

# GEANT 4 SIMULATION OF NEUTRON TRANSPORT AND SCATTERING IN MEDIA

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GEANT 4 simulation toolkit and PhysList QGSP BIC HP for simulate neutron transport and scattering was used. Primary neutron spectrum was modeled similar spectrum of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source. Spectra of neutron passing through the material and scattered were obtained. Number of thermal neutrons after passing various materials were calculated. Detector-dosimeter MKS-01R was used for measurements of the experimental thermal neutron flux from  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source. Satisfactory agreement between calculations and experiment was obtained.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In all studies and applications using neutrons, calculations of neutron transport in matter are of the fundamental importance. Simulation is necessary to estimate the flux of neutrons traversing from materials and the energy loss in the materials, to determine the energy distribution of the emerging neutrons, to calculate the shielding and moderator, etc. Monte-Carlo simulations are often usefully in studying the response of neutron detectors employed in low-, intermediate-, and high- energy physics, as well as to estimate the activity induced in different detectors by the intense neutron fields. Finally, neutron transport calculations based on Monte-Carlo method are becoming basic tools in radiation protection dosimetry of a neutron or mixed radiation fields, as they help to link measurable observables with radiation protection quantities. GEANT 4 high-energy physics simulation toolkit [1] widely used to simulate neutron scattering and propagation [2, 3, 4, 5] and modeling of neutron detectors [6, 7].

In this paper PhysList QGSP BIC HP (which includes NeutronHPElastic, NeutronHPInelastic, NeutronHPCapture, NeutronHPPFission) was used to simulate the interaction of neutrons with the material. Primary neutron spectrum was modeled similar spectra of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source. Purpose of this study was to estimate the number of thermal neutrons after passing of a different materials. In future these thermal neutrons are supposed to use for initialization of the reaction  $Gd(n, \gamma e^-)$  [6, 7].

## 2. RESULTS OF MODELING

### 2.1. Neutron transport through a plate

For testing neutron transport through a plates of material we used simple geometry. Monoenergetic neutrons with energy  $E_0 = 10^{-3}$ , 1 and  $10^3$  keV emitted

from a point-like source are propagating through a square plates with surface  $50 \times 50$  cm<sup>2</sup>, positioned at the distance 10 cm from the source. Trajectories of the particles are directed perpendicular to the surface. On the opposite side of the plate the sphere of 30 cm radius is used to determine the fluence and energy distribution of the emerging neutrons. The flux of neutrons energy  $E_n$  passing through the plate of two materials Fe and CONCRETE thickness  $t$  normalized to the incident flux  $I_{plate}/I_0$  ( $I_{plate}$  is intensity of beam passing through the plate,  $I_0$  is intensity of the primary beam) is shown in Table I. The results are close to the calculations [2].

Table 1. The normalized flux of neutrons energy  $E_0 = 10^{-3}$ , 1 and  $10^3$  keV passing through the Fe and CONCRETE plate thickness ( $t$ , cm)

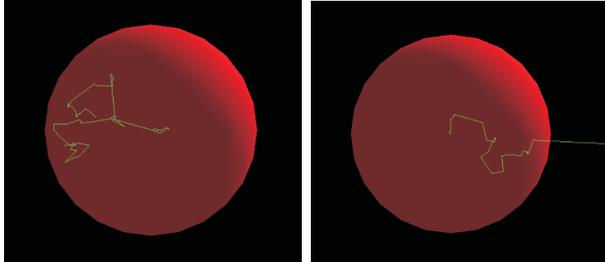
$E_0$ , keV	$10^{-3}$	1	$10^3$
Fe, 5 cm	0.65	0.33	0.14
Fe, 10 cm	0.4	0.17	0.022
Fe, 20 cm	0.2	0.035	0.00032
CONCRETE, 10 cm	0.22	0.28	0.32
CONCRETE, 20 cm	0.08	0.095	0.12

