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Low-mass dark-matter hint from CDMS II, Higgs boson at the LHC, and darkon models

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The CDMS II experiment has observed three events which may have arisen from weakly interacting massive particle (WIMP) dark matter (DM) with mass of order 9 GeV colliding with nuclei. Although the implied WIMP parameter region seems to be excluded by limits from the XENON experiments, it is interesting that most of this tension can go away if the WIMP-nucleon interaction violates isospin. This motivates us to explore some of the implications for models in which a real gauge-singlet scalar particle, the darkon, serves as the WIMP, taking into account the recent discovery of a Higgs boson at the LHC and Planck determination of the DM relic density. In the simplest scenario, involving only the standard model plus a darkon, the Higgs boson is largely invisible due to its decay into a pair of darkons having the WIMP mass suggested by CDMS II and hence cannot be identified with the one found at the LHC. We find, on the other hand, that a two-Higgs-doublet model supplemented with a darkon has ample parameter space to accommodate well both the new potential DM hint from CDMS II and the Higgs data from the LHC, whether or not the darkon-nucleon interaction conserves isospin.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The latest direct search for weakly interacting massive particle (WIMP) dark matter (DM) carried out by the CDMS Collaboration has come up with a tantalizing possible hint of WIMP collisions with ordinary matter [1]. Their analysis of data collected using the CDMS II silicon detectors has turned up three events in the signal region with confidence level of about three sigmas [2]. If interpreted to be due to spin-independent WIMP-nucleon scattering, the new data favor a WIMP mass of 8.6 GeV and scattering cross section of 1.9×10^{-41} cm^2.

Because of the relatively low statistical significance of this finding, it still does not provide definitive evidence for the existence of WIMPs [1,2]. Nevertheless, it has added to the excitement previously aroused by the excess events which had been seen in the DAMA, CoGeNT, and CRESST-II direct detection experiments and could conceivably be of WIMP origin as well [3–5]. Like the CDMS II observation, the earlier findings are suggestive of a WIMP mass in the range roughly from 7 to 40 GeV and WIMP-nucleon scattering cross sections of order 10^{-42} to 10^{-40} cm^2, although the respective ranges preferred by the different experiments do not fully agree with each other.

The CDMS II result has also contributed to the ongoing tension between these potential WIMP indications and the null results of direct searches by the XENON Collaborations and others [6–13]. This puzzle on the experimental side is yet to be resolved comprehensively, and presently for WIMP masses under 15 GeV the null results are still controversial [14]. It is intriguing, however, that for most of the WIMP mass region implied by CDMS II the conflict with the exclusion limits set by the latter experiments can disappear if the WIMP interactions with nucleons are allowed to violate isospin symmetry, as will be shown later, which is not the case with the signal regions favored by DAMA, CoGeNT, and CRESST-II.

It is then of interest to see how simple models may account for these developments regarding the light-WIMP hypothesis, taking into account the recent discovery of a Higgs boson with mass around 125 GeV at the LHC [15] and determination of the DM relic density by the Planck Collaboration [16]. In this paper, we will focus on a scenario in which a real gauge-singlet scalar particle called the darkon plays the role of WIMP DM. The intimate interplay between the DM and Higgs sectors of darkon models makes them appealing to study in light of new experimental information that is relevant to either sector.

In the minimal darkon model [17,18], which is the standard model (SM) slightly expanded with the addition of a darkon (SM+D), the Higgs boson having a mass of 125 GeV will decay predominantly into a darkon pair if the darkon mass $m_D \sim 10$ GeV as suggested by CDMS II. This Higgs boson would then be largely invisible, very unlike the one found at the LHC [15].

In order to accommodate both a Higgs boson consistent with LHC data and a light darkon, the SM+D must therefore be enlarged. One of the simplest extensions contains an extra Higgs doublet [19–21]. In a two-Higgs-doublet model plus a darkon (THDM+D), the lighter *CP*-even Higgs boson can be arranged to be SM-like and the heavier one primarily responsible for the light-darkon annihilation which reproduces the observed DM relic density [20,21].

