max} + m_{min})$. For signal events, this variable peaks at the $\overline{D}^0$ mass, while for background events it has a broader distribution. For this reason, m_{miss} can be used to determine the fractions of signal and background events in the data sample.

5 Event selection

Data and Monte Carlo events are first selected with the following loose requirements:

- $R2$, the ratio of the 2nd to the 0th Fox Wolfram moments [4], less than 0.35;
- at least one a_1 candidate[2] such that:
  - the a_1 invariant mass m_{a_1} is between 1.0 and 1.6 GeV/c^2;
  - the a_1 momentum p_{a_1}, computed in the CM frame, is between 1.85 and 2.30 GeV/c;
  - the vertex probability obtained from a vertex fit of the 3 pions is greater than 1%;
  - the invariant mass of at least one of the two possible $\pi^+\pi^-$ combinations ($m_{\pi\pi}$) is in the range [0.278, 1.122] GeV/c^2;
- at least one additional track (the π_s) with CM momentum p_{π_s} between 50 and 700 MeV/c;
- for each selected D^*a_1 candidate, there must be at least 2 additional particles (charged or neutral).

The fraction of events selected by applying these cuts is summarized in Table 1 for signal and background MC samples and for off-resonance data.

The main source of background in this analysis is continuum $q\overline{q}$ events, where $q = u, d, s, c$. A neural network is used to optimize the separation of $B\overline{B}$ events from the continuum background, independent of any particular B decay channel. The NN has three layers, with 11 input nodes, 15 hidden nodes and one output. Its definition relies on the different topologies of signal and background at the $\Upsilon(4S)$: while $B\overline{B}$ events are more "spherical", $q\overline{q}$ events are more "jet-like". The variables used to discriminate jet-like from isotropic events are R_2; the thrust of the event [4]; the two invariant masses squared, obtained by adding the four momenta of all particles going into

[2] By a_1^+ we refer to the π^+ π^- π^+ final state.

each of the hemispheres divided by the plane perpendicular to the thrust axis; and the angle of the thrust axis with respect to the e^+e^- direction.

The signal to background separation becomes more complicated when one or more gluons are emitted, which is more likely to happen when light quarks are produced. In this case there are multiple preferred axes, so that the event shape more closely resembles that of the signal. To discriminate further between signal and background in this case, the tracks are clustered into 3 or 4 jets using the so called "Durham" algorithm [5,6].

The event is first clustered into four jets and the following discriminating variables are added to those previously defined in order to build up the network: $\mathbf{y}_4$, the jet metric [5,6] obtained when the event is clustered in 4 jets; the QCD matrix element [7]; the cosine of the maximum angle between each pair of jets; the angle between the plane defined by the two most energetic jets and that defined by the other two jets; and the angle between the lowest and second lowest energy jet. The event is then further clustered into 3 jets and the jet metric $\mathbf{y}_3$ is also added to the list of network input variables.

The distributions of $B\overline{B}$ MC events and on-resonance data that pass the event selection criteria are shown in Fig. 1. The on-resonance distribution is shown after the subtraction of the off-resonance distribution, scaled by the ratio of the on-resonance to off-resonance luminosities and the CM energy squared. By selecting events for which the NN output (O_{NN}) is greater than 0.25, 66% of the continuum events are rejected. The fractions of events selected by this requirement in the various analyzed samples are shown in Table 1.

After the NN cut, further selection requirements are applied. There must be at least one $a_1\pi$ combination with net charge equal 0; the three pion invariant mass must be in the range [1.0, 1.45] GeV/c^2; the three pion momentum in the CM frame must be in the range [1.9, 2.25] GeV/c; at least one $\pi^+\pi^-$ combination from the three daughters of the a_1 must have invariant mass in the range [0.65, 0.9] GeV/c^2; and the vertex probability of the 3π plus the π_s must be greater than 3%.

The fractions of events selected by these requirements are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Fractions of events in MC data that are selected by the requirements applied in the analysis.