Neutrons with energy  $E_0 = 2$  MeV passing through a flat plate of polyethylene were calculated (POLYETHYLENE,  $\text{C}_2\text{H}_4$ ,  $\rho = 0.94$  g/cm<sup>-3</sup>) in the same geometry. Neutrons passing forward (in the forward hemisphere) and gamma rays in  $4\pi$  geometry were detected. For polyethylene 5 cm thickness the normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n < 1$  eV was 0.082, with  $E_n < 0.1$  eV was 0.064. Calculation of neutron lethargy was performed on formula  $U = \ln(E_0/E_n)$ , ratio of the neutrons number in the lethargy interval  $U(0; 2.3)/U(15.9; 18.2)=6.5$ , which is close to the results [8].

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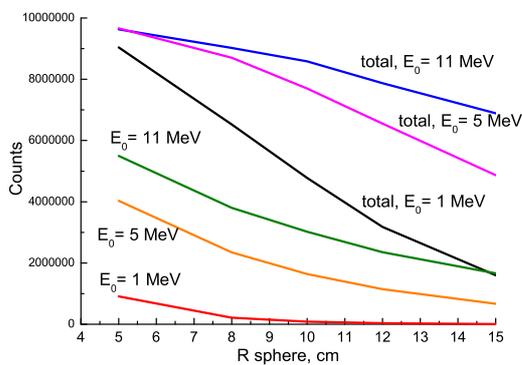
## 2.2. Neutron transport through a sphere

Transport of neutrons through paraffin sphere was calculated. Neutron spectra in  $4\pi$  geometry were calculated. Point neutron source was located inside the sphere of radius  $R$  of the material *PARAFFIN*. Neutrons with initial energy  $E_0 = 1, 5$  and  $11 \text{ MeV}$  passed through the sphere in random direction were registered. Typical neutrons trajectory from the center of paraffin sphere are presented in Fig. 1.



**Fig.1.** Trajectory of neutrons  $E_0 = 1 \text{ MeV}$  from the center of paraffin sphere diameter  $20 \text{ cm}$ . Neutron trajectory (left) and slow neutron trajectory with capture reaction and gamma-ray emission (right)

The neutrons on the surface of the sphere were detected. Gamma radiation passed through sphere, and then registered on the larger diameter sphere. Normalized flux through the spherical surface of the thermal neutrons  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $< 0.025 \text{ eV}$  for the initial neutron energy  $E_0 = 1, 5$  and  $11 \text{ MeV}$  were calculated depending on radius paraffin sphere. The total number of thermal neutrons decreases with increasing initial energy  $E_0$ . Maximum of the thermal neutrons distribution is depending on the radius of the sphere:  $10, 12$  and  $15 \text{ cm}$  for  $E_0 = 1, 5$  and  $11 \text{ MeV}$ , respectively. In Fig.2 flux through the spherical surface of neutrons with energy  $E_0$  and the total flux neutrons as the function of the paraffin sphere radius are shown. Initial neutron energy  $E_0 = 1, 5$  and  $11 \text{ MeV}$ .



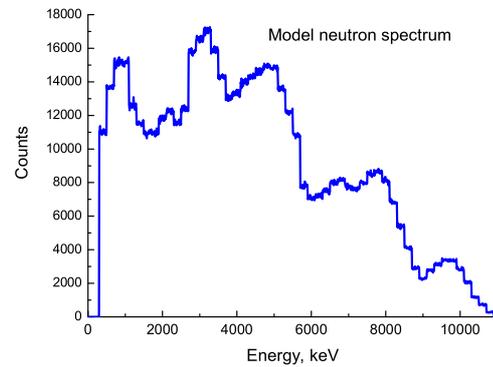
**Fig.2.** Flux of neutrons with energy  $E_0$  (green, orange, red) and the total flux (blue, pink, black) neutrons as the function of the paraffin sphere radius  $R$ ,  $\text{cm}$ . Initial neutron energy  $E_0 = 1, 5$  and  $11 \text{ MeV}$  ( $N_n = 10^7$ )

The total flux of neutrons decreases with increasing

radius sphere and with the decrease of the initial energy. However, even for  $R = 50 \text{ cm}$  at  $E_0 = 11 \text{ MeV}$  through sphere penetrates 0.2 percent of the neutrons with initial energy  $E_0$ .