In the following section, we explore some of the implications of the latest CDMS II, LHC, and Planck measurements for the THDM+D with a low-mass darkon. We will consider both the cases of WIMP-nucleon interactions that conserve and violate isospin symmetry.

II. TWO-HIGGS-DOUBLET MODEL PLUS DARKON

For the Higgs sector of the model, we adopt the so-called two-Higgs-doublet model (THDM) of type III, in which the quarks and charged leptons couple to both Higgs doublets. In the type-I THDM only one of the doublets couples to fermions [22], and so adding a darkon would only lead to darkon-Higgs interactions similar to those in the SM+D. Although the type-II THDM+D can also provide a SM-like Higgs boson and a low-mass darkon [20], only the type-III THDM+D can offer WIMP-nucleon effective couplings with sufficiently sizable isospin violation [21].

Its Yukawa Lagrangian has the form [22]

$$\mathcal{L}_{\rm Y} = -\bar{Q}_{j,L}(\lambda_a^{\mathcal{U}})_{jl}\tilde{H}_a\mathcal{U}_{l,R} - \bar{Q}_{j,L}(\lambda_a^{\mathcal{D}})_{jl}H_a\mathcal{D}_{l,R} - \bar{L}_{j,L}(\lambda_a^{E})_{jl}H_aE_{l,R} + {\rm H.c.}, \quad (1)$$

where summation over $j, l = 1, 2, 3$ and $a = 1, 2$ is implicit, $Q_{j,L}$ ($L_{l,L}$) represent the left-handed quark (lepton) doublets, $\mathcal{U}_{l,R}$ and $\mathcal{D}_{l,R}$ ($E_{l,R}$) are the right-handed quark (charged lepton) fields, $H_{1,2}$ denote the Higgs doublets, $\tilde{H}_{1,2} = i\tau_2H_{1,2}^*$, and so $\lambda_{1,2}^{\mathcal{U},\mathcal{D},E}$ are 3×3 matrices for the Yukawa couplings. In the Higgs sector, the CP-even components of the doublets mix with mixing angle α, while the CP-odd components mix, as do the charged ones, with mixing angle β. The latter is related to the vacuum expectation values $v_{1,2}$ of $H_{1,2}$, respectively, by $\cos\beta = v_1/v$ and $\sin\beta = v_2/v$, with $v_1^2 + v_2^2 = v^2$ and $v \simeq 246$ GeV. We have followed the notation of Ref. [21] which has a more detailed description of the model.

After the diagonalization of the fermion mass matrices, the flavor-diagonal couplings of the physical CP-even Higgs fields $\mathcal{H} = h, H$ to the fermion mass eigenstate f can be described by

$$\mathcal{L}_{ff\mathcal{H}} = -k_f^{\mathcal{H}}m_f\bar{f}f\frac{\mathcal{H}}{v}, \quad (2)$$

where m_f is the mass of f and for, say, the first family

$$\begin{aligned} k_u^h &= \frac{\cos\alpha}{\sin\beta} - \frac{\lambda_1^u v\cos(\alpha-\beta)}{\sqrt{2}m_u\sin\beta}, \\ k_u^H &= \frac{\sin\alpha}{\sin\beta} - \frac{\lambda_1^u v\sin(\alpha-\beta)}{\sqrt{2}m_u\sin\beta}, \\ k_{d,e}^h &= -\frac{\sin\alpha}{\cos\beta} + \frac{\lambda_2^{d,e} v\cos(\alpha-\beta)}{\sqrt{2}m_{d,e}\cos\beta}, \\ k_{d,e}^H &= \frac{\cos\alpha}{\cos\beta} + \frac{\lambda_2^{d,e} v\sin(\alpha-\beta)}{\sqrt{2}m_{d,e}\cos\beta}, \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

