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Are X-rays the new γ -rays in neutrino astronomy?

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The production mechanism of astrophysical high-energy neutrinos is not yet understood. A common assumption is that beamed relativistic outflows (jets) driven by accreting black holes are needed to accelerate particles to such high energies to produce high-energy neutrinos. Indeed, the first astrophysical high-energy neutrino source candidate identified by IceCube at a significance level of $>3\sigma$ was a blazar – an AGN with an accreting supermassive black hole that drives a relativistic jet directed towards Earth. Recently, IceCube discovered strong evidence that Seyfert galaxies also emit neutrinos, which appears unrelated to jet activity. I will show that the neutrino–hard X-ray flux ratio of the blazar TXS 0506+056 is consistent with neutrino production in a γ -obscured region near the central supermassive black hole, with the X-ray flux corresponding to reprocessed γ -ray emission with flux comparable to that of neutrinos. Similