



Search for neutral MSSM Higgs bosons decaying to a pair of tau leptons in pp collisions

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Abstract

A search for neutral Higgs bosons in the minimal supersymmetric extension of the standard model (MSSM) decaying to tau-lepton pairs in pp collisions is performed, using events recorded by the CMS experiment at the LHC. The dataset corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 24.6 fb^{-1} , with 4.9 fb^{-1} at 7 TeV and 19.7 fb^{-1} at 8 TeV. To enhance the sensitivity to neutral MSSM Higgs bosons, the search includes the case where the Higgs boson is produced in association with a b-quark jet. No excess is observed in the tau-lepton-pair invariant mass spectrum. Exclusion limits are presented in the MSSM parameter space for different benchmark scenarios, m_h^{max} , $m_h^{\text{mod+}}$, $m_h^{\text{mod-}}$, light-stop, light-stau, τ -phobic, and low- m_H . Upper limits on the cross section times branching fraction for gluon fusion and b-quark associated Higgs boson production are also given.

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1 Introduction

A broad variety of precision measurements have shown the overwhelming success of the standard model (SM) [1–3] of fundamental interactions, which includes an explanation for the origin of the mass of the weak force carriers, as well as for the quark and lepton masses. In the SM, this is achieved via the Brout–Englert–Higgs mechanism [4–9], which predicts the existence of a scalar boson, the Higgs boson. However, the Higgs boson mass in the SM is not protected against quadratically divergent quantum-loop corrections at high energy, known as the hierarchy problem. In the model of supersymmetry (SUSY) [10, 11], which postulates a symmetry between the fundamental bosons and fermions, a cancellation of these divergences occurs naturally. The Higgs sector of the minimal supersymmetric extension of the standard model (MSSM) [12, 13] contains two scalar doublets that result in five physical Higgs bosons: a light and a heavy CP-even Higgs boson h and H , a CP-odd Higgs boson A , and two charged Higgs bosons H^\pm . At tree level the Higgs sector can be expressed in terms of two parameters which are usually chosen as the mass of the CP-odd Higgs boson m_A and $\tan\beta$, the ratio of the two vacuum expectation values of the two Higgs doublets.

The dominant neutral MSSM Higgs boson production mechanism is the gluon fusion process for small and moderate values of $\tan\beta$. At large values of $\tan\beta$ b-quark associated production is the dominant contribution, due to the enhanced Higgs boson Yukawa coupling to b quarks. Figure 1 shows the leading-order diagrams for the gluon fusion and b-quark associated Higgs boson production, in the four-flavor and in the five-flavor scheme. In the region of large $\tan\beta$ the branching fraction to tau leptons is also enhanced, making the search for neutral MSSM Higgs bosons in the $\tau\tau$ final state particularly interesting.

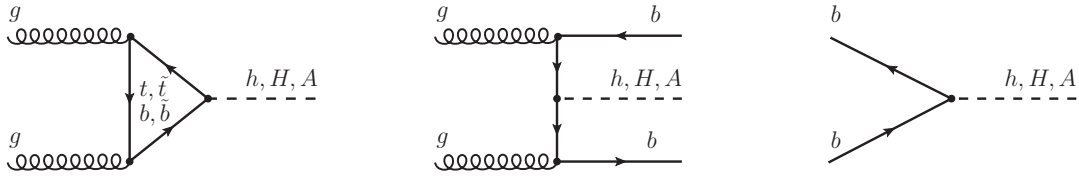


Figure 1: Leading-order diagrams of the gluon fusion (left) and b-quark associated Higgs boson production, in the four-flavor (center) and the five-flavor (right) scheme.

This paper reports a search for neutral MSSM Higgs bosons in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV and 8 TeV in the $\tau\tau$ decay channel. The data were recorded with the CMS detector [14] at the CERN LHC and correspond to an integrated luminosity of 24.6 fb^{-1} , with 4.9 fb^{-1} at 7 TeV and 19.7 fb^{-1} at 8 TeV. Five different $\tau\tau$ signatures are studied, $e\tau_h, \mu\tau_h, e\mu, \mu\mu$, and $\tau_h\tau_h$, where τ_h denotes a hadronically decaying τ . These results are an extension of previous searches by the CMS and ATLAS experiments [15–17] at 7 TeV, and are complementary to the searches in $p\bar{p}$ and e^+e^- collisions at the Tevatron [18–21] and LEP [22], respectively.

The results are interpreted in the context of the MSSM with different benchmark scenarios described in Section 1.1 and also in a model independent way, in terms of upper limits on the cross section times branching fraction $\sigma \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ for gluon fusion ($gg\phi$) and b-quark associated ($bb\phi$) neutral Higgs boson production, where ϕ denotes a single resonance with a narrow width compared to the experimental resolution.

1.1 MSSM Higgs boson benchmark scenarios

Traditionally, searches for MSSM Higgs bosons are expressed in terms of benchmark scenarios where the parameters $\tan\beta$ and m_A are varied, while the other parameters that enter through radiative corrections are fixed to certain benchmark values. At tree level the masses of the neutral MSSM scalar Higgs bosons h and H can be expressed in terms of $\tan\beta$ and m_A as follows

$$m_{H,h}^2 = \frac{1}{2} \left[m_A^2 + m_Z^2 \pm \sqrt{(m_A^2 + m_Z^2)^2 - 4m_Z^2 m_A^2 (\cos^2 2\beta)} \right], \quad (1)$$

which gives an upper bound on the light scalar Higgs boson mass, m_h , in terms of the Z -boson mass of $m_h \leq m_Z \cos 2\beta$, which is below the excluded value of the LEP experiments [22]. After radiative corrections, values of the mass larger than the LEP limits are obtained with a maximum value of $m_h \sim 135$ GeV [23].

Taking into account higher-order corrections, the following extended set of parameters defines the MSSM Higgs sector: M_{SUSY} denotes the common soft-SUSY-breaking third-generation squark masses; μ is the higgsino mass parameter; M_1 (M_2) is the U(1) (SU(2)) gaugino mass parameter; X_t is the stop mixing parameter; A_t , A_b and A_τ are the trilinear Higgs–stop, Higgs–sbottom and Higgs–stau-lepton couplings, respectively; $m_{\tilde{g}}$ ($m_{\tilde{l}_3}$) is the gluino (stau) mass. A_t is obtained by the relation $A_t = X_t + \mu/\tan\beta$ and the value of the U(1)-gaugino mass parameter M_1 is generally fixed via the unification relation $M_1 = (5/3)M_2 \tan^2 \theta_w$, where $\cos \theta_w = m_W/m_Z$.

Previous MSSM Higgs searches [15–22] were interpreted in the m_h^{max} benchmark scenario [24, 25], which allows the mass of the light scalar Higgs boson h to reach its maximum value of ~ 135 GeV. The ATLAS and CMS experiments have reported the observation of a new boson with mass around 125 GeV [26–28]. Evidence that this new boson also decays into tau lepton pairs has recently been reported by CMS [29]. If the new boson is interpreted as the light scalar MSSM Higgs boson h , a large part of the $\tan\beta$ and m_A parameter space in the m_h^{max} scenario is excluded. However, changes in some of the parameters open up a large region of the allowed parameter space again [30]. New benchmark scenarios [31] have thus recently been proposed where the mass of one of the scalar Higgs bosons, h or H , is compatible with the mass of the recently discovered Higgs boson of 125 GeV within a range of ± 3 GeV. This uncertainty is a conservative estimate of the theoretical uncertainty of the MSSM Higgs boson mass calculations [23]. Table 1 summarizes the main parameters of the benchmark scenarios considered in this study.

The traditional m_h^{max} scenario has been slightly modified to the $m_h^{\text{mod+}}$ and $m_h^{\text{mod-}}$ scenarios, where the different values of the stop mixing parameter yield a smaller light scalar Higgs boson mass than the maximal value of ~ 135 GeV. Other scenarios which have recently been proposed due to their interesting Higgs sector phenomenology compared to the SM are the light-stop scenario, which allows for a modified gluon fusion rate; the light-stau, which gives a modified $H \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$ rate; and the τ -phobic scenario, which gives a reduced Higgs decay rate to down-type fermions of up to 30% at large values of $\tan\beta$ and m_A . The value of m_A is generally varied between 90 and 1000 GeV. In the light-stop scenario the scan is only performed up to 600 GeV, because the calculation of the SUSY next-to-leading order (NLO) QCD corrections loses validity at larger masses. The range of $\tan\beta$ values studied for each scenario is chosen such that the calculation of the light scalar Higgs boson mass is well defined. In contrast to the other scenarios, that interpret the light scalar Higgs h as the recently discovered Higgs boson, the low- m_H scenario assumes the heavy scalar MSSM Higgs H as the new discovered state. In this scenario, the parameters have been chosen such that the mass of the light scalar Higgs h

is not excluded by the LEP results [22]. The mass of the pseudoscalar Higgs boson is set to $m_A = 110$ GeV and the higgsino mass parameter μ and $\tan\beta$ are varied as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: MSSM benchmark scenarios.

Parameter	m_h^{\max}	$m_h^{\text{mod}+}$	$m_h^{\text{mod}-}$
m_A	90–1000 GeV	90–1000 GeV	90–1000 GeV
$\tan\beta$	0.5–60	0.5–60	0.5–60
M_{SUSY}	1000 GeV	1000 GeV	1000 GeV
μ	200 GeV	200 GeV	200 GeV
M_1	$(5/3) M_2 \tan^2 \theta_W$	$(5/3) M_2 \tan^2 \theta_W$	$(5/3) M_2 \tan^2 \theta_W$
M_2	200 GeV	200 GeV	200 GeV
X_t	$2 M_{\text{SUSY}}$	$1.5 M_{\text{SUSY}}$	$-1.9 M_{\text{SUSY}}$
A_b, A_t, A_τ	$A_b = A_t = A_\tau$	$A_b = A_t = A_\tau$	$A_b = A_t = A_\tau$
$m_{\tilde{g}}$	1500 GeV	1500 GeV	1500 GeV
$m_{\tilde{l}_3}$	1000 GeV	1000 GeV	1000 GeV

Parameter	light-stop	light-stau	τ -phobic	low- m_H
m_A	90–600 GeV	90–1000 GeV	90–1000 GeV	110 GeV
$\tan\beta$	0.7–60	0.5–60	0.9–50	1.5–9.5
M_{SUSY}	500 GeV	1000 GeV	1500 GeV	1500 GeV
μ	400 GeV	500 GeV	2000 GeV	300–3100 GeV
M_1	340 GeV	$(5/3) M_2 \tan^2 \theta_W$	$(5/3) M_2 \tan^2 \theta_W$	$(5/3) M_2 \tan^2 \theta_W$
M_2	400 GeV	200 GeV	200 GeV	200 GeV
X_t	$2 M_{\text{SUSY}}$	$1.6 M_{\text{SUSY}}$	$2.45 M_{\text{SUSY}}$	$2.45 M_{\text{SUSY}}$
A_b, A_t, A_τ	$A_b = A_t = A_\tau$	$A_b = A_t, A_\tau = 0$	$A_b = A_t = A_\tau$	$A_b = A_t = A_\tau$
$m_{\tilde{g}}$	1500 GeV	1500 GeV	1500 GeV	1500 GeV
$m_{\tilde{l}_3}$	1000 GeV	245 GeV	500 GeV	1000 GeV

The neutral MSSM Higgs boson production cross sections and the corresponding uncertainties are provided by the LHC Higgs Cross Section Group [32]. The cross sections for the gluon fusion process in the m_h^{\max} scenario have been obtained with the NLO QCD program HIGLU [33, 34], for the contribution of the top loop, the bottom loop, and the interference. The top loop contribution has been further corrected using the next-to-next-to-leading order (NNLO) program GGH@NNLO [35–39]. In the case of the other benchmark scenarios, the program SUSHI [40] has been used as it includes the SUSY NLO QCD corrections [41–45] that are of importance in these alternative scenarios. In the SUSHI calculations, the electroweak corrections due to light-fermion loop effects [46, 47] have also been included. For the $bb\phi$ process, the four-flavor NLO QCD calculation [48, 49] and the five-flavor NNLO QCD calculation, as implemented in BBH@NNLO [50] have been combined using the Santander matching scheme [51]. In all cross section programs used, the Higgs boson Yukawa couplings have been calculated with FEYNHIGGS [23, 52–54]. The Higgs boson branching fraction to tau leptons in the different benchmark scenarios has been obtained with FEYNHIGGS and HDECAY [55–57], as described in Ref. [58].