with $\lambda_a^{u,d,e} = (\lambda_a^{\mathcal{U},\mathcal{D},E})_{11}$. The corresponding $k_f^{\mathcal{H}}$ for the other two families have analogous expressions. Since only $\lambda_1^f v_1 + \lambda_2^f v_2 = \sqrt{2}m_f$ is fixed by the f mass, λ_a^f in $k_f^{\mathcal{H}}$ is a free parameter, and so is $k_f^{\mathcal{H}}$. Setting $\lambda_1^{\mathcal{U}} = \lambda_2^{\mathcal{D}} = \lambda_2^E = 0$ would lead to the type-II THDM+D considered in Ref. [20]. Since the type-III THDM is known to have flavor-changing neutral Higgs couplings at tree level, we assume that in the THDM+D they have their naturally small values according to the Cheng-Sher ansatz [23], namely $(\lambda_a)_{jl} \sim (m_jm_l)^{1/2}/v$ for $j\neq l$. If necessary, the effects of these flavor-changing couplings could be further suppressed by increasing the mediating Higgs masses.

In the DM sector of the THDM+D, the stability of the darkon, D, as a WIMP candidate is ensured by requiring it to be a gauge singlet and imposing a discrete Z_2 symmetry under which D is odd and all the other fields are even. The renormalizable Lagrangian for D is then [19]

$$\mathcal{L}_D = \frac{1}{2}\partial^\mu D\partial_\mu D - \frac{1}{4}\lambda_D D^4 - \frac{1}{2}m_0^2D^2 - [\lambda_1H_1^\dagger H_1 + \lambda_2H_2^\dagger H_2 + \lambda_3(H_1^\dagger H_2 + H_2^\dagger H_1)]D^2. \quad (4)$$

After electroweak symmetry breaking, $\mathcal{L}_D$ includes the darkon mass m_D and the $DD(h, H)$ terms $-\lambda_h vD^2h - \lambda_H vD^2H$ with

$$\begin{aligned} m_D^2 &= m_0^2 + [\lambda_1\cos^2\beta + \lambda_2\sin^2\beta + \lambda_3\sin(2\beta)]v^2, \\ \lambda_h &= -\lambda_1\sin\alpha\cos\beta + \lambda_2\cos\alpha\sin\beta + \lambda_3\cos(\alpha+\beta), \\ \lambda_H &= \lambda_1\cos\alpha\cos\beta + \lambda_2\sin\alpha\sin\beta + \lambda_3\sin(\alpha+\beta), \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

but no DDA coupling involving the physical CP-odd Higgs boson A if CP is conserved. Since m_0 and $\lambda_{1,2,3}$ are free parameters, so are m_D and $\lambda_{h,H}$.

To evaluate the darkon annihilation rates, the couplings of h and H to the W and Z bosons may also be pertinent depending on m_D. They are given by [22]

$$\mathcal{L}_{VV\mathcal{H}} = \frac{1}{v}(2m_W^2W^{+\mu}W_\mu^- + m_Z^2Z^\mu Z_\mu) \times [h\sin(\beta-\alpha) + H\cos(\beta-\alpha)] \quad (6)$$

from the Higgs kinetic sector of the model.

We start our numerical work by identifying the lighter Higgs particle h with the Higgs boson observed at the LHC and fixing the couplings discussed above. The latest measurements on h have begun to indicate that the particle has SM-like properties, but there is still some room in its couplings for deviations from SM expectations. Specifically, according to a number of analyses [24], the current data imply that the h couplings to the W and Z bosons cannot differ from their SM values by more than $\mathcal{O}(10\%)$, whereas the couplings to fermions are less well determined. Furthermore, the branching ratio of nonstandard decays of h into invisible or undetected final states can be as high as a few tens of percent [24]. All this implies that in general the free parameters k_f^h and $\sin(\beta-\alpha)$ may deviate from unity accordingly and that for a light darkon λ_h can be nonzero, but not large. For definiteness and simplicity, we take $\beta - \alpha = \pi/2$ and $\lambda_h = 0$, following Ref. [21]. Consequently, at tree level h has fermionic and gauge couplings identical to their SM counterparts, in particular $k_f^h = 1$, but no interaction with the darkon, preventing h from having a non-negligible invisible decay mode. Moreover, the heavier Higgs boson H now couples to fermions and the darkon according to