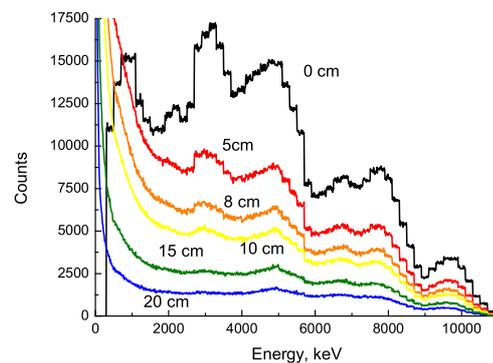
## 2.3. Modeling neutron spectrum similar spectrum of $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$ neutron source

Neutron spectrum which similar to the emission of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  source [9] was simulated by Monte Carlo method (Fig. 3). In work [9] neutron spectra have been measured for  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  sources containing  $2, 14, 80$  and  $160 \text{ g}$  of  $^{239}\text{Pu}$ . Intensity maxima near  $1.4, 2.0, 3.1, 4.8, 6.6, 7.7$  and  $9.8 \text{ MeV}$  were seen in all spectra. The stilbene crystal for fast neutron spectrometer and a long counter were used in these measurements [9].



**Fig.3.** Primary neutron spectrum modeled similar spectrum of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source [9]

The neutron spectra for *PhysList QGSP BIC HP* in  $4\pi$  geometry were calculated (Fig. 4). The neutron energy decreases due to the scattering on nuclei C and H. The registered spectrum is shifting to the range of the thermal neutron energy with increasing radius ( $R$ ,  $\text{cm}$ ) of the sphere.



**Fig.4.** The neutron spectra in  $4\pi$  geometry for different  $R$ ,  $\text{cm}$ . Primary neutron spectrum (black) modeled similar spectrum of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source

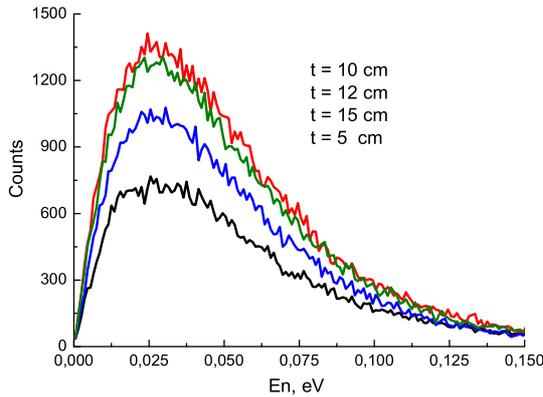
Some of the results obtained for the primary neutron spectrum modeled similar spectrum of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source are presented below. Polyethylene layers and spheres of polyethylene

paraffin, water, carbon were used as moderators. Neutrons passed in the forward hemisphere were registered for case of the plate of material. The neutrons were detected in  $4\pi$  geometry for case a sphere. The characteristic line with  $E_\gamma = 2.223 \text{ MeV}$  were appeared in the spectra of gamma rays. This line corresponds to the thermal neutron capture  $^1\text{H}(n, \gamma)^2\text{H}$ , i.e. the large proportion of thermalized neutrons is reacted capture and disappears. There is also the line with  $E_\gamma = 4.438 \text{ MeV}$ , which corresponds to the inelastic scattering of  $^{12}\text{C}(n, n'\gamma)^{12}\text{C}$ . Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $< 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and gamma quanta with  $E_\gamma = 2.223$  and  $4.438 \text{ MeV}$  after passing through the layer of polyethylene are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n^1 < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^2 < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and gamma quanta with  $E_\gamma^1 = 2.223$  and  $E_\gamma^2 = 4.438 \text{ MeV}$  after passing through the layer of polyethylene