Cuts applied	$B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$	$B^0\overline{B^0}$ (no signal)	B^+B^-	$q\overline{q}$ MC
Reconstruction Efficiency	38.3%	14.6%	13.9%	6.4%
$O_{NN} > 0.25$	85.4%	91.9%	92.1%	45.2%
$q_{a_1-\pi} = 0$	94.2%	86.7%	85.2%	83.5%
$1.0 \leq m_{a_1} \leq 1.45$ GeV/c^2	81.7%	71.8%	71.7%	73.6%
$1.9 \leq p_{a_1} \leq 2.25$ GeV/c	94.8%	92.4%	92.5%	93.3%
$0.65 \leq m_{\pi\pi} \leq 0.9$ GeV/c^2	76.4%	59.1%	60.5%	64.3%
Vertex Prob $4\pi > 0.03$	80.0%	74.2%	73.9%	76.9%
Total Efficiency	14.6%	3.4%	3.2%	0.82%

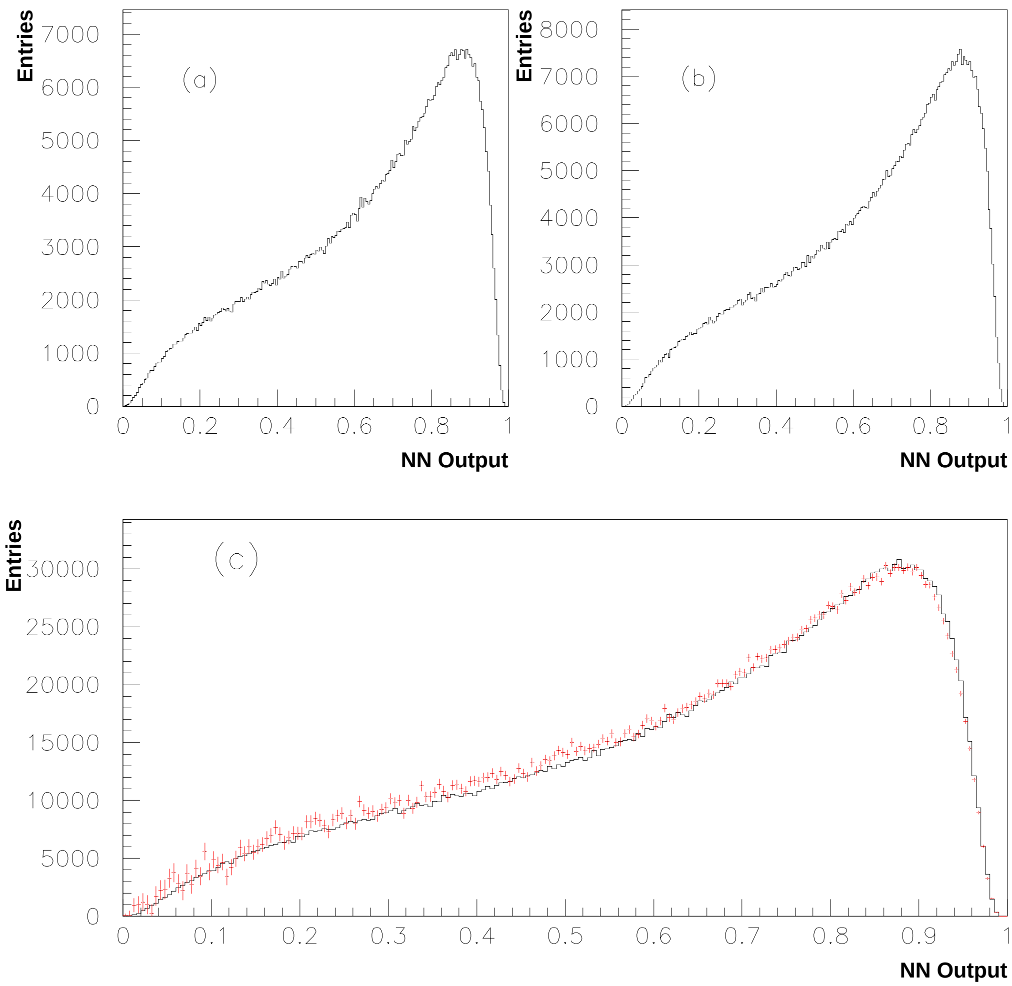

Figure 1: Distribution of the neural net output for (a) $B^0\overline{B^0}$ MC, (b) B^+B^- MC and (c) on-resonance (off-resonance subtracted) data events, with superimposed distribution for all $B\overline{B}$ MC events. All events satisfy the event selection criteria.