$$k_u^H = -\cot\beta + \frac{\lambda_1^u v}{\sqrt{2} m_u \sin\beta}, \qquad k_{d,e}^H = \tan\beta - \frac{\lambda_2^{d,e} v}{\sqrt{2} m_{d,e} \cos\beta}, \tag{7}$$

$$\lambda_H = \frac{1}{2}(\lambda_1 - \lambda_2)\sin(2\beta) - \lambda_3 \cos(2\beta), \tag{8}$$

but no longer has tree-level couplings to W and Z, the k_f^H formulas for the second and third families being analogous. It follows from these choices that for a light darkon, with $m_D < m_h/2$, its annihilation occurs mainly via H-mediated diagrams.

The darkon being the DM candidate, its annihilation cross section must reproduce the observed DM relic density Ω. Its most recent value has been determined by the Planck Collaboration from the Planck measurement and other data to be $\Omega \bar{h}^2 = 0.1187 \pm 0.0017$ [16], where $\bar{h}$ is the Hubble parameter. To extract λ_H for specific m_D and H-mass, m_H, values, after k_f^H are chosen, we require the darkon relic density to satisfy the 90% C.L. (confidence level) range of its experimental value, $0.1159 \le \Omega \bar{h}^2 \le 0.1215$. We can then employ the obtained λ_H to predict the darkon-nucleon scattering cross section and compare it with the direct search data. We will treat in turn the cases where the darkon-nucleon interactions respect and violate isospin symmetry.

In the first case, since λ_1^u and $\lambda_2^{d,e}$ in Eq. (7) as well as the corresponding parameters for the other two families are free parameters, again following Ref. [21] we pick for definiteness $k_f^H = 1$. We present the λ_H ranges allowed by the relic data for the low-mass region 5 GeV $\le m_D \le$ 50 GeV and some illustrative values of m_H in Fig. 1(a), where the width of each band reflects the 90% C.L. range of $\Omega \bar{h}^2$ above.[1]

The darkon-nucleon elastic scattering occurs via an H-mediated diagram in the t channel. Its cross section is given by [21] $\sigma_{\rm el}^N = \lambda_H^2 g_{NNH}^2 v^2 m_N^2 / [\pi (m_D + m_N)^2 m_H^4]$, where m_N is the average of the proton and neutron masses. The effective H-nucleon coupling g_{NNH}, which respects isospin, has a rather wide range, $0.0011 \le g_{NNH} \le 0.0032$ [18,21], because of its dependence on the pion-nucleon sigma term which is not well determined [26]. We display in Fig. 1(b) the calculated $\sigma_{\rm el}^N$ corresponding to the parameter selections in Fig. 1(a). The width of each predicted $\sigma_{\rm el}^N$ curve arises mainly from the sizable uncertainty of g_{NNH}. Also on display are the contours and curves reproduced from Refs. [3–12,27] and representing the results of CDMS II and other latest DM direct detection experiments. One can see that the THDM+D prediction