$t, \text{ cm}$	$E_n^1$	$E_n^2$	$E_\gamma^1$	$E_\gamma^2$
5	0.046	0.013	0.026	0.0027
10	0.084	0.024	0.126	0.0027
12	0.079	0.023	0.159	0.0024
15	0.064	0.018	0.193	0.0019

The energy distribution of the thermal neutron corresponds to the known Maxwell curve with a maximum of  $kT = 0.025 \text{ eV}$  (Fig.5). The maximum number of thermal neutrons after passing a polyethylene plate  $10 \text{ cm}$  is observed. Further increase thickness does not increase the number of thermal neutrons due to thermal neutron capture reaction  $^1\text{H}(n, \gamma)^2\text{H}$ . Correspondingly the yield of gamma rays with  $E_\gamma = 2.223 \text{ MeV}$  increased.



**Fig.5.** The energy distribution of the thermal neutron after passing through a layer of polyethylene ( $t, \text{ cm}$ ,  $N_n = 10^6$ )

Basic results of the neutrons thermalization passing the polyethylene sphere are shown in Table 3 and for paraffin sphere are shown in Table 4. Maximum thermal neutrons is achieved at the sphere radius  $R \sim 10...11 \text{ cm}$ . Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $< 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and gamma quanta with  $E_\gamma = 2.223$  and  $6.13 \text{ MeV}$  (re-

action  $^1\text{H}(n, \gamma)^2\text{H}$  and  $^{16}\text{O}(n, n'\gamma)^{16}\text{O}$ ) after passing through the water sphere are given in Table 5.

**Table 3.** Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n^1 < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^2 < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and gamma quanta with  $E_\gamma^1 = 2.223$  and  $E_\gamma^2 = 4.438 \text{ MeV}$  after passing through the polyethylene sphere  $R \text{ cm}$

$R, \text{ cm}$	$E_n^1$	$E_n^2$	$E_\gamma^1$	$E_\gamma^2$
5	0.071	0.02	0.019	0.0058
10	0.19	0.054	0.16	0.0059
12	0.188	0.053	0.23	0.0056
15	0.157	0.044	0.31	0.0044

**Table 4.** Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n^1 < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^2 < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and gamma quanta with  $E_\gamma^1 = 2.223$  and  $E_\gamma^2 = 4.438 \text{ MeV}$  after passing through a paraffin sphere  $R \text{ cm}$

$R, \text{ cm}$	$E_n^1$	$E_n^2$	$E_\gamma^1$	$E_\gamma^2$
5	0.071	0.019	0.020	0.005
8	0.163	0.046	0.100	0.006
10	0.188	0.055	0.171	0.006
11	0.190	0.053	0.204	0.006
12	0.187	0.054	0.234	0.005
15	0.155	0.045	0.307	0.004
20	0.09	0.026	0.349	0.002

Maximum thermal neutrons flux is achieved at the sphere radius  $R = 15 \text{ cm}$ . Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n < 1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $< 0.25 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $< 0.025 \text{ eV}$  after passing through a carbon sphere are given in Table 6. The advantage of the carbon sphere is not a strong thermal neutron capture. Disadvantage is the large thickness necessary for thermalization of neutrons.

**Table 5.** Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n^1 < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^2 < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and gamma quanta with  $E_\gamma^1 = 2.223$  and  $E_\gamma^2 = 6.13 \text{ MeV}$  after passing through the water sphere  $R \text{ cm}$

$R, \text{ cm}$	$E_n^1$	$E_n^2$	$E_\gamma^1$	$E_\gamma^2$
10	0.171	0.048	0.093	0.0032
15	0.187	0.054	0.211	0.0026
20	0.136	0.039	0.274	0.0019
40	0.175	0.005	0.188	0.0012

**Table 6.** Normalized flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n^1 < 1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^2 < 0.25 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^3 < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ ,  $E_n^4 < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  after passing through a carbon sphere  $R \text{ cm}$

$R, \text{ cm}$	$E_n^1$	$E_n^2$	$E_n^3$	$E_n^4$
10	0	0	0	0
20	0.034	0.025	0.020	0.010
40	0.464	0.430	0.400	0.214
60	0.675	0.660	0.634	0.360