6 Results

Applying all of the selection criteria, the m_{miss} distribution of on-resonance and off-resonance data is obtained for "right-sign"events, which are events where the a_1 and π_s candidates have opposite electrical charges. The off-resonance distribution is then scaled to take into account the difference in luminosities and CM energies between the two samples and subtracted bin-by-bin from the on-resonance distribution. The resulting plot is fitted, using a minimum χ^2 technique, to a linear combination of the m_{miss} distributions of:

1. $B\overline{B}$ Monte Carlo events, excluding correctly reconstructed signal events; and
2. correctly reconstructed signal Monte Carlo events.

In Fig. 2(a) the m_{miss} distribution of "right-sign" on-resonance data, off-resonance subtracted, is shown, together with the distributions of $B\overline{B}$ background MC and signal MC events. The signal yield that is obtained is 18400 ± 1200 events. The $B\overline{B}$ contribution to the fit is 0.995 ± 0.015 of the value expected, given the total number of $B\overline{B}$ events in the data and in the Monte Carlo simulation.

Given this yield, the a_1 branching fraction[3], the total signal efficiency of Table 1 and the fraction of events with multiple signal candidates, the following preliminary result for the $B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$ branching fraction is obtained:

$$\mathcal{B}(B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+) = (1.20 \pm 0.07)\%, \quad (2)$$

where the error is statistical only. The result is in very good agreement with the current best measurement of $(1.30 \pm 0.27)\%$ [8–11].

Several tests were conducted to verify that the background shapes in data and MC agree and do not give rise to a spurious signal. Charged a_1 candidates were combined with tracks of the same charge into "wrong-sign" combinations, and were analyzed in the same way as "right-sign" combinations. The m_{miss} distribution of these candidates, shown in Fig. 2(b), shows a good agreement between data and MC in the signal region ($m_{\text{miss}} > 1.854$ GeV/c^2). The $B\overline{B}$ contribution to the fit is 0.990 ± 0.016 of the value expected from MC simulation.

Among events collected on-resonance, the fraction containing more than one $a_1\pi$ combination that passes all the analysis requirements in the signal region, defined by $m_{\text{miss}} > 1.854$ GeV/c^2, is $F = (15.10 \pm 0.14)\%$. This agrees with the fraction $F_{MC} = (15.51 \pm 0.26)\%$ obtained from a weighted mix of off-resonance, $B\overline{B}$ and signal MC events. It was verified that the reconstruction efficiency in $q\overline{q}$ MC and off-resonance data are in good agreement.

7 Systematic errors

The selection criteria applied in the analysis are varied within a reasonable range around their chosen values. The branching fraction and its error are recalculated for each value, obtaining N different measurements for N different choices of the requirement [12]. The variation of the N results with respect to their average, taking into account statistical correlations between them [13], is taken as a systematic error. The method of Ref. [14] is used in order to disentangle the statistical fluctuations from the systematic ones.

[3]In this analysis it is assumed that $\mathcal{B}(a_1^+ \to \rho^0\pi^+) = 0.4920$, based on isospin considerations and phase space corrections.