2 Experimental setup, event reconstruction, and simulation

The central feature of the CMS apparatus is a superconducting solenoid of 6 m internal diameter, providing a magnetic field of 3.8 T. Within the superconducting solenoid volume

are a silicon pixel and strip tracker, a lead tungstate crystal electromagnetic calorimeter, and a brass/scintillator hadron calorimeter, each composed of a barrel and two endcap sections. Muons are measured in gas-ionization detectors embedded in the steel flux-return yoke outside the solenoid. Extensive forward calorimetry complements the coverage provided by the barrel and endcap detectors. The first level of the CMS trigger system, composed of custom hardware processors, uses information from the calorimeters and muon detectors to select the most interesting events in a fixed time interval of less than $4\ \mu\text{s}$. The High Level Trigger processor farm further decreases the event rate from around 100 kHz to less than 1 kHz, before data storage. A more detailed description of the CMS detector, together with a definition of the coordinate system, can be found in Ref. [14].

An average of 9 (21) pp interactions occurred per LHC bunch crossing in 2011 (2012). For each reconstructed collision vertex the sum of the p_T^2 of all tracks associated to the vertex is computed and the one with the largest value is taken as the primary collision vertex, where p_T is the transverse momentum. The additional pp collisions are referred to as pileup.

A particle-flow algorithm [59, 60] 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} .

Jets are reconstructed using the anti- k_T jet algorithm [61, 62] with a distance parameter of 0.5. To correct for the contribution to the jet energy due to pileup, a median transverse momentum density (ρ) is determined event by event. The pileup contribution to the jet energy is estimated as the product of ρ and the area of the jet and subsequently subtracted from the jet transverse momentum [63]. Jet energy corrections [64] are also applied as a function of the jet p_T and pseudorapidity $\eta = -\ln[\tan(\theta/2)]$, where θ is the polar angle. To tag jets coming from b-quark decays the combined secondary vertex algorithm is used, that is based on the reconstruction of secondary vertices, together with track-based lifetime information [65]. Jets with $|\eta| < 4.7$ and b-tagged jets with $|\eta| < 2.4$ are used.

Hadronically-decaying tau leptons are reconstructed using the hadron-plus-strips algorithm [66]. The constituents of the reconstructed jets are used to identify individual τ decay modes with one charged hadron and up to two neutral pions, or three charged hadrons. The presence of extra particles within the jet, not compatible with the reconstructed decay mode of the τ , is used as a criterion to discriminate τ_h decays from jets. Additional discriminators are used to separate τ_h decays from electrons and muons.

Tau leptons from Higgs boson decays are expected to be isolated in the detector, while leptons from heavy-flavor (c and b) decays and decays in flight are expected to be found inside jets. A measure of isolation is used to discriminate the signal from the QCD multijet background, based on the charged hadrons, photons, and neutral hadrons falling within a cone around the lepton momentum direction. Electron, muon, and tau lepton isolation are estimated as

$$\begin{aligned}
 I_{e,\mu} &= \sum_{\text{charged}} p_T + \max\left(0, \sum_{\text{neutral}} p_T + \sum_{\gamma} p_T - 0.5 \sum_{\text{charged,pileup}} p_T\right), \\
 I_{\tau_h} &= \sum_{\text{charged}} p_T + \max\left(0, \sum_{\gamma} p_T - 0.46 \sum_{\text{charged,pileup}} p_T\right),
 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where $\sum_{\text{charged}} p_T$ is the scalar sum of the transverse momenta of the charged hadrons, elec-

trons, and muons from the primary vertex located in a cone centered around the lepton direction of size $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta\eta)^2 + (\Delta\phi)^2}$ of 0.4 for electrons and muons and 0.5 for tau leptons. The sums $\sum_{\text{neutral}} p_T$ and $\sum_{\gamma} p_T$ represent the same quantities for neutral hadrons and photons, respectively. In the case of electrons and muons the innermost region is excluded to avoid the footprint in the calorimeter of the lepton itself from entering the sum. Charged particles close to the direction of the electrons are excluded as well, to prevent tracks originating from the conversion of photons emitted by the bremsstrahlung process from spoiling the isolation. In the case of τ_h , the particles used in the reconstruction of the lepton are excluded. The contribution of pileup photons and neutral hadrons is estimated from the scalar sum of the transverse momenta of charged hadrons from pileup vertices in the isolation cone $\sum_{\text{charged, pileup}}$. This sum is multiplied by a factor of 0.5 that approximately corresponds to the ratio of neutral-to-charged hadron production in the hadronization process of inelastic pp collisions. In the case of τ_h , a value of 0.46 is used, as the neutral hadron contribution is not used in the computation of I_{τ_h} . An η , p_T , and lepton-flavor dependent threshold on the isolation variable is applied.

In order to mitigate the effects of pileup on the reconstruction of E_T^{miss} , a multivariate regression correction is used where the inputs are separated in those components coming from the primary vertex and those which are not [67]. The correction improves the E_T^{miss} resolution in $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ events by roughly a factor of two in the case where 25 additional pileup events are present.

The MSSM neutral Higgs boson signals are modelled with the event generator PYTHIA 6.4 [68]. For the background processes, the MADGRAPH 5.1 [69] generator is used for Z+jets, W+jets, $t\bar{t}$ and di-boson production, and POWHEG 1.0 [70–73] for single-top-quark production. The POWHEG and MADGRAPH generators are interfaced with PYTHIA for parton shower and fragmentation. All generators are interfaced with TAUOLA [74] for the simulation of the τ decays. Additional interactions are simulated with PYTHIA and reweighted to the observed pileup distribution in data. All generated events are processed through a detailed simulation of the CMS detector based on GEANT4 [75] and are reconstructed with the same algorithms as the data. The missing transverse energy in Monte Carlo (MC) simulated events is corrected for the difference between data and simulation measured using a sample of $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ events [76].

3 Event selection

The events in this analysis have been selected with dedicated triggers that use a combination of electron, muon and tau lepton trigger objects [77–79]. The identification criteria and transverse momentum thresholds of these objects were progressively tightened as the LHC instantaneous luminosity increased over the data-taking period.

In the $e\tau_h$ and $\mu\tau_h$ final states, events are selected in the 2011 (2012) dataset with an electron of $p_T > 20$ (24) GeV or a muon of $p_T > 17$ (20) GeV and $|\eta| < 2.1$, and an oppositely charged τ_h of $p_T > 20$ GeV and $|\eta| < 2.3$. The tau lepton is required to have I_{τ_h} of less than 1.5 GeV. To reduce the $Z \rightarrow ee, \mu\mu$ contamination, events with two electrons or muons of $p_T > 15$ GeV, of opposite charge, and passing loose isolation criteria are rejected.

In the $e\mu$ and $\mu\mu$ final states, events with two oppositely charged leptons are selected, where the highest (second-highest) p_T lepton is required to have $p_T > 20$ (10) GeV. Electrons with $|\eta| < 2.3$ and muons with $|\eta| < 2.1$ are used. The large background arising from $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ events in the $\mu\mu$ channel is reduced by a multivariate boosted decision tree discriminator [80] using different muon kinematic variables, including the distance of closest approach of the muon pair.

In the $\tau_h \tau_h$ final state, events with two oppositely charged hadronically decaying tau leptons with $p_T > 45 \text{ GeV}$ and $|\eta| < 2.1$ are selected, where the isolation I_{τ_h} of both tau leptons is required to be less than 1 GeV.

In order to reject events coming from the W+jets background, a dedicated selection is applied. In the $e\tau_h$ and $\mu\tau_h$ final states, the transverse mass of the electron or muon and the E_T^{miss}

$$M_T = \sqrt{2p_T E_T^{\text{miss}}(1 - \cos \Delta\phi)}, \quad (3)$$

is required to be less than 30 GeV, where p_T is the lepton transverse momentum and $\Delta\phi$ is the difference in the azimuthal angle between the lepton momentum and the \vec{E}_T^{miss} . In the $e\mu$ final state, a discriminator to reject W+jets events is formed by considering the bisector of the directions of the visible τ decay products transverse to the beam direction, and is denoted as the ζ axis. From the projections of the visible decay product momenta and the \vec{E}_T^{miss} onto the ζ axis, two values are calculated,

$$P_\zeta = \left(\vec{p}_{T,1} + \vec{p}_{T,2} + \vec{E}_T^{\text{miss}} \right) \cdot \frac{\vec{\zeta}}{|\zeta|} \quad \text{and} \quad P_\zeta^{\text{vis}} = \left(\vec{p}_{T,1} + \vec{p}_{T,2} \right) \cdot \frac{\vec{\zeta}}{|\zeta|}, \quad (4)$$

where $p_{T,1}$ and $p_{T,2}$ indicate the transverse momentum of the two reconstructed leptons. Events are selected with $P_\zeta - 1.85P_\zeta^{\text{vis}} > -20 \text{ GeV}$.

To further enhance the sensitivity of the search to Higgs bosons, the sample of selected events is split into two mutually exclusive categories:

- **b-tag:** At least one b-tagged jet with $p_T > 20 \text{ GeV}$ is required and not more than one jet with $p_T > 30 \text{ GeV}$, in order to reduce the contribution from the $t\bar{t}$ background. This event category is intended to exploit the production of Higgs bosons in association with b quarks which is enhanced in the MSSM.
- **no b-tag:** Events are required to have no b-tagged jets with $p_T > 20 \text{ GeV}$. This event category is mainly sensitive to the gluon fusion Higgs boson production mechanism.

This analysis uses a simpler event categorization than the dedicated SM Higgs boson search in the $\tau\tau$ decay mode [29], to reduce possible model dependencies in the result interpretation. The sensitivity to the SM Higgs boson in this analysis is thus reduced, as the contributions from vector boson fusion and boosted gluon fusion Higgs boson production are not enhanced.

4 Background estimation

The estimation of the shapes and yields of the major backgrounds in each of the channels is obtained from the observed data.

The $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ process is the largest source of background events in the $e\tau_h$, $\mu\tau_h$, and $e\mu$ channels. This background is estimated using a sample of $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ events from data where the reconstructed muons are replaced by the reconstructed particles from simulated τ decays. The normalization for this process is determined from the measurement of the $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ yield in data. This technique substantially reduces the systematic uncertainties due to the jet energy scale and the missing transverse energy, as these quantities are modelled with collision data.

