with spectrometers using G-M tubes, and the results are not in close agreement. To check the reported values, both conversion and photoelectrons for each gamma-ray have been observed in magnetic photographic spectrometers. The K electron lines are clearly resolved, being separated by several millimeters with the resolving power used. The relative intensities of the three K lines appear to be approximately 10, 5, and 7, for the 1.121, 1.189, and 1.219 Mev gamma-rays, respectively. The various results are summarized in Table I, with the initials of the authors at the top of the vertical column that contains their respective data. It is believed that the uncertainty in the presently reported values is not greater than 2 kev for each of the three gamma-energies.

TABLE I. Gamma-rays from Ta^{181}.

R. W.[a]	B. P. W.[b]	G. C.[c]	Present
1.13 Mev	1.133 Mev	1.12 Mev	1.121 Mev
...	1.219	1.19	1.189
1.22	1.237	1.23	1.219

[a] W. Rall and R. Wilkinson, Phys. Rev. **71**, 321 (1947).
[b] Beach, Peacock, and Wilkinson, Phys. Rev. **75**, 211 (1949).
[c] C. Goddard and C. Cook, Phys. Rev. **76**, 1419 (1949).

† This project was supported jointly by the AEC and ONR.

[1] J. Cork, Phys. Rev. **72**, 581 (1947). Cork, Keller, Rutledge, and Stoddard, Phys. Rev. **78**, 95 (1950).

Calculations on the Number of Neutrons in the Atmosphere

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December 26, 1950

THERE have been many experiments over the last few years designed to measure the rate of production of neutrons by cosmic rays. In all cases, the number of thermal neutrons was measured. The experiments are of two types: (a) measurements made in the free atmosphere, and (b) measurements made inside a large bulk of solid material.

Now it is interesting to note that the experiments of the first type appear to give results which are very much lower than those of the second type. We would like to point out that this probably arises from errors in the calculations. Bethe[1] has shown that the number, n, of counts in a BF_3 counter of volume, V, and pressure, p, is related to the rate of production, q (per gram), by the formula

$$q=(n/V)(\sigma_A/\sigma_D)(780/p), \quad (1)$$

where σ_A is the capture cross section per molecule of the surrounding material and σ_D is the capture cross section per molecule of the BF_3 detector.

Since air (nitrogen) is diatomic, σ_A is double the more usually defined atomic cross section. Several investigators[2,3] have omitted to use the molecular cross section, and their results should therefore be multiplied by two. It should be noted that formula (1) applies only when the neutrons are produced and slowed down in air; i.e., only to experiments of type (a).

Furthermore, there would appear to be some doubt as to the value of the ratio, σ_A/σ_D. Korff and Hamermesh use a value of 0.0027. (σ_D refers to natural BF_3, not to enriched $B^{10}F_3$ in this case.) For 100 percent $B^{10}F_3$, Davis uses a value of 0.00048, which is equivalent to the value 0.0024 for normal BF_3. However, Adair[4] gives $\sigma_D=116E^{-\frac{1}{2}}$ per molecule, and Melkonian[5] gives $\sigma_A=0.34E^{-\frac{1}{2}}$ per atom. This gives a true ratio of $(0.0029\times 2)=0.0058$, which should be used in formula (1). Therefore the results of Korff and Hamermesh should be multiplied by 2.15 and those of Davis by 2.4.

These corrected results are plotted in Fig. 1, together with the results of Montgomery and Tobey[6] and of Lattimore[7] who used method (b). As can be seen, the corrected values give considerably better agreement than do the old ones. Yuan[8] has also given results on the number of thermal neutrons in the atmosphere, but he merely states that the counters used were calibrated. Whether the results depend on formula (1) is therefore not clear, although this formula is quoted on the figure given in his letter. However, since his results agree with those of Korff and Hamermesh before correction, it does seem possible that they should be increased also by a factor of 2.15, and these corrected results are shown in Fig. 1.

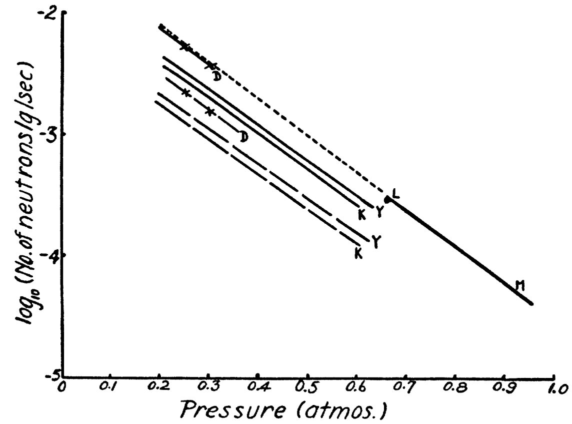

FIG. 1. The dashed and the full lines represent the uncorrected and the corrected results, respectively. The dotted line is an extrapolation of that found by Montgomery and Tobey. (K) Korff and Hamermesh (1946). (Y) Yuan (1946). (D) Davis (1950). (M) Montgomery and Tobey (1949). (L) Lattimore (1950).

In conclusion, it would appear that the various neutron experiments are in much better agreement, and give much more reasonable results, than has been thought hitherto.

[1] Bethe, Korff, and Placzek, Phys. Rev. **57**, 573 (1940).
[2] S. A. Korff and B. Hamermesh, Phys. Rev. **69**, 155 (1946).
[3] W. D. Davis, Phys. Rev. **80**, 150 (1950).
[4] R. K. Adair, Revs. Modern Phys. **22**, 249 (1950).
[5] E. Melkonian, Phys. Rev. **76**, 1750 (1940).
[6] C. G. Montgomery and A. R. Tobey, Phys. Rev. **76**, 1478 (1949).
[7] S. Lattimore, Phil. Mag. (in press).
[8] L. C. L. Yuan, Phys. Rev. **74**, 804 (1948).

The Half-Life of I^{131}

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THE consensus of values for the half-life of I^{131}, as given in Nuclear Data, National Bureau of Standards Circular 499, is 8.0 and 8.1 days. We have made a precise determination of I^{131} decay and arrive at a value of 8.1409 ± 0.0062 days. This falls within the range of some unpublished results of Dr. F. N. D. Kurie, in which he has obtained a value of 8.16 ± 0.04 days using a Lauritsen electroscope and following the activity for about eight half-lives. We appreciate the interest of Dr. Kurie and the permission to quote his results.

Erratum: The Diamagnetic Correction for Protons in Water and Mineral Oil

[Phys. Rev. **80**, 901 (1950)]

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THROUGH an oversight, the diamagnetic correction was applied to the value of e/m as well as to the value of γ. Since the diamagnetic correction does not affect the value of e/m, the previously reported[1] value of e/m should remain unchanged.

[1] Thomas, Driscoll, and Hipple, Phys. Rev. **78**, 787 (1950).