Calculating normalized flux of thermal neutrons  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$  for the mylar sphere radius of  $10 \text{ cm}$  is 0.102, which is significantly worse than for polyethylene, paraffin and water. The normalized flux

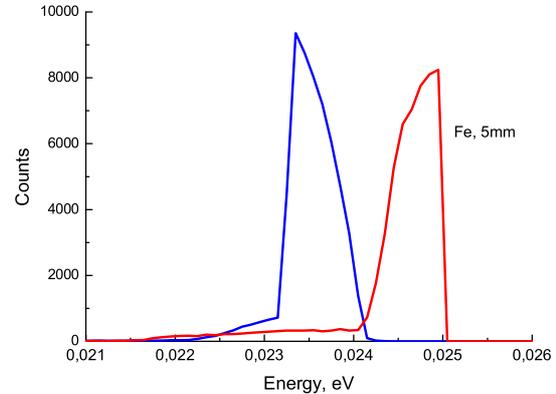
from the lead sphere  $R = 60 \text{ cm}$  is about  $10^{-5}$  for neutrons with  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$ , but about 0.06 for neutrons  $E_n < 5 \text{ keV}$ . The total normalized flux of thermal neutrons with energy  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$  on the surface of the paraffin sphere with radius  $11 \text{ cm}$  is equal to 0.19. Accordingly, maximum number of thermal neutrons getting on the planar *SiPIN*-detector  $1.8 \times 1.8 \text{ mm}^2$  size at intensity  $^{239}\text{Pu}-\text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  source  $10^6 \text{ n} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ , is about  $4 \text{ n} \times \text{s}^{-1}$  for  $E_n < 0.1 \text{ eV}$  and for  $E_n < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  about  $1.1 \text{ n} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ .

For testing our calculations neutron flux measurements was performed with using of the industrially manufactured neutron detector-dosimeter *MKS - 01R* and the plutonium-beryllium neutron source with the  $1.13 \times 10^5 \text{ n} \times \text{s}^{-1}$  fluency. The neutron flux measurements were performed for two neutron energy ranges:  $E_n < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  (thermal) and  $E_n > 0.025 \text{ eV}$  (intermediate and fast). After passing through  $11 \text{ cm}$  of paraffine experimental thermal neutron fluency was  $4.7 \text{ n} \times \text{cm}^{-2} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ . The calculated fluency of thermal neutrons is equal to  $3.96 \text{ n} \times \text{cm}^{-2} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ . After passing through  $10 \text{ cm}$  of paraffine experimental thermal neutron flux 4.96, calculated  $4.95 \text{ n} \times \text{cm}^{-2} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ . After passing through  $20 \text{ cm}$  of paraffine experimental thermal neutron flux 0.63, calculated 0.59  $\text{n} \times \text{cm}^{-2} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ . It is known that the  $^{239}\text{Pu}-\text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  source emits background gamma quanta [11]. Geometry of calculations in which two boxes of paraffin ( $10 \times 10 \times 10 \text{ cm}^3$ ) and lead ( $10 \times 10 \times 4 \text{ cm}^3$ ) are located near to each other was used. Neutrons from the  $^{239}\text{Pu}-\text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  source falls normally to the front paraffin box. Rectangular parallelepiped of paraffin thermalized the neutrons. Lead box cuts background gamma rays. The calculated flux of thermal neutrons with  $E_n < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  on the back side of the *Pb* box was equal to  $1.58 \text{ n} \times \text{cm}^{-2} \times \text{s}^{-1}$  for the source  $1.13 \times 10^5 \text{ n} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ . Experimental thermal neutron flux was  $1.8 \text{ n} \times \text{cm}^{-2} \times \text{s}^{-1}$ . Thus, the experimental data are slightly higher than the calculated values. In part this may be due to the scattering of thermal neutrons by atoms of the environment.

