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Inside the tetra-neutron: correlations within the $4n$ system

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Light multineutron systems represent a severe test for our understanding of nuclei. They are composed of only one type of particle, connected by only one (nuclear) force, and can be calculated by ab-initio exact models. As such, the observation of events in the dissociation of ^{14}Be consistent with the detection at the 2 sigma level of a weakly bound or unbound tetra-neutron [1,2] led not only to a theoretical reappraisal of the $4n$ system [3], but also motivated renewed experimental efforts. In particular, work at RIKEN in two experiments using ^8He beams and the missing-mass technique, first with double-charge exchange [4] and later with alpha knockout [5], exhibited a relatively narrow structure near threshold (respectively with 4.9 and $\gg 5$ sigma significance) at about 2.4 MeV in the $4n$ continuum [5]. There is, however, no clear consensus on the interpretation of this near-threshold structure [6], in particular whether it is a true resonance or rather a correlated system that reflects the character of the $4n$ in the initial state [7]. We will discuss the next steps in this field, involving the direct measurement of the multineutron invariant mass and the exploration of internal correlations in the system.

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