Another significant source of background is QCD multijet events, which can mimic the signal in various ways. For example, two jets may be misidentified as τ_h decays in which case the event will contribute to the $\tau_h \tau_h$ channel. Or, in the $e\tau_h$ and $\mu\tau_h$ channels, one jet is misidentified as

an isolated electron or muon and a second jet as τ_h . In the $e\tau_h$ and $\mu\tau_h$ channels, the shape of the QCD background is estimated using a sample of same-sign (SS) $\tau\tau$ events in data. The yield is obtained by scaling the observed number of SS events by the ratio of the opposite-sign (OS) to SS event yields obtained in a QCD-enriched region with loose lepton isolation. In the $\tau_h\tau_h$ channel, the shape is obtained from OS events with loose τ isolation. The yield is obtained by scaling these events by the ratio of SS events with tight and loose τ isolation.

W +jets events in which there is a jet misidentified as a τ_h are another sizable source of background in the $e\tau_h$ and $\mu\tau_h$ channels. The background shape is modelled using a MC simulation and the rate is estimated using a control region of events with large transverse mass.

The Drell–Yan production of muon pairs is the largest background in the $\mu\mu$ channel. The $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ event yield is obtained from a fit to the distance of closest approach of the muon pairs observed in data, after subtracting all backgrounds. In the $e\tau_h$ and $\mu\tau_h$ channels, the contribution of Drell–Yan production of electron and muon pairs is estimated from the simulation, after rescaling the simulated yield to the one derived from $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ data. In the $e\tau_h$ channel, the $Z \rightarrow ee$ simulation is further corrected using the $e \rightarrow \tau_h$ fake-rate measured in data using a “tag-and-probe” technique [76] on $Z \rightarrow ee$ events.

In the $e\mu$ final state, the W +jets and multijet background rate is obtained by measuring the number of events with one good lepton and a second one that passes relaxed selection criteria, but fails the nominal lepton selection. This rate is extrapolated to the signal region using the efficiencies for such loose lepton candidates to pass the nominal lepton selection. These efficiencies are measured in data using multijet events.

The $t\bar{t}$, di-boson and single-top-quark background contributions are estimated from simulation. The event yield of the $t\bar{t}$ background is checked in a sample of $e\mu$ events with two b-tagged jets.

The observed number of events for each category, the expected number of events from various background processes, and the expected signal yields and efficiencies, are shown in Tables 2–4. The uncertainties are obtained after the likelihood fit described in Section 7.

Table 2: Observed and expected number of events in the two event categories in the $e\tau_h$ channel, where the combined statistical and systematic uncertainty is shown. The expected signal yields for $h, H, A \rightarrow \tau\tau$ in the m_h^{\max} scenario for $m_A = 160$ GeV and $\tan\beta = 8$ and the signal efficiency times acceptance for a MSSM Higgs boson of 160 GeV mass are also given.

Process	$e\tau_h$ channel			
	$\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV		$\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV	
	no b-tag	b-tag	no b-tag	b-tag
$Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$	11819 ± 197	135 ± 4	30190 ± 345	453 ± 14
QCD	4163 ± 212	78 ± 11	11894 ± 544	194 ± 27
W +jets	1344 ± 112	29 ± 7	5646 ± 385	113 ± 25
Z +jets (e, μ or jet faking τ)	1334 ± 130	9 ± 1	6221 ± 360	83 ± 7
$t\bar{t}$	43 ± 3	19 ± 3	290 ± 22	102 ± 12
Di-bosons + single top	46 ± 5	7 ± 0.9	224 ± 23	30 ± 4
Total background	18750 ± 144	278 ± 11	54464 ± 259	975 ± 29
$h, H, A \rightarrow \tau\tau$	128 ± 13	10 ± 1	466 ± 43	37 ± 5
Observed data	18785	274	54547	975
Efficiency \times acceptance				
gluon fusion Higgs	1.39×10^{-2}	1.24×10^{-4}	9.48×10^{-3}	1.11×10^{-4}
b-quark associated Higgs	1.12×10^{-2}	2.10×10^{-3}	7.78×10^{-3}	1.49×10^{-3}

Table 3: Observed and expected number of events in the two event categories in the $\mu\tau_h$, $e\mu$, and $\mu\mu$ channels. Other details are as in Table 2.

$\mu\tau_h$ channel				
Process	$\sqrt{s} = 7 \text{ TeV}$		$\sqrt{s} = 8 \text{ TeV}$	
	no b-tag	b-tag	no b-tag	b-tag
$Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$	26838 ± 244	284 ± 8	87399 ± 497	1118 ± 31
QCD	5495 ± 258	131 ± 18	18056 ± 811	552 ± 62
W+jets	2779 ± 201	55 ± 14	12845 ± 793	237 ± 52
Z+jets (e, μ or jet faking τ)	716 ± 109	11 ± 2	3704 ± 454	54 ± 9
$t\bar{t}$	82 ± 6	36 ± 5	564 ± 41	194 ± 22
Di-bosons + single top	94 ± 11	12 ± 2	506 ± 51	60 ± 7
Total background	36004 ± 205	530 ± 18	123075 ± 407	2214 ± 44
$h, H, A \rightarrow \tau\tau$	226 ± 23	17 ± 2	929 ± 85	67 ± 9
Observed data	36055	542	123239	2219
Efficiency \times acceptance				
gluon fusion Higgs	2.34×10^{-2}	2.49×10^{-4}	1.78×10^{-2}	2.32×10^{-4}
b-quark associated Higgs	1.96×10^{-2}	3.54×10^{-3}	1.53×10^{-2}	2.66×10^{-3}

$e\mu$ channel				
Process	$\sqrt{s} = 7 \text{ TeV}$		$\sqrt{s} = 8 \text{ TeV}$	
	no b-tag	b-tag	no b-tag	b-tag
$Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$	13783 ± 134	165 ± 5	48218 ± 300	679 ± 8
QCD	804 ± 114	14 ± 3	4302 ± 356	148 ± 17
$t\bar{t}$	467 ± 29	309 ± 18	2215 ± 158	1183 ± 48
Di-bosons + single top	501 ± 55	63 ± 8	2367 ± 248	308 ± 38
Total background	15556 ± 128	551 ± 21	57102 ± 257	2318 ± 37
$h, H, A \rightarrow \tau\tau$	114 ± 11	9 ± 1	455 ± 43	34 ± 4
Observed data	15436	558	57285	2353
Efficiency \times acceptance				
gluon fusion Higgs	1.14×10^{-2}	1.11×10^{-4}	8.83×10^{-3}	8.85×10^{-5}
b-quark associated Higgs	9.70×10^{-3}	1.80×10^{-3}	7.59×10^{-3}	1.33×10^{-3}

$\mu\mu$ channel				
Process	$\sqrt{s} = 7 \text{ TeV}$		$\sqrt{s} = 8 \text{ TeV}$	
	no b-tag	b-tag	no b-tag	b-tag
$Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$	6838 ± 118	34 ± 1	20931 ± 376	101 ± 5
$Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$	562008 ± 764	1435 ± 34	1894509 ± 1566	5125 ± 69
QCD	380 ± 51	4 ± 2	1131 ± 108	31 ± 7
$t\bar{t}$	183 ± 15	83 ± 7	809 ± 62	324 ± 15
Di-bosons + single top	1114 ± 221	10 ± 2	5543 ± 625	48 ± 8
Total background	570523 ± 763	1566 ± 35	1922923 ± 1439	5629 ± 72
$h, H, A \rightarrow \tau\tau$	57 ± 5	3 ± 0.4	195 ± 17	8 ± 1
Observed data	570616	1559	1922924	5608
Efficiency \times acceptance				
gluon fusion Higgs	5.66×10^{-3}	2.55×10^{-5}	3.73×10^{-3}	2.29×10^{-5}
b-quark associated Higgs	5.33×10^{-3}	6.65×10^{-4}	3.58×10^{-3}	3.42×10^{-4}

Table 4: Observed and expected number of events in the two event categories in the $\tau_h \tau_h$ channel. Other details are as in Table 2.

$\tau_h \tau_h$ channel		
$\sqrt{s} = 8 \text{ TeV}$		
Process	no b-tag	b-tag
$Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$	2511 ± 97	60 ± 3
QCD	20192 ± 236	273 ± 21
W+jets	630 ± 165	17 ± 5
Z+jets (e, μ or jet faking τ)	115 ± 19	2 ± 0.4
$t\bar{t}$	38 ± 4	16 ± 2
Di-bosons + single top	63 ± 13	5 ± 1
Total background	23548 ± 174	374 ± 19
h, H, A $\rightarrow \tau\tau$	325 ± 34	30 ± 5
Observed data	23606	381
Efficiency \times acceptance		
gluon fusion Higgs	9.11×10^{-3}	1.32×10^{-4}
b-quark associated Higgs	7.26×10^{-3}	1.37×10^{-3}

5 Tau lepton-pair invariant mass

To distinguish Higgs boson signals from the background, the tau-lepton pair invariant mass, $m_{\tau\tau}$, is reconstructed using a maximum likelihood technique [29]. The $m_{\tau\tau}$ resolution for $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ events depends on the final state considered but typically amounts to 20%, relative to the true mass value. Distributions of the mass of the visible decay products m_{vis} and $m_{\tau\tau}$ for simulated events are shown in Fig. 2. The reconstruction of $m_{\tau\tau}$ improves the separation power between the main $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ background and the hypothetical MSSM Higgs boson A signals.

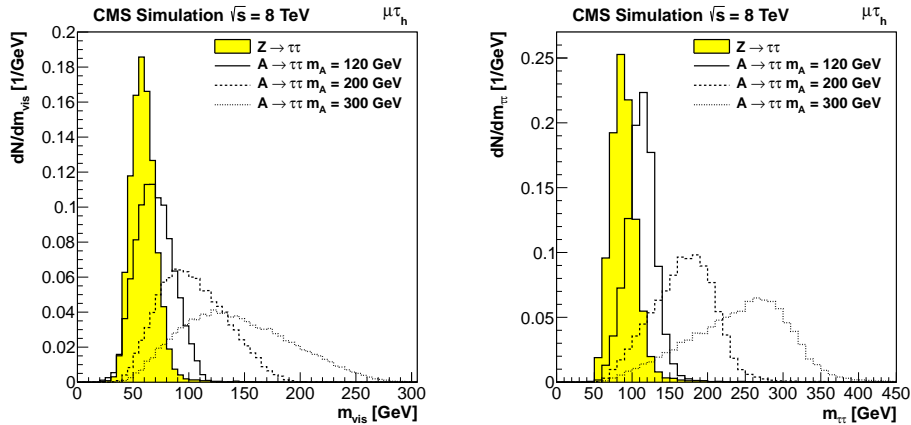


Figure 2: Visible mass m_{vis} (left) and $m_{\tau\tau}$ reconstructed mass (right) for simulated events: $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ and MSSM $A \rightarrow \tau\tau$ signal with $m_A = 120, 200$ and 300 GeV , in the $\mu\tau_h$ final state. Distributions are normalized to unity.

The distribution in $m_{\tau\tau}$ for the five final states studied, $e\tau_h, \mu\tau_h, e\mu, \mu\mu$, and $\tau_h\tau_h$, compared with the background prediction in the no b-tag category is shown in Fig. 3. These events are more sensitive to the gluon fusion Higgs boson production mechanism. Figure 4 shows the $m_{\tau\tau}$ distribution in the b-tag category, which has an enhanced sensitivity to the b-quark associated Higgs boson production mechanism.