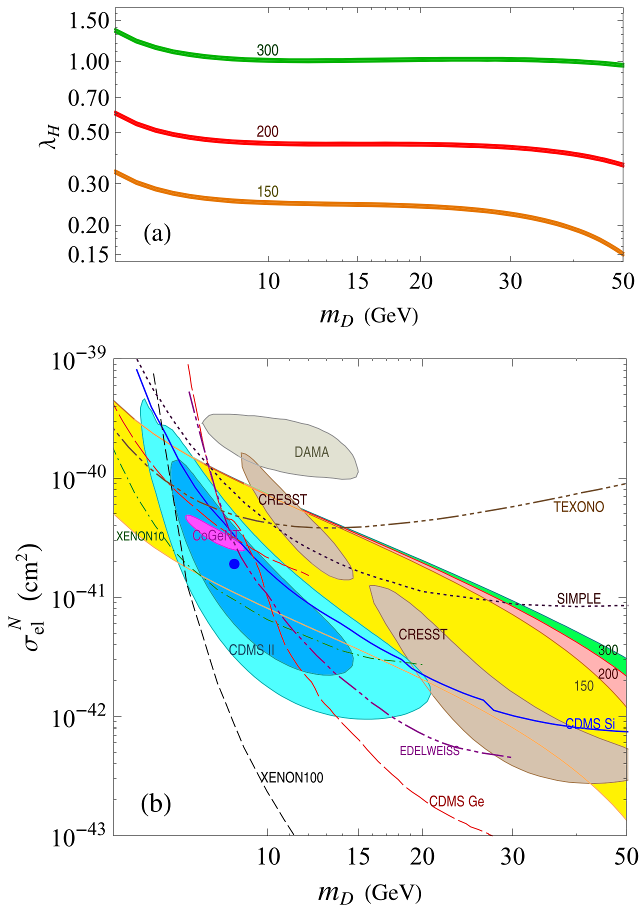

FIG. 1 (color online). (a) Darkon-H coupling λ_H as a function of darkon mass m_D for $m_H = 150$, 200, 300 GeV, with the other couplings specified in the text, in the THDM+D with isospin-conserving darkon-nucleon interactions. (b) The resulting darkon-nucleon scattering cross section $\sigma_{\rm el}^N$, compared to 90% C.L. upper limits from XENON10 (green dashed-dotted curve) [6], XENON100 (black short-dashed curve) [7], CDMS Ge (red long-dashed curves) [8], CDMS Si (blue solid curve) [12], Stage 2 of SIMPLE (dark dotted curve) [9], EDELWEISS (purple dashed-double-dotted curve) [10], and TEXONO (brown dashed-triple-dotted curve) [11]. Also plotted are a gray patch compatible with the DAMA Na modulation signal at the 3σ level [27], two 2σ-confidence (light brown) areas representing the CRESST-II result [5], the 90% C.L. (magenta) signal region suggested by CoGeNT [4], and a blue (cyan) area for a possible signal at 68% (90%) C.L. from CDMS II [1], with the blue dot marking the maximum likelihood point at (8.6 GeV, 1.9×10^{-41} cm^2).

[1]With the simple choices $k_f^H = 1$, the rate of darkon annihilation into $b\bar{b}$ seems to be in somewhat of a tension with upper limits inferred from searches for DM signals in diffuse gamma-ray data from the Fermi Large Area Telescope observations of dwarf spheroidal satellite galaxies of the Milky Way [25]. This can be circumvented by taking instead $k_b^H < 1$ and also adjusting the other k_f^H to satisfy any additional constraints.

overlaps significantly with the 68% C.L. (90% C.L.) possible signal [blue (cyan)] region from CDMS II [1], as well as with the signal regions preferred by CoGeNT and CRESST-II. At the same time, the prediction and the potential signal regions mostly appear to be in serious conflict with the exclusion limit from XENON100 and in partial disagreement with some of the other limits.

One of the important proposals in the literature to resolve the light-WIMP inconsistencies among the direct search data is to allow substantial violation of isospin symmetry in the WIMP-nucleon interactions [28,29]. It turns out that the tension can be partially alleviated if the effective WIMP couplings f_p and f_n to the proton and neutron, respectively, obey the ratio $f_n/f_p \simeq -0.7$ [28,29].