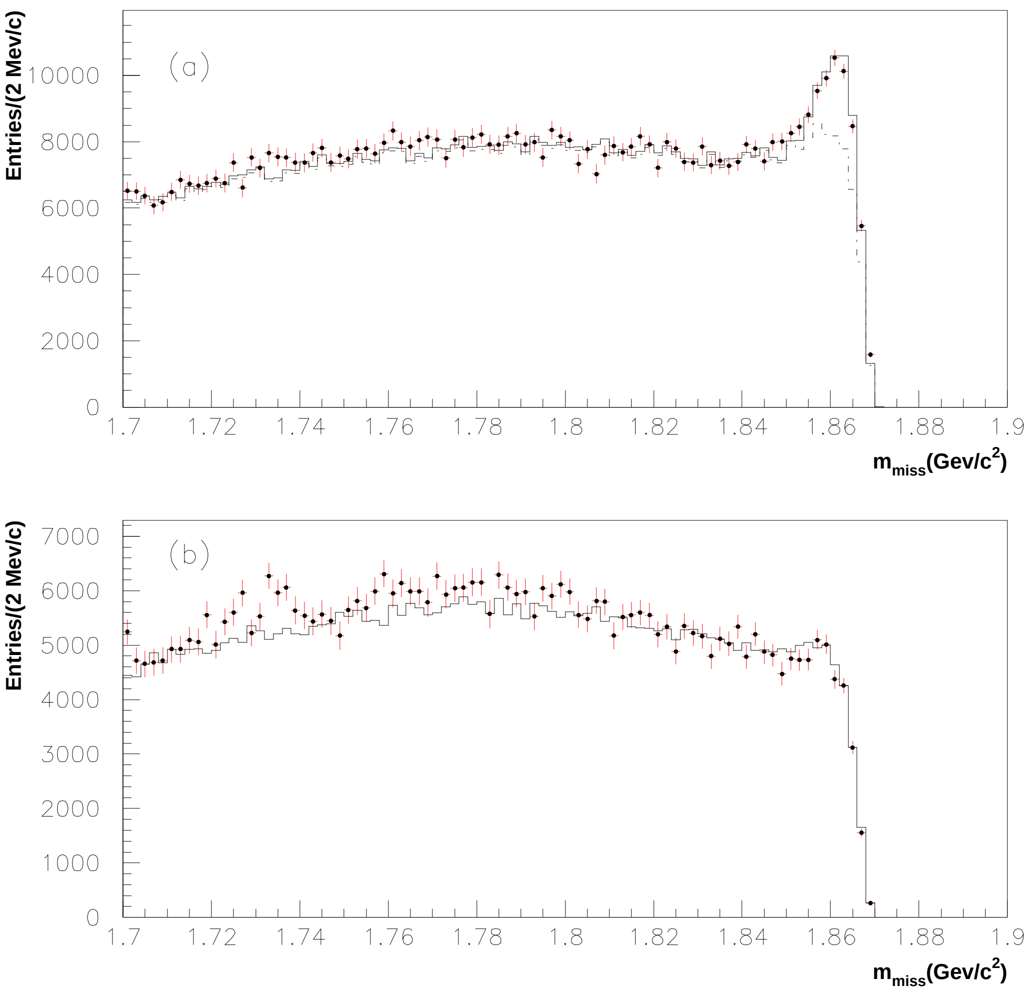

Figure 2: (a) $m_{\rm miss}$ distribution of continuum-subtracted on-resonance data events (data points), $B\overline{B}$ background MC events (dashed histogram) and $B\overline{B}$ background plus signal events (solid histogram) for "right-sign" $a_1\pi$ combinations. The histograms are the result of the fit procedure described in the text. (b) Same distributions for "wrong-sign" $a_1\pi$ combinations.

The final contributions to the error on the branching ratio due to the variation of the selection requirements are shown in Table 2. It has been verified that the systematic error obtained for each requirement does not depend on the variation studied.

Table 2: Systematic errors on $\mathcal{B}(B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+)$ due to changing the value of some of the requirements in the analysis.

Cut applied	Range Studied	$\tilde{\chi}^2_{min}$	N	Error (%)
$O_{NN} > O_{\rm min}$	$O_{\rm min} = 0.15$ to 0.35	1.37	5	4.2
$m_{\rm min} \leq m_{a_1} \leq m_{\rm max}$	$m_{\rm min} = 1.0$ GeV/c^2			
	$m_{\rm max} = 1.4$ to 1.5 GeV/c^2	0.99	5	negl.
$p_{\rm min} \leq p_{a_1} \leq p_{\rm max}$	$p_{\rm min} = 1.85$ to 1.95 GeV/c^2			
	$p_{\rm max} = 2.15$ to 2.25 GeV/c^2	1.96	5	6.6
Vertex Prob $3\pi > P_{\rm min}$	$P_{\rm min} = 0.01$ to 0.15	1.15	5	2.4
Vertex Prob $4\pi > P_{\rm min}$	$P_{\rm min} = 0.01$ to 0.1	1.10	5	2.2
$m_{\rm min} \leq m_\rho \leq m_{\rm max}$	$m_{\rm min} = 0.65$ to 0.75 GeV/c^2			
	$m_{\rm max} = 0.8$ to 0.9GeV/c^2	1.45	5	4.6
Total error				9.6

A conservative systematic error of 0.35% is determined from MC due to the dependence of the π_s reconstruction efficiency on the π_s momentum. The systematic error due to track reconstruction efficiency is 4.2% and the uncertainty in the total number of B mesons in the data sample is 1.6%.