## 2.4. Thermal neutron scattering

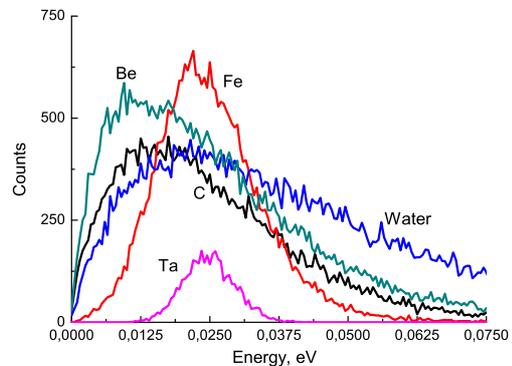
The double change the number of thermal neutrons were experimentally registered depending on things that surround the neutron source. The number of neutrons in detector increased in presence bottles of water placed around detector. Thus, there is a reflection of thermal neutrons. Transmission and reflection (in the front and back hemisphere) neutrons of  $E_n < 0.025 \text{ eV}$  for different layer materials were calculated. Some calculations in the approximation *QGSP* were performed (*PhysList* includes *G4HadronElastic*, *G4LENutronInelastic*, *G4LCapture*). Fig. 6 shows the spectra of neutron with  $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$  forth and scattering back (in the front and back hemisphere) in the approximation *QGSP*. The spectrum of neutrons passed forth has the sharp edge energy at  $0.025 \text{ eV}$ . The spec-

trum of backscattered neutrons is shifted on energy to the left according to the kinematics of the collision. Thus, the calculations in the *QGSP* accurately to take account the kinematics of collisions. Energy of particles is accurately determined by simple formulas [10]. However, the numerical result is incorrect and different from calculations in the approximation *PhysList QGSP BIC HP*.



**Fig. 6.** Spectra of neutron with  $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$  forth and scattering back (in the front (red curve) and back (blue curve) hemisphere) in the approximation *QGSP*

Spectrum of backscattered neutrons calculated in the *PhysList QGSP BIC HP* approximation have a different view depending from the material (Fig. 7). Thickness of targets  $20 \text{ mm}$ ,  $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$ ,  $N_n = 10^5$ .



**Fig. 7.** Spectra of backscattering neutron (in the back hemisphere)

The results of the calculations are shown in Table 7. These data are close to the results of [10].

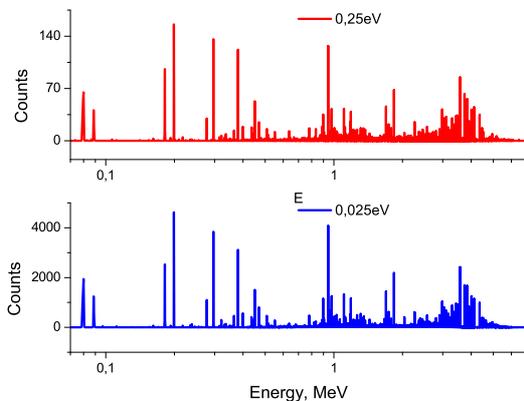
**Table 7.** Normalized number of scattering neutron (in the back and forward hemisphere) *PhysList QGSP BIC HP* ( $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$ )

$t, \text{ mm}$	<i>Fe</i> , 40	<i>Fe</i> , 20	<i>Fe</i> , 10	<i>H</i> <sub>2</sub> <i>O</i> , 50	<i>H</i> <sub>2</sub> <i>O</i> , 20
Back	0.287	0.273	0.227	0.624	0.447
Forward	0.047	0.231	0.488	0.180	0.411
$t, \text{ mm}$	<i>Ta</i> , 10	<i>C</i> , 20	<i>C</i> , 10	<i>Be</i> , 20	<i>Pb</i> , 20
Back	0.034	0.306	0.178	0.408	0.262
Forward	0.296	0.690	0.823	0.580	0.711

Note that, for example, for water the total amount back and forth scattering neutrons plus gamma with  $E_\gamma = 2.223 \text{ MeV}$  were incident neutrons  $N_n = 10^5$ . Calculations for *B, Cd, Gd*-containing compounds were showed: 0 passed forward neutrons and backscattering neutrons  $< 50$  for  $N_n = 10^5$ .