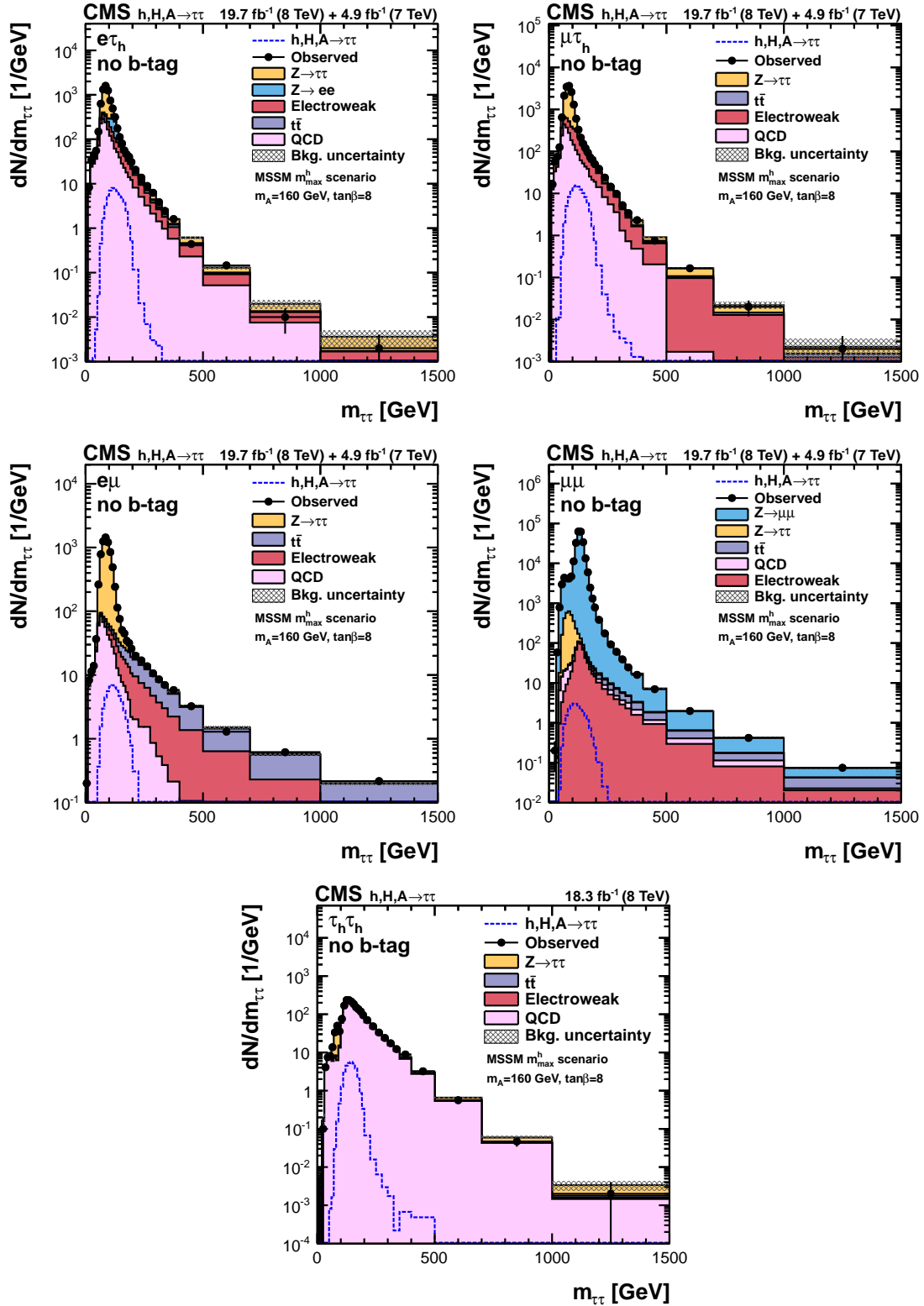


Figure 3: Reconstructed $\tau\tau$ invariant-mass in the no b-tag category for the $e\tau_h$, $\mu\tau_h$, $e\mu$, $\mu\mu$ and $\tau_h\tau_h$ channels. The electroweak background includes the contributions from $Z \rightarrow ee$, $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$, W , di-bosons, and single top. In the $\mu\mu$ channel, the $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ contribution is shown separately. The expected signal yield of the MSSM Higgs bosons h , H , and A for $m_A = 160$ GeV and $\tan\beta = 8$ in the m_h^{\max} scenario is also shown.

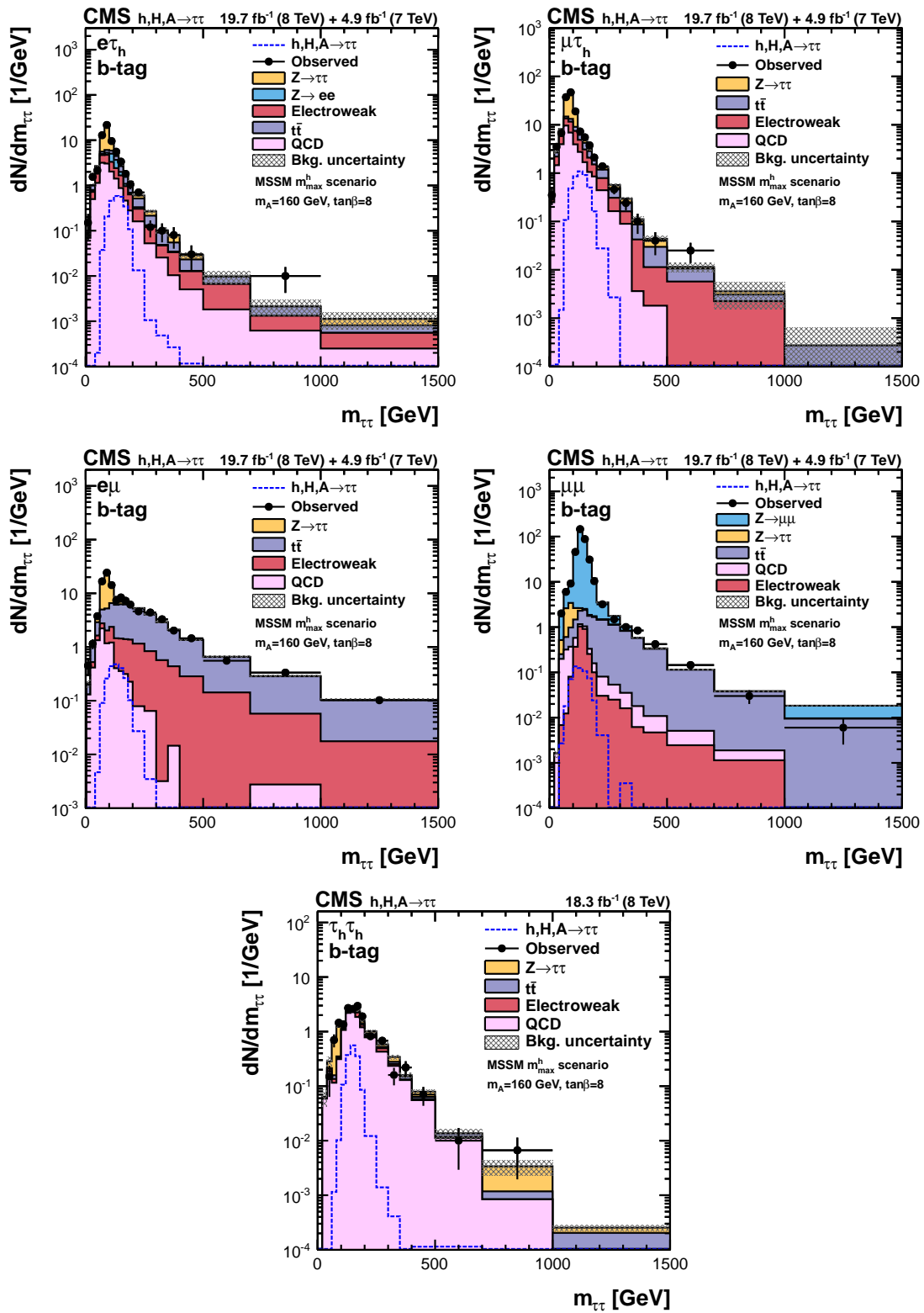


Figure 4: Reconstructed $\tau\tau$ mass in the b-tag category for the $e\tau_h$, $\mu\tau_h$, $e\mu$, $\mu\mu$ and $\tau_h\tau_h$ channels. Other details are as in Fig. 3.

6 Systematic uncertainties

Various imperfectly known effects can alter the shape and the normalization of the invariant-mass spectrum. The main contributions to the normalization uncertainty, that affect the signal and the simulated backgrounds, include the uncertainty in the total integrated luminosity (2.2% for 2011 and 2.6% for 2012 data [81, 82]), the jet energy scale (1–10%), and the identification and trigger efficiencies of electrons (2%) and muons (2–3%). The tau-lepton identification and trigger efficiency uncertainty is estimated to be 8% from an independent study done using a “tag-and-probe” technique on $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ events. An extra uncertainty of $0.02\% \times p_T^\tau$ [GeV], due to the extrapolation from the Z-boson resonance region to larger tau lepton p_T values, is also considered. The b-tagging efficiency has an uncertainty between 2–7%, and the mistag rate for light-flavor partons is accurate to 10–20% [65]. The background normalization uncertainties from the estimation methods discussed in Section 4 are also considered. Uncertainties that contribute to variations in the shape of the mass spectrum include the electron (1%), muon (1%), and tau lepton (3%) energy scales. The main experimental uncertainties and their effect on the yields in the two event categories are summarized in Table 5.

The theoretical uncertainties on the MSSM Higgs signal cross sections depend on $\tan\beta$, m_A , and the scenario considered, and can amount up to $\sim 25\%$. In the cross section calculations the MSTW2008 [83] parton distribution functions are used, and the recommended prescription [83, 84] to compute the uncertainties is followed. The renormalization and factorization scales used in the theoretical calculations and the variation considered are summarized in Ref. [32].

Table 5: Systematic uncertainties that affect the estimated number of signal or background events. Several uncertainties are treated as correlated for the different decay channels and event categories. Some uncertainties vary with p_T , η , and final state, so ranges are given.

Experimental uncertainties	Uncertainty	Event yield uncertainty by event category	
		no b-tag	b-tag
Integrated luminosity 7 (8) TeV	2.2 (2.6)%	2.2 (2.6)%	2.2 (2.6)%
Jet energy scale	1–10%	1–5%	1–8%
E_T^{miss}	1–5%	1–2%	1–2%
Electron identification and trigger	2%	2%	2%
Muon identification and trigger	2–3%	2–6%	2–6%
Tau-lepton identification and trigger	8%	8–19%	8–19%
b-tagging efficiency	2–7%	2–4%	2–9%
b-mistag rate	10–20%	2%	2–5%
Normalization, Z production	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
Z $\rightarrow \tau\tau$: category selection	3%	—	1–3%
Normalization, $t\bar{t}$	10%	10%	10–17%
Normalization, di-boson	15–30%	15–30%	15–30%
Normalization, QCD Multijet	10–35%	10–35%	20–35%
Normalization, W+jets	10–30%	10–30%	30%
Normalization, Z $\rightarrow ee$: e misidentified as τ_h	20%	20%	20%
Normalization, Z $\rightarrow \mu\mu$: μ misidentified as τ_h	30%	30%	30%
Normalization, Z+jets : jet misidentified as τ_h	20%	20%	20%
Electron energy scale	1%	1%	1%
Muon energy scale	1%	1%	1%
Tau-lepton energy scale	3%	3%	3%

7 Statistical analysis

To search for the presence of a MSSM Higgs boson signal in the selected events, a binned maximum likelihood fit is performed. The invariant mass of the tau-lepton pairs is used as the input to the fit in the $e\tau_h, \mu\tau_h, e\mu,$ and $\tau_h\tau_h$ final states. The sensitivity of the $\mu\mu$ channel is enhanced by fitting the two-dimensional distribution of $m_{\tau\tau}$ versus the mass of the visible decay products, m_{vis} , utilizing the fact that most of the large $Z \rightarrow \mu\mu$ background contributing to this channel is concentrated in the m_{vis} distribution within a narrow peak around the Z-boson mass. The fit is performed simultaneously for the five final states and the two event categories, b-tag and no b-tag.