The $B\overline{B}$ background has a component that peaks slightly under the signal region (Fig. 2). This is due mostly to signal events in which one or more of the selected tracks did not originate from the signal B^0. The contribution of this background is varied in the $B\overline{B}$ MC by $\pm\sqrt{(0.07/1.2)^2 + 0.104^2}$, i.e., by the relative statistical error in the central value of the branching fraction plus the total relative systematic error calculated up to this point, added in quadrature. This results in a 4.5% variation of the signal yield, which is added to the total systematic error. The total systematic error is 11.5%.

Other possible sources of systematic error have been investigated. The non-resonant decay channel $B^0 \to D^{*-}\rho^0\pi^+$ could contribute to the quoted branching fraction. The measured branching fraction for this mode is $0.57 \pm 0.31\%$ [8, 10]. Since the central value is inconsistent with the total $\mathcal{B}(B^0 \to D^{*-}\pi^+\pi^-\pi^+)$, this channel is ignored in our fit. As a result, there is a potential contribution from this channel that is included in the quoted branching fraction for $B^0 \to D^{*-}a_1^+$. The central value will shift according to the branching fraction for $B^0 \to D^{*-}\rho^0\pi^+$ at a rate of $-3.3\% \times \mathcal{B}(B^0 \to D^{*-}\rho^0\pi^+)/0.57\%$.

Likewise, the decay $B \to D^{**}a_1$ could affect the signal yield[4]. To study its effect, D^{**} MC events are added to the generic $B\overline{B}$ sample at the level of $\mathcal{B}^{**} = \mathcal{B}(B \to D^{**}a_1) \times \mathcal{B}(D^{**} \to D^*\pi) = 0.35\%$ [15], and the fit to the missing mass distribution is repeated. This results in a reduction of the signal yield of 4.3%. Since the $\mathcal{B}(B \to D^{**}a_1)$ has not yet been measured, based on this result the branching fraction obtained in this analysis will be shifted by contributions from $B \to D^{**}a_1$ at a rate of $-4.3\% \times \mathcal{B}^{**}/0.35\%$.

[4] D^{**} denotes the sum of D_1, $D_1^{'}$ and D_2^* states.

8 Conclusions

With a partial reconstruction technique, 18400 ± 1200 $B^0 \to D^{*-} a_1^+$ events have been found in the *BABAR* data set of 20.6 fb^{-1} on-resonance events. This corresponds to the branching fraction

$$\mathcal{B}(B^0 \to D^{*-} a_1^+) = (1.20 \pm 0.07 \pm 0.14)\%, \tag{3}$$

where the first error is statistical and the second is systematic. Due to the uncertainty in the contribution of $B^0 \to D^{*-} \rho^0 \pi^+$ events in the signal sample, the central value of the quoted branching fraction will shift according to the branching fraction for $B^0 \to D^{*-} \rho^0 \pi^+$ at a rate of $-3.3\% \times \mathcal{B}(B^0 \to D^{*-} \rho^0 \pi^+)/0.57\%$. Likewise, due to the unknown value of $\mathcal{B}^{**} = \mathcal{B}(B \to D^{**} a_1) \times \mathcal{B}(D^{**} \to D^* \pi)$ the central value of the branching fraction will be shifted by contributions from $B \to D^{**} a_1$ events at a rate of $-4.3\% \times \mathcal{B}^{**}/0.35\%$. The result is in good agreement with the current world average value of $(1.30 \pm 0.27)\%$ [8–11] but reduces the uncertainty by a factor of two.

9 Acknowledgments

We are grateful for the extraordinary contributions of our PEP-II colleagues in achieving the excellent luminosity and machine conditions that have made this work possible. The success of this project also relies critically on the expertise and dedication of the computing organizations that support *BABAR*. The collaborating institutions wish to thank SLAC for its support and the kind hospitality extended to them. This work is supported by the US Department of Energy and National Science Foundation, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (Canada), Institute of High Energy Physics (China), the Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique and Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (France), the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Germany), the Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (Italy), the Research Council of Norway, the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Russian Federation, and the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (United Kingdom). Individuals have received support from the A. P. Sloan Foundation, the Research Corporation, and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

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