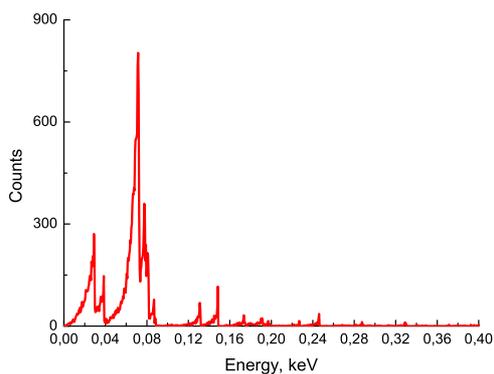
### 2.5. Nuclear reaction natural $Gd(n, \gamma e^-)$ yields in *GEANT4*

The calculation in *GEANT4* (*PhysList QGSPBICHP*) gamma quanta spectrum from nuclear reaction natural  $Gd(n, \gamma e^-)$  were performed. Yield of gamma rays is depending highly from the neutron energy and decreases with energy increasing. In Fig.8 the yield of photons in  $4\pi$  geometry for  $10 \mu\text{m}$  *Gd* foil and neutrons  $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and  $0.25 \text{ eV}$  are presented.



**Fig.8.** The yield of photons in  $4\pi$  geometry for  $10 \mu\text{m}$  foil *Gd* and neutrons  $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$  and  $0.25 \text{ eV}$  ( $N_n = 10^5$ )

In Fig.9 shows the calculated spectrum of the conversion electrons in a similar geometry.



**Fig.9.** The yield of electron in  $4\pi$  geometry for  $10 \mu\text{m}$  foil *Gd* for neutrons  $E_n = 0.025 \text{ eV}$

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The interaction of neutrons with the material using *GEANT4* and *PhysList QGSPBICHP* was studied. Primary neutron spectrum was modeled similar spectrum of  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$  neutron source. The number of thermal neutrons after passing of

the different materials were calculated. Detector-dosimeter *MKS - 01R* was used for the measurements of experimental thermal neutron flux. Agreement between calculations and experiment was satisfactory. The calculation gamma quanta and conversion electrons from nuclear reaction  $Gd(n, \gamma e^-)$  for the natural isotopic composition of *Gd* were performed. Thermal neutrons is supposed to use to initiate this reaction. Results of this study will be used in the construction of the *SiPIN* detector coated with the gadolinium foil for thermal neutrons registration.

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## МОДЕЛИРОВАНИЕ В *GEANT4* ПЕРЕНОСА И РАССЕЯНИЯ НЕЙТРОНОВ В СРЕДАХ

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Расчетный код *GEANT4* и физический лист *QGSP BIC HP* использовались для моделирования транспорта и рассеяния нейтронов. Получены спектры нейтронов, проходящих через слои материала и отраженных назад. Первичный спектр нейтронов моделируется как у источника  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$ . Рассчитаны количества тепловых нейтронов после прохождения различных материалов. Для экспериментального измерения теплового потока нейтронов использован детектор-дозиметр МКС-01Р. Согласие между расчетами и экспериментом удовлетворительное.

## МОДЕЛЮВАННЯ В *GEANT4* ПЕРЕНОСУ І РОЗСІЯННЯ НЕЙТРОНІВ В СЕРЕДОВИЩАХ

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Розрахунковий код *GEANT4* і фізичний лист *QGSP BIC HP* використовувались для моделювання транспорту і розсіяння нейтронів. Отримані спектри нейтронів, що проходять через шари матеріалу і розсіяні назад. Первинний спектр нейтронів моделюється як у джерела  $^{239}\text{Pu} - \text{Be}(\alpha, n)$ . Розраховані кількості теплових нейтронів після проходження різних матеріалів. Для експериментального вимірювання теплового потоку нейтронів використаний детектор-дозиметр МКС-01Р. Згода між розрахунками і експериментом задовільна.