The systematic uncertainties described in Section 6 are incorporated in the fit via nuisance parameters and are treated according to the frequentist paradigm, as described in Ref. [85]. The uncertainties that affect the shape of the mass spectrum, mainly those corresponding to the energy scales, are represented by the nuisance parameters whose variation results in a continuous perturbation of the spectrum. Shape uncertainties due to limited statistics are incorporated via nuisance parameters that allow for uncorrelated single-bin fluctuations of the background expectation, following the method described in Ref. [86]. In the tail of the $m_{\tau\tau}$ distribution ($m_{\tau\tau} > 150$ GeV), where the statistical uncertainties are large, a different method is used. A fit of the form $f = \exp[-m_{\tau\tau}/(c_0 + c_1 \cdot m_{\tau\tau})]$ is performed for each of the major backgrounds, the result of which replaces the nominal distribution. The uncertainties in the fit parameters c_0 and c_1 are treated as nuisance parameters in the likelihood fit.

The invariant-mass spectra show no clear evidence for the presence of a MSSM Higgs boson signal so exclusion limits are obtained. For the calculation of exclusion limits a modified frequentist criterion CL_s [87, 88] is used. The chosen test statistic q , used to determine how signal- or background-like the data are, is based on a profile likelihood ratio.

In this study, two searches are performed:

- a model independent search for a single narrow resonance ϕ for different mass hypotheses in the gluon fusion and b-quark associated Higgs boson production modes;
- a search for the MSSM neutral Higgs bosons, h, A, and H in the $\tau\tau$ mass spectrum.

In the case of the model independent search for a single resonance ϕ , the profile likelihood ratio is defined as

$$q_\mu = -2 \ln \frac{L(N_{\text{obs}}|\mu \cdot s + b, \hat{\theta}_\mu)}{L(N_{\text{obs}}|\hat{\mu} \cdot s + b, \hat{\theta})}, \quad \text{with } 0 \leq \hat{\mu} \leq \mu, \quad (5)$$

where N_{obs} is the number of observed events, b and s are the number of expected background and signal events, μ is the signal strength modifier, and θ are the nuisance parameters describing the systematic uncertainties. The value $\hat{\theta}_\mu$ maximizes the likelihood in the numerator for a given μ , while $\hat{\mu}$ and $\hat{\theta}$ define the point at which the likelihood reaches its global maximum. The ratio of probabilities to observe a value of the test statistic at least as large as the one observed in data, q_μ^{obs} , under the signal-plus-background ($\mu \cdot s + b$) and background-only hypotheses,

$$\text{CL}_s(\mu) = \frac{P(q_\mu \geq q_\mu^{\text{obs}}|\mu \cdot s + b)}{P(q_\mu \geq q_\mu^{\text{obs}}|b)} \leq \alpha, \quad (6)$$

is used as the criterion for excluding the presence of a signal at the $1 - \alpha$ confidence level (CL).

Upper limits on $\sigma \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ at 95% CL for gluon fusion and b-quark associated neutral Higgs boson production for a single narrow resonance are obtained using Eqs. 5 and 6. The

expected limit is obtained by replacing the observed data by a representative dataset which not only contains the contribution from background processes but also a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV. To extract the limit on the gluon fusion (b-quark associated) Higgs boson production, the rate of the b-quark associated (gluon fusion) Higgs boson production is treated as a nuisance parameter in the fit.

A search for MSSM Higgs bosons in the $\tau\tau$ final state is also performed, where the three neutral MSSM Higgs bosons are present in the signal. In light of the recent Higgs boson discovery at 125 GeV, a search for a MSSM signal versus a background-only hypothesis has lost validity. A modified CL_s approach has been also adopted in this case, which tests the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h , H , and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis, with inclusion of the backgrounds in both cases. To achieve this a physics model is built according to

$$M(\mu) = [\mu \cdot s(\text{MSSM}) + (1 - \mu) \cdot s(\text{SM})] + b. \quad (7)$$

In the search, two well defined theories are tested so μ can only take the value of 0 or 1. The test statistic used in the CL_s method is given by the ratio of likelihoods

$$q_{\text{MSSM/SM}} = -2 \ln \frac{L(N_{\text{obs}}|M(1), \hat{\theta}_1)}{L(N_{\text{obs}}|M(0), \hat{\theta}_0)}, \quad (8)$$

where the numerator and denominator are maximized by finding the corresponding nuisance parameters $\hat{\theta}_1$ for $\mu=1$ and $\hat{\theta}_0$ for $\mu=0$.

The MSSM Higgs boson signal expectation for each benchmark scenario studied is determined in each point of the parameter space as follows:

- At each point of m_A and $\tan \beta$: the mass, the gluon fusion and associated-b production cross sections, and the branching fraction to $\tau\tau$ are determined for h , H and A .
- The contributions of all three neutral Higgs boson are added using the corresponding cross sections times branching fractions.

Limits on $\tan \beta$ versus m_A at 95% CL are obtained for different benchmark MSSM scenarios following the test statistic given in Eq. 8.

8 Results

The invariant-mass spectra show no clear evidence for the presence of a MSSM Higgs boson signal. Therefore 95% CL upper bounds on $\tan \beta$ as a function of the pseudoscalar Higgs boson mass m_A are set for the traditional MSSM benchmark scenario m_h^{max} , and the recently proposed benchmark scenarios, $m_h^{\text{mod+}}$, $m_h^{\text{mod-}}$, light-stop, light-stau, and τ -phobic. In the case of the low- m_H scenario, limits on $\tan \beta$ as a function of the higgsino mass parameter μ are performed, where m_A is set to a value of 110 GeV.

A test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h , H , and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed as described in Section 7, using the test statistics given by Eq. 8. The simulation of the SM Higgs boson signal at 125 GeV used in the statistical analysis, is the same as in the dedicated SM Higgs boson search in the $\tau\tau$ decay mode [29], which includes the contributions from gluon fusion, vector boson fusion, and Z or W boson and top-quark associated Higgs boson production. The contribution from SM b-quark associated Higgs boson production is expected to be small and is not included in this analysis.

Figure 5 shows the expected and observed exclusion limits at the 95% CL in the m_h^{\max} scenario and the modified scenarios $m_h^{\text{mod}+}$ and $m_h^{\text{mod}-}$. The allowed regions where the mass of the MSSM scalar Higgs boson h or H is compatible with the mass of the recently discovered boson of 125 GeV within a range of ± 3 GeV are delimited by the hatched areas. Most of the MSSM parameter space is excluded by the Higgs boson mass requirement in the m_h^{\max} scenario, while in the modified scenarios the exclusion is mainly concentrated at low $\tan\beta$ values.

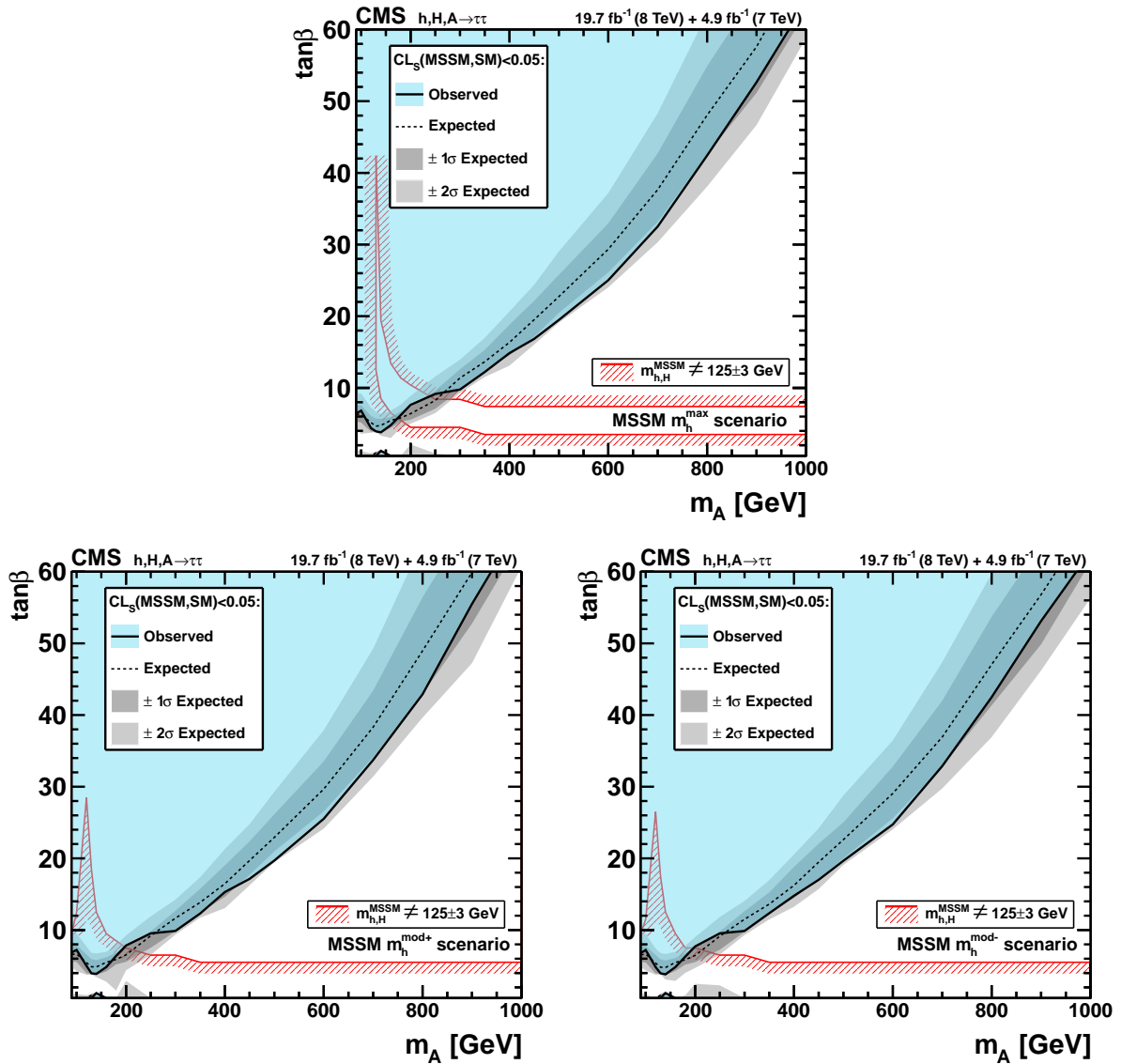


Figure 5: Expected and observed exclusion limits at 95% CL in the m_A - $\tan\beta$ parameter space for the MSSM m_h^{\max} , $m_h^{\text{mod}+}$ and $m_h^{\text{mod}-}$ benchmark scenarios, are shown as shaded areas. The allowed regions where the mass of the MSSM scalar Higgs boson h or H is compatible with the mass of the recently discovered boson of 125 GeV within a range of ± 3 GeV are delimited by the hatched areas. A test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h, H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Figure 6 shows the exclusion limits at the 95% CL in the light-stop, light-stau, τ -phobic and low- m_H scenarios. In the light-stop scenario, most of the parameter space probed is excluded either by the direct exclusion of this search or by the Higgs boson mass compatibility requirement with the recent Higgs boson discovery at 125 GeV. Numerical values for the expected and observed exclusion limits for all MSSM benchmark scenarios considered are given in Tables 6–12 in Appendix A.