We now apply this requirement to the THDM+D and the new CDMS II data. Since k_f^H, as in Eq. (7), are free parameters, letting them deviate from the choices $k_f^H = 1$ made above, which conserve isospin, can lead to large isospin violation in the effective interactions of the darkon with the proton and neutron. This is achievable through the couplings of H to the proton and neutron, denoted by g_{ppH} and g_{nnH}, respectively, which are related to the k_f^H for quarks by $g_{\mathcal{N}\mathcal{N}H} = \sum_q g_q^{\mathcal{N}} k_q^H$, where $\mathcal{N} = p$, n, the sum is over all quarks, and $g_q^{\mathcal{N}}$ results from the $\mathcal{N}$ matrix element of the q scalar density [21,26]. Thus, one can arrive at substantial isospin violation with $k_u^H \neq k_d^H$ and the other k_q^H being sufficiently small. This has been done in Ref. [21], with g_{nnH}/g_{ppH} fixed to the desired value of f_n/f_p. The result is that, although the prediction is too low compared to the DAMA and CoGeNT preferred areas by a factor of a few, a sizable part of it escapes the stringent bound from XENON100 as well as the new limit from CDMS II silicon detector data [12]. All this is illustrated in Fig. 2, where the calculated darkon-proton scattering cross section, $\sigma_{\rm el}^p$, is compared to the contours and curves translated from the direct search data shown in Fig. 1(b) using the expression provided in Ref. [29] which relates the WIMP-nucleon and WIMP-proton cross sections, with $f_n = -0.7 f_p$ imposed. The orange curve in Fig. 2 indicates the maximum prediction, corresponding to $\lambda_H k_u^H = \mathcal{O}(10^3)$, $k_u^H \sim -2k_d^H$, and the other k_f^H being negligible by comparison [21].[2] The lightly shaded (light orange) region below the orange curve corresponds to the prediction with other choices of k_f^H subject to the relic data and $f_n = -0.7 f_p$ requirements.

It is interesting to notice that in Fig. 2 nearly all of the blue (cyan) area representing the 68% C.L. (90% C.L.) possible CDMS II signal is allowed by all of the present limits, although it no longer overlaps with the CoGeNT (magenta) patch. This is in stark contrast to the signal regions favored by DAMA, CoGeNT, and CRESST-II, almost all of which are excluded by the various limits shown. Moreover, most of the allowed regions of CDMS II are within the prediction range (light orange region). Thus the THDM+D with a light darkon is very consistent with this new WIMP inkling, whether the WIMP-nucleon interaction conserves isospin or not. Data from future direct detection experiments can be expected to provide extra tests on the light-WIMP hypothesis and therefore also probe the darkon model further.

[2] The enhanced size of $k_{u,d}^H$ confirms the finding of Ref. [30].

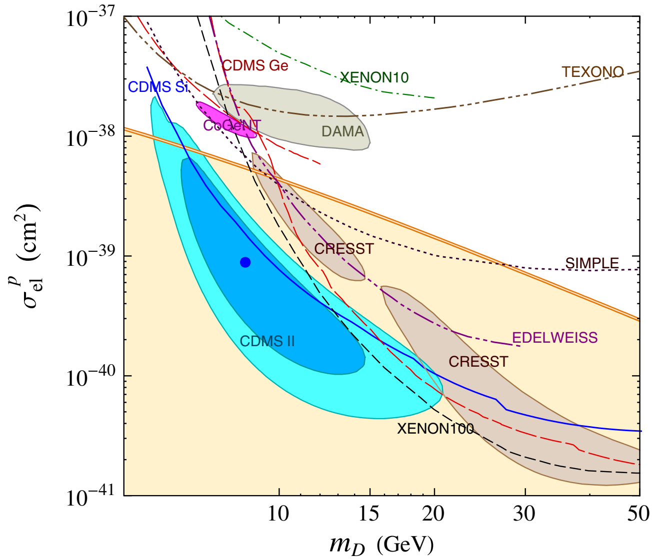

FIG. 2 (color online). Darkon-proton scattering cross section $\sigma_{\rm el}^p$ in THDM+D with isospin-violating darkon-nucleon couplings [orange curve and (lightly shaded) light orange region below it] compared with the direct search results in Fig. 1(b) reproduced using WIMP-nucleon effective couplings satisfying $f_n = -0.7 f_p$.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The three excess events detected by CDMS II could be the first evidence of WIMP DM collisions with ordinary matter. Most of the WIMP parameter space implied by this data can evade all the bounds from other direct detection experiments if the WIMP interactions violate isospin significantly. We have explored this new development within the context of a two-Higgs-doublet model slightly expanded with the addition of a real gauge-singlet scalar particle, the darkon, acting as the WIMP, taking into account the Higgs data from the LHC and Planck determination of the relic density. We find that this model can comfortably account for both the discovered Higgs boson and the low-mass WIMP that may have been observed by CDMS II.

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