It should be noted that due to the interference effects of the bottom and top loops in the MSSM ggh cross section calculation, the direct search is also able to exclude some regions at low $\tan\beta$. The excluded regions at low $\tan\beta$ can be seen better looking at the numerical values given in Tables 6–12 in Appendix A.

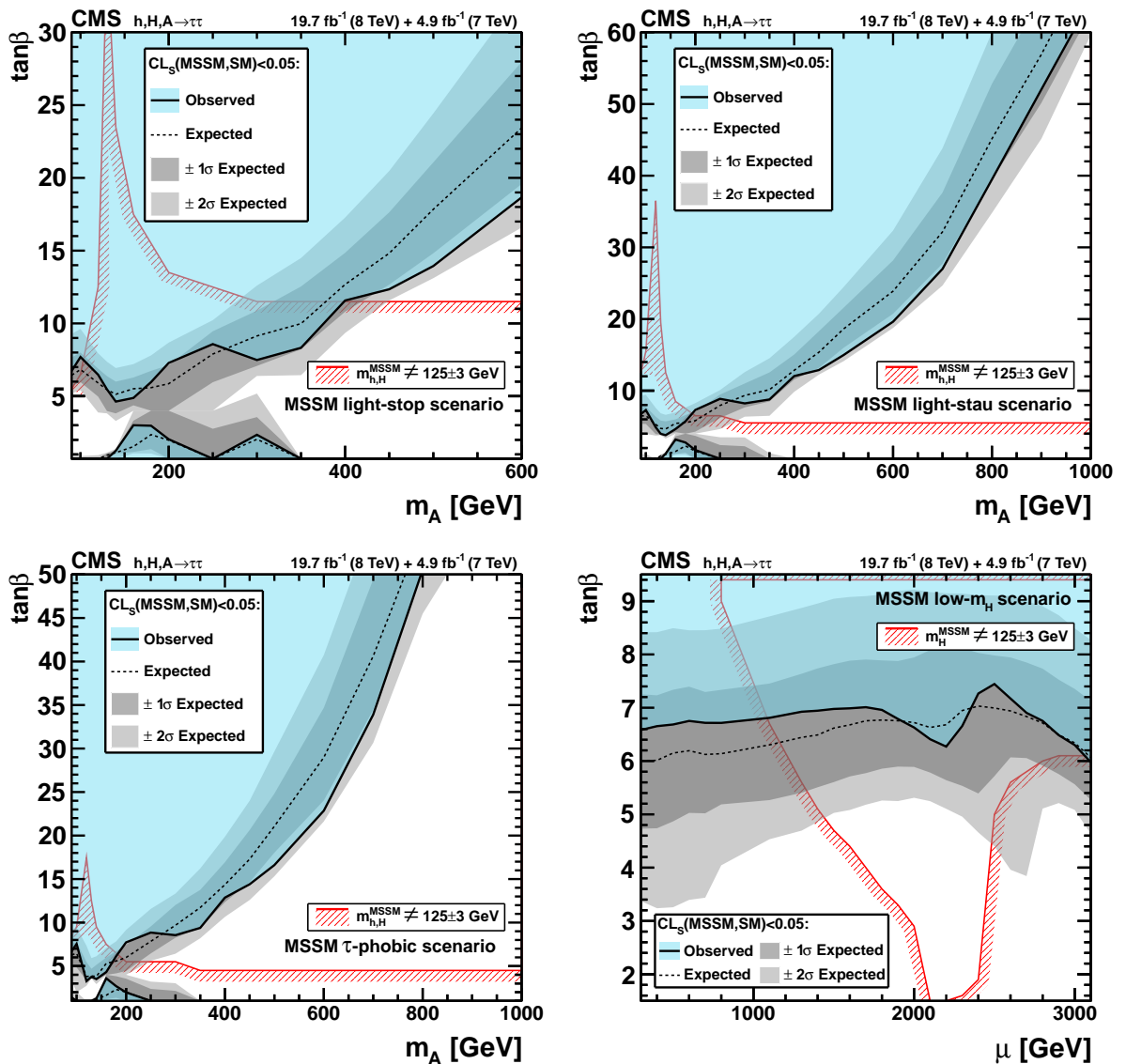


Figure 6: Expected and observed exclusion limits at 95% CL in the m_A - $\tan\beta$ parameter space for the MSSM light-stop, light-stau, and τ -phobic benchmark scenarios. In the MSSM low- m_H benchmark scenario the limits in the μ - $\tan\beta$ parameter space are shown. Other details are as in Fig. 5.

To allow to compare these results to other extensions of the SM apart from the MSSM, which have been proposed to solve the hierarchy problem, a search for a single resonance ϕ with a narrow width compared to the experimental resolution is also performed. In this case, model independent limits on the product of the production cross section times branching fraction to $\tau\tau$, $\sigma \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$, for gluon fusion and b-quark associated Higgs boson production, as a function of the Higgs boson mass m_ϕ have been determined. To model the hypothetical signal ϕ , the same simulation samples as the neutral MSSM Higgs boson search have been used. These results have been obtained using the data with 8 TeV center-of-mass energy only and are shown in Fig. 7. The expected and observed limits are computed using the test statistics given by Eq. 5. To extract the limit on the gluon fusion (b-quark associated) Higgs boson production, the rate of the b-quark associated (gluon fusion) Higgs boson production is treated as a nuisance parameter in the fit. For the expected limits, the observed data have been replaced by a representative dataset which not only contains the contribution from background processes but also a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV. The observed limits are in agreement with the expectation. The results are also summarized in Tables 13 and 14 in Appendix A.

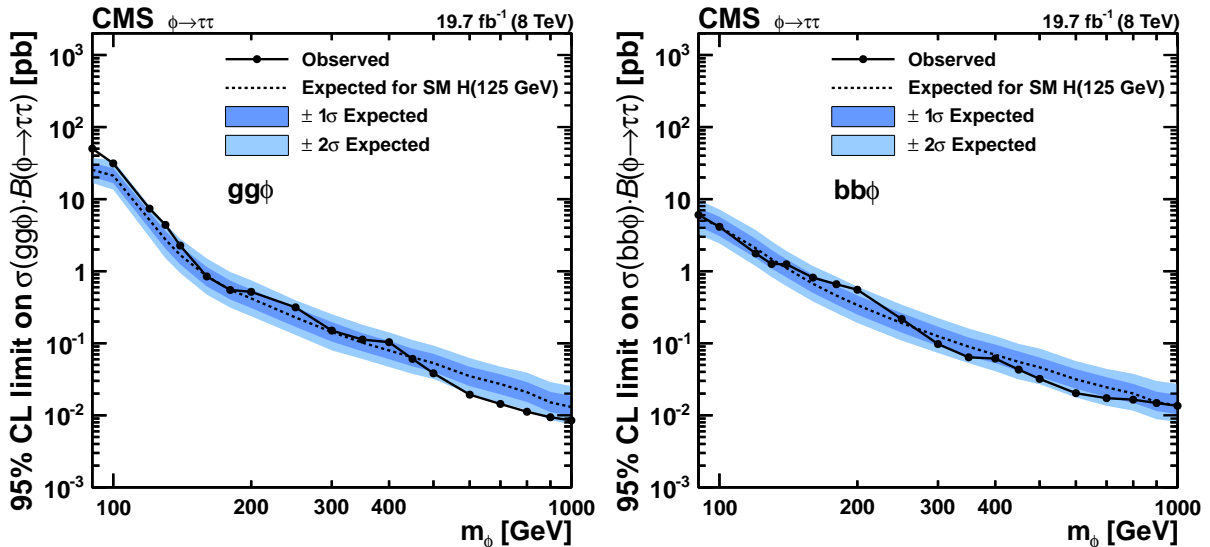


Figure 7: Upper limit at 95% CL on $\sigma(gg\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ (left) and $\sigma(bb\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ (right) at 8 TeV center-of-mass energy as a function of m_ϕ , where ϕ denotes a generic Higgs-like state. The expected and observed limits are computed using the test statistics given by Eq. 5. For the expected limits, the observed data have been replaced by a representative dataset which not only contains the contribution from background processes but also a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV.

Finally, a 2-dimensional 68% and 95% CL likelihood scan of the cross section times branching fraction to $\tau\tau$ for gluon fusion and b-quark associated Higgs boson production, $\sigma(bb\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ versus $\sigma(gg\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$, has also been performed. The results for different values of the Higgs boson mass m_ϕ are shown in Fig. 8. The best fit value and the expectation from a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV is also shown. The result from the likelihood scan for $m_\phi = 125$ GeV is compatible with the expectation from a SM Higgs boson.

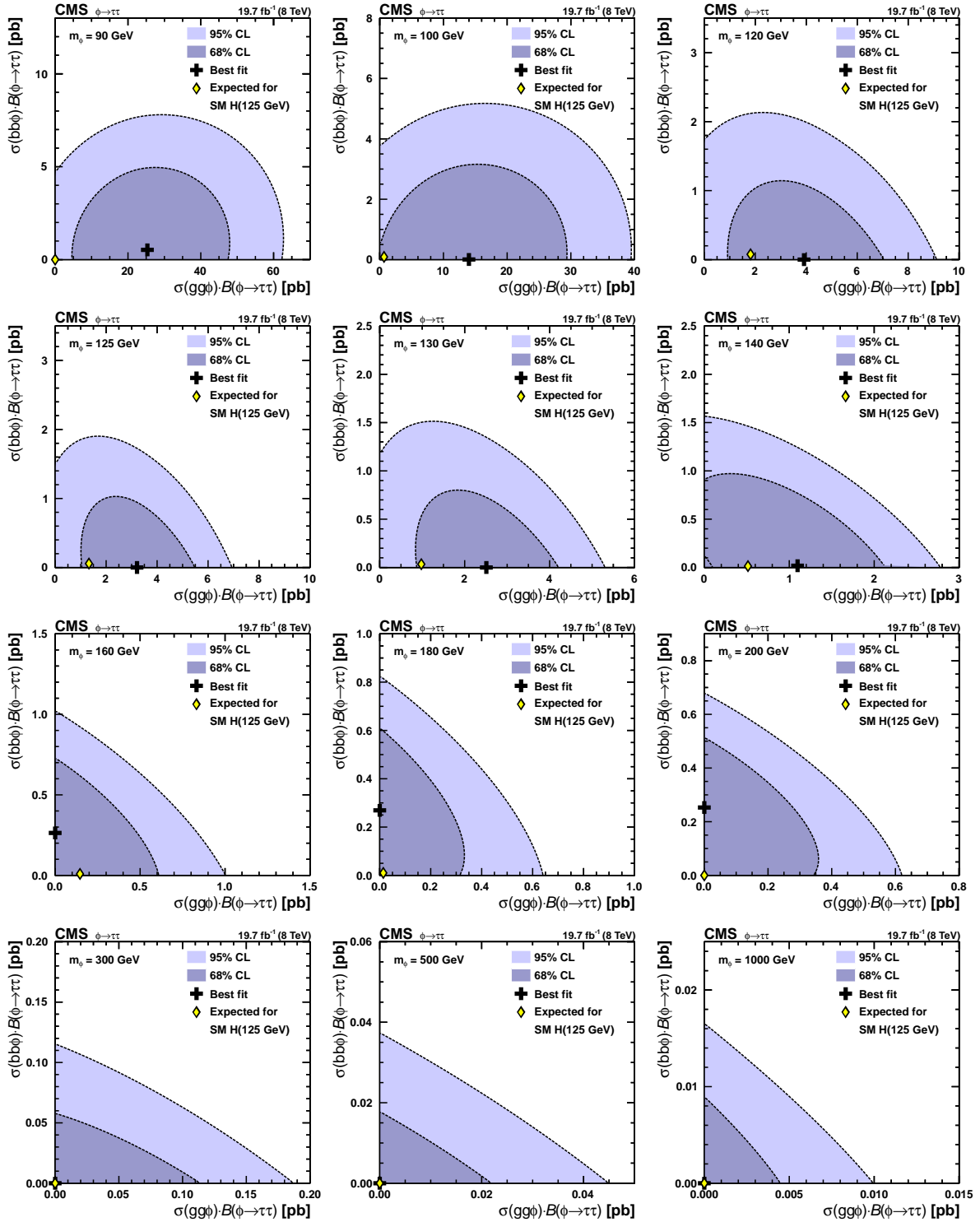


Figure 8: Likelihood contours of $\sigma(\text{bb}\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ versus $\sigma(\text{gg}\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ at 8 TeV center-of-mass energy for different values of the Higgs boson mass m_ϕ . The best fit value (cross) and the expectation from a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV (diamond) is also shown. In the case of $m_\phi = 300, 500$ and 1000 GeV, the best fit value and the expectation from a SM Higgs boson at 125 GeV are both at $(0,0)$.

9 Summary

A search for neutral Higgs bosons in the minimal supersymmetric extension of the standard model (MSSM) decaying to tau-lepton pairs has been performed using events recorded by the CMS experiment at the LHC. The dataset corresponds to an integrated luminosity of 24.6 fb^{-1} , with 4.9 fb^{-1} at 7 TeV and 19.7 fb^{-1} at 8 TeV. Five different $\tau\tau$ signatures are studied, $e\tau_h$, $\mu\tau_h$, $e\mu$, $\mu\mu$, and $\tau_h\tau_h$, where τ_h denotes a hadronically decaying tau lepton. To enhance the sensitivity to neutral MSSM Higgs bosons, the search includes the case where the Higgs boson is produced in association with a b-quark jet. No excess is observed in the tau-lepton-pair invariant mass spectrum. Exclusion limits are presented in the MSSM parameter space for different MSSM benchmark scenarios, m_h^{max} , $m_h^{\text{mod}+}$, $m_h^{\text{mod}-}$, light-stop, light-stau, τ -phobic and low- m_H . Model independent upper limits on the Higgs boson production cross section times branching fraction for gluon fusion and b-quark associated production are also given.

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A Exclusion limits

The 95% CL exclusion limits in the $\tan\beta$ - m_A or $\tan\beta$ - μ parameter space for different MSSM benchmark scenarios are given in Tables 6–12.

Model independent limits on $\sigma \cdot \mathcal{B}(\phi \rightarrow \tau\tau)$ for gluon fusion and b-quark associated Higgs boson production as a function of the Higgs boson mass m_ϕ are given in Tables 13 and 14, for 8 TeV center-of-mass energy only.

Table 6: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of m_A , for the MSSM search in the m_h^{\max} benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h, H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: m_h^{\max} scenario						
m_A [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	>4.3	>5.3	>6.3	>7.6	>8.3	>6.4
	<1.3					
100	>3.6	>5.1	>6.3	>7.6	>9.0	>6.8
	<1.2					
120	>3.8	>3.9	>5.2	>6.1	>6.6	>4.4
	<0.9					
130	>3.8	>3.9	>4.7	>5.7	>5.5	>3.9
	<1.1	<1.1	<0.9			
140	>3.3	>3.7	>4.8	>5.7	>6.2	>3.8
	<1.4	<1.3	<1.1	<1.0		
160	>3.0	>4.4	>5.5	>5.9	>7.9	>4.8
180	>4.4	>5.3	>5.8	>6.7	>7.2	>6.2
200	>5.0	>5.6	>6.4	>7.4	>7.8	>7.6
	<2.1					
250	>6.5	>7.1	>8.3	>9.6	>10.0	>9.2
	<0.8					
300	>9.3	>9.7	>11.4	>12.6	>13.5	>9.8
350	>11.5	>12.4	>13.6	>15.3	>15.8	>12.2
400	>13.1	>14.5	>16.3	>18.8	>19.6	>14.9
450	>16.0	>17.1	>19.5	>22.1	>23.0	>16.8
500	>19.1	>20.5	>22.7	>25.8	>26.4	>19.5
600	>24.0	>26.1	>29.3	>33.0	>34.7	>25.0
700	>30.3	>33.2	>37.7	>42.7	>45.0	>32.5
800	>38.1	>42.6	>48.1	>54.9	—	>42.4
900	>46.7	>51.2	>57.6	—	—	>52.7
1000	>58.8	—	—	—	—	—

Table 7: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of m_A , for the MSSM search in the $m_h^{\text{mod}+}$ benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h, H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: $m_h^{\text{mod}+}$ scenario						
m_A [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	>4.9	>5.6	>6.6	>7.8	>8.3	>6.9
	<1.2					
100	>4.3	>5.5	>6.7	>7.9	>9.0	>7.2
	<1.1					
120	>3.8	>4.0	>5.4	>6.6	>7.1	>5.0
	<0.9					
130	>3.8	>3.9	>4.9	>5.9	>6.0	>4.0
	<1.1	<1.1	<0.9			
140	>3.4	>3.7	>4.8	>5.8	>6.3	>3.9
	<1.4	<1.2	<1.1	<1.0		<1.2
160	>2.8	>4.2	>5.5	>6.2	>8.2	>4.8
180	>1.6	>5.2	>5.9	>6.9	>10.2	>6.4
200	>4.4	>5.6	>6.5	>7.6	>8.7	>7.8
	<2.9					
250	>6.5	>7.5	>9.2	>9.8	>11.9	>9.5
300	>9.4	>9.8	>11.7	>12.7	>13.9	>9.9
350	>11.7	>12.5	>13.9	>15.8	>16.0	>12.3
400	>13.0	>14.6	>16.5	>19.0	>19.9	>15.3
450	>16.2	>17.7	>19.7	>22.4	>23.2	>17.1
500	>19.5	>21.0	>22.9	>26.1	>26.4	>19.7
600	>24.1	>26.5	>29.7	>33.5	>35.2	>25.5
700	>31.4	>34.1	>38.3	>43.4	>45.2	>33.7
800	>39.6	>43.0	>49.0	>56.4	—	>42.9
900	>47.2	>52.8	>59.9	—	—	>55.5
1000	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 8: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of m_A , for the MSSM search in the $m_h^{\text{mod-}}$ benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h , H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: $m_h^{\text{mod-}}$ scenario						
m_A [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	>4.9	>5.6	>6.5	>7.7	>8.2	>6.8
	<1.1					
100	>4.4	>5.5	>6.6	>7.8	>8.9	>7.2
	<1.0					
120	>3.8	>4.0	>5.4	>6.5	>7.0	>4.8
	>3.8	>3.9	>4.8	>5.9	>5.8	
130	<1.1	<1.1	<0.9			>4.0
	>3.1	>3.7	>4.8	>5.8	>6.4	
140	<1.5	<1.2	<1.1	<1.0		>3.8
	>2.9	>4.3	>5.5	>6.1	>8.0	
160	>4.0	>5.2	>5.9	>6.8	>7.7	>4.8
	<0.9					
180	>4.7	>5.5	>6.5	>7.5	>8.2	>6.3
	<2.5					
200	>6.6	>7.3	>9.1	>9.8	>11.7	>7.7
	<2.3					
250	>9.3	>9.8	>11.5	>12.6	>13.7	>9.5
	>11.5	>12.4	>13.6	>15.3	>15.7	
300	>13.2	>14.5	>16.2	>18.8	>19.2	>9.9
	>15.7	>17.2	>19.5	>22.1	>23.2	
350	>19.1	>20.0	>22.6	>25.0	>26.1	>12.3
	>24.0	>25.6	>29.1	>32.8	>34.1	
400	>29.8	>32.8	>36.9	>42.0	>44.1	>14.8
	>36.9	>41.4	>47.1	>53.7	>57.2	
450	>46.2	>49.9	>56.8	—	—	>17.0
	>19.7					
500	>24.7					>19.7
	>29.8					
600	>32.9					>24.7
	>36.9					
700	>42.5					>32.9
	>46.2					
800	>53.1					>42.5
	>56.3	—	—	—	—	
900	—					>53.1
	>56.3	—	—	—	—	
1000	—					—
	>56.3	—	—	—	—	

Table 9: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of m_A , for the MSSM search in the light-stop benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h , H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: light-stop scenario						
m_A [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	>5.2	>5.7	>6.4	>7.7	>7.7	>6.7
	<1.2					
100	>5.4	>6.0	>6.8	>8.0	>8.3	>7.7
	<0.9					
120	>3.9	>5.0	>5.9	>6.9	>7.9	>6.5
	<0.9					
130	>3.8	>4.0	>5.4	>6.4	>7.1	>5.5
	<1.1	<1.1	<0.9			
140	>3.3	>3.8	>5.1	>6.0	>7.0	>4.6
	<1.4	<1.2	<1.1	<1.0		<1.2
160	>3.3	>4.4	>5.5	>6.3	>7.2	>4.9
	<1.4	<3.3	<1.5	<1.2	<1.1	<3.0
180	>3.3	>4.4	>5.6	>6.7	>7.8	>6.0
	<1.4	<3.3	<2.4	<1.4	<1.1	<3.0
200	>3.3	>4.4	>5.9	>7.1	>7.7	>7.3
	<1.4	<3.3	<2.0			<2.0
250	>3.3	>6.0	>7.9	>9.5	>11.8	>8.6
	<1.4	<2.8				
300	>6.4	>7.1	>9.1	>10.9	>11.9	>7.5
	<5.2	<3.6	<2.0			<2.3
350	>6.4	>8.2	>10.0	>12.5	>13.5	>8.3
400	>9.3	>10.8	>12.7	>14.9	>16.0	>11.6
450	>11.6	>12.7	>14.8	>17.6	>18.1	>12.3
500	>13.1	>14.8	>17.8	>21.1	>22.6	>13.9
600	>16.6	>19.6	>23.4	>28.0	>30.3	>18.7

Table 10: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of m_A , for the MSSM search in the light-stau benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h , H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: light-stau scenario						
m_A [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	>4.5	>5.4	>6.5	>7.7	>8.4	>6.7
	<1.1					
100	>4.0	>5.4	>6.5	>7.8	>9.0	>7.3
	<1.1					
120	>3.7	>3.9	>5.3	>6.4	>6.9	>4.9
130	>3.8	>3.9	>4.7	>5.8	>5.7	>4.0
	<1.1	<1.1	<0.9			
140	>3.3	>3.7	>4.7	>5.7	>6.0	>3.8
	<1.4	<1.2	<1.1	<1.0		<1.2
160	>3.3	>4.2	>5.4	>6.0	>7.0	>4.6
	<1.4	<3.6	<1.5	<1.2	<1.1	<3.2
180	>3.3	>4.2	>5.5	>6.6	>7.6	>5.7
	<1.4	<3.6	<2.3	<1.3	<1.1	<2.8
200	>3.3	>4.3	>5.8	>7.0	>7.6	>7.3
	<1.4	<3.7	<1.6			<1.7
250	>4.6	>6.2	>7.9	>9.5	>11.2	>8.9
	<3.5	<2.4				
300	>6.4	>7.7	>9.3	>11.0	>12.3	>8.2
	<3.5	<2.2				
350	>6.5	>8.5	>10.1	>12.5	>13.8	>8.8
	<1.3					
400	>9.8	>11.6	>12.8	>15.0	>15.8	>12.0
450	>12.2	>13.2	>15.4	>18.3	>18.5	>12.9
500	>14.1	>16.0	>18.6	>21.6	>23.1	>15.0
600	>18.8	>20.7	>23.9	>28.2	>29.0	>19.6
700	>24.7	>27.7	>32.2	>37.6	>39.6	>27.0
800	>34.8	>39.4	>45.1	>52.8	—	>39.5
900	>45.2	>50.2	>56.9	—	—	>52.0
1000	>59.6	—	—	—	—	—

Table 11: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of m_A , for the MSSM search in the τ -phobic benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h , H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: τ -phobic scenario						
m_A [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	>3.3	>5.4	>6.3	>7.5	>9.2	>6.7
	<1.8	<1.4	<1.2	<1.1	<1.1	<1.4
100	>3.3	>4.8	>6.5	>7.8	>10.9	>7.5
	<1.8					
120	>2.7	>3.3	>3.8	>5.5	>4.9	>3.3
130	>3.6	>3.7	>3.9	>4.7	>4.2	>3.8
	<1.2	<1.1				
140	>2.9	>3.4	>3.8	>5.1	>4.7	>3.5
	<1.5	<1.3	<1.1	<1.0		<1.3
160	>2.9	>3.4	>5.3	>6.0	>7.1	>4.3
	<1.5	<1.3	<1.7	<1.2	<1.1	<3.6
180	>2.9	>4.2	>5.6	>6.7	>7.8	>6.1
	<1.5	<3.8	<2.3	<1.4	<1.1	<2.7
200	>2.9	>4.4	>6.0	>7.4	>8.0	>7.7
	<1.5	<3.6	<2.0			<2.0
250	>5.6	>6.4	>7.8	>9.6	>10.1	>8.8
	<3.2	<2.4				
300	>6.4	>8.3	>9.7	>12.0	>13.0	>8.6
	<3.0	<2.2				
350	>8.2	>9.4	>11.7	>13.7	>15.3	>9.4
400	>10.7	>12.3	>14.4	>16.9	>18.1	>12.9
450	>12.6	>14.6	>17.3	>20.6	>22.0	>14.4
500	>15.3	>18.0	>21.1	>24.8	>26.8	>16.6
600	>21.6	>24.0	>29.0	>34.7	>36.3	>22.9
700	>30.6	>34.5	>40.6	>49.5	—	>33.9
800	>45.5	—	—	—	—	—
900	—	—	—	—	—	—
1000	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 12: Expected and observed 95% CL limits for $\tan\beta$ as a function of μ , for the MSSM search in the low- m_H benchmark scenario. For the statistical procedure a test of the compatibility of the data to a signal of the three neutral Higgs bosons h, H and A compared to a SM Higgs boson hypothesis is performed.

Neutral MSSM Higgs: low- m_H scenario						
μ [GeV]	Expected $\tan\beta$ limit					Observed $\tan\beta$ limit
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
300	>3.4	>4.7	>6.0	>7.3	>8.6	>6.6
400	>3.2	>4.7	>6.0	>7.2	>8.8	>6.7
500	>3.3	>4.9	>6.1	>7.3	>9.0	>6.7
600	>3.4	>5.0	>6.2	>7.4	>9.0	>6.8
700	>3.4	>5.0	>6.1	>7.3	>8.8	>6.7
800	>4.0	>5.2	>6.1	>7.3	>8.2	>6.7
1100	>4.5	>5.3	>6.3	>7.5	>8.1	>6.8
1300	>4.7	>5.4	>6.4	>7.6	>8.2	>6.9
1400	>4.9	>5.5	>6.5	>7.7	>8.1	>6.9
1500	>5.0	>5.6	>6.6	>7.8	>8.2	>7.0
1600	>5.1	>5.7	>6.7	>7.9	>8.3	>7.0
1700	>5.2	>5.8	>6.8	>7.9	>8.3	>7.0
1800	>5.3	>5.9	>6.8	>7.9	>8.3	>7.0
1900	>5.2	>5.9	>6.8	>7.9	>8.3	>6.8
2000	>5.3	>5.9	>6.7	>7.9	>8.1	>6.6
2100	>5.2	>5.8	>6.6	>8.1	>8.0	>6.4
2200	>5.1	>5.6	>6.7	>8.1	>8.3	>6.3
2300	>5.0	>5.5	>6.9	>8.1	>8.9	>6.7
2400	>4.7	>5.4	>7.0	>8.0	>9.4	>7.3
2500	>4.4	>5.7	>7.0	>8.0	>9.6	>7.4
2600	>4.0	>6.1	>6.9	>7.9	>9.9	>7.2
2700	>3.8	>6.1	>6.8	>7.8	>9.8	>6.9
2800	>5.1	>5.9	>6.7	>7.7	>8.3	>6.8
2900	>5.2	>5.8	>6.5	>7.5	>7.8	>6.5
3000	>5.1	>5.6	>6.3	>7.4	>7.6	>6.3
3100	>4.6	>5.3	>6.1	>7.1	>7.5	>6.0

Table 13: Expected and observed 95% CL upper limits for $\sigma(\text{gg}\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\tau\tau)$ (pb) at 8 TeV center-of-mass energy as a function of the Higgs mass m_ϕ , where ϕ denotes a generic Higgs-like state. The expected and observed limits are computed using the test statistics given by Eq. 5. For the expected limits, the observed data have been replaced by a representative dataset which not only contains the contribution from background processes but also a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV.

m_ϕ [GeV]	$\sigma(\text{gg}\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\tau\tau): \sqrt{s} = 8 \text{ TeV}$					Observed limit
	Expected limit					
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	16.75	20.36	25.45	31.65	37.34	50.21
100	13.54	16.66	21.18	27.00	34.57	31.33
120	2.96	3.88	5.14	6.65	8.09	7.38
130	1.51	2.05	2.75	3.63	4.55	4.39
140	9.42×10^{-1}	1.24	1.68	2.23	2.82	2.27
160	4.74×10^{-1}	6.15×10^{-1}	8.55×10^{-1}	1.14	1.50	8.45×10^{-1}
180	3.12×10^{-1}	4.05×10^{-1}	5.52×10^{-1}	7.41×10^{-1}	9.74×10^{-1}	5.49×10^{-1}
200	2.37×10^{-1}	3.08×10^{-1}	4.19×10^{-1}	5.56×10^{-1}	7.48×10^{-1}	5.17×10^{-1}
250	1.30×10^{-1}	1.69×10^{-1}	2.28×10^{-1}	3.11×10^{-1}	3.95×10^{-1}	3.15×10^{-1}
300	7.95×10^{-2}	1.05×10^{-1}	1.43×10^{-1}	1.97×10^{-1}	2.53×10^{-1}	1.50×10^{-1}
350	6.05×10^{-2}	7.71×10^{-2}	1.02×10^{-1}	1.38×10^{-1}	1.80×10^{-1}	1.12×10^{-1}
400	4.68×10^{-2}	6.01×10^{-2}	7.94×10^{-2}	1.08×10^{-1}	1.41×10^{-1}	1.03×10^{-1}
450	3.76×10^{-2}	4.77×10^{-2}	6.36×10^{-2}	8.39×10^{-2}	1.11×10^{-1}	6.07×10^{-2}
500	3.20×10^{-2}	4.01×10^{-2}	5.31×10^{-2}	7.14×10^{-2}	9.28×10^{-2}	3.83×10^{-2}
600	1.97×10^{-2}	2.54×10^{-2}	3.49×10^{-2}	4.70×10^{-2}	6.22×10^{-2}	1.93×10^{-2}
700	1.49×10^{-2}	1.95×10^{-2}	2.72×10^{-2}	3.71×10^{-2}	4.73×10^{-2}	1.44×10^{-2}
800	1.19×10^{-2}	1.53×10^{-2}	2.09×10^{-2}	2.89×10^{-2}	3.91×10^{-2}	1.12×10^{-2}
900	8.55×10^{-3}	1.11×10^{-2}	1.51×10^{-2}	2.11×10^{-2}	2.89×10^{-2}	9.39×10^{-3}
1000	7.47×10^{-3}	9.80×10^{-3}	1.30×10^{-2}	1.86×10^{-2}	2.54×10^{-2}	8.50×10^{-3}

Table 14: Expected and observed 95% CL upper limits for $\sigma(\text{bb}\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\tau\tau)$ (pb) at 8 TeV center-of-mass energy as a function of the Higgs mass m_ϕ , where ϕ denotes a generic Higgs-like state. The expected and observed limits are computed using the test statistics given by Eq. 5. For the expected limits, the observed data have been replaced by a representative dataset which not only contains the contribution from background processes but also a SM Higgs boson with a mass of 125 GeV.

m_ϕ [GeV]	$\sigma(\text{bb}\phi) \cdot \mathcal{B}(\tau\tau): \sqrt{s} = 8 \text{ TeV}$					Observed limit
	Expected limit					
	-2σ	-1σ	Median	$+1\sigma$	$+2\sigma$	
90	3.25	4.19	5.69	7.54	9.74	6.04
100	2.43	3.07	4.14	5.69	7.19	4.13
120	1.18	1.53	2.08	2.82	3.72	1.76
130	8.31×10^{-1}	1.08	1.47	1.97	2.60	1.26
140	6.21×10^{-1}	8.24×10^{-1}	1.10	1.46	1.91	1.25
160	3.80×10^{-1}	4.99×10^{-1}	6.68×10^{-1}	8.94×10^{-1}	1.18	8.14×10^{-1}
180	2.64×10^{-1}	3.45×10^{-1}	4.59×10^{-1}	6.27×10^{-1}	8.40×10^{-1}	6.59×10^{-1}
200	1.92×10^{-1}	2.50×10^{-1}	3.39×10^{-1}	4.60×10^{-1}	6.10×10^{-1}	5.53×10^{-1}
250	1.09×10^{-1}	1.41×10^{-1}	1.90×10^{-1}	2.62×10^{-1}	3.42×10^{-1}	2.16×10^{-1}
300	7.33×10^{-2}	9.15×10^{-2}	1.25×10^{-1}	1.70×10^{-1}	2.24×10^{-1}	9.75×10^{-2}
350	5.30×10^{-2}	6.58×10^{-2}	8.95×10^{-2}	1.20×10^{-1}	1.60×10^{-1}	6.38×10^{-2}
400	4.09×10^{-2}	5.30×10^{-2}	6.92×10^{-2}	9.59×10^{-2}	1.26×10^{-1}	6.13×10^{-2}
450	3.15×10^{-2}	4.09×10^{-2}	5.51×10^{-2}	7.68×10^{-2}	9.81×10^{-2}	4.31×10^{-2}
500	2.70×10^{-2}	3.41×10^{-2}	4.63×10^{-2}	6.33×10^{-2}	8.44×10^{-2}	3.20×10^{-2}
600	1.77×10^{-2}	2.34×10^{-2}	3.16×10^{-2}	4.37×10^{-2}	5.66×10^{-2}	2.03×10^{-2}
700	1.35×10^{-2}	1.78×10^{-2}	2.44×10^{-2}	3.38×10^{-2}	4.40×10^{-2}	1.73×10^{-2}
800	1.16×10^{-2}	1.49×10^{-2}	2.01×10^{-2}	2.73×10^{-2}	3.77×10^{-2}	1.65×10^{-2}
900	8.81×10^{-3}	1.15×10^{-2}	1.52×10^{-2}	2.12×10^{-2}	3.00×10^{-2}	1.48×10^{-2}
1000	8.15×10^{-3}	1.03×10^{-2}	1.37×10^{-2}	1.92×10^{-2}	2.72×10^{-2}	1.35×10^{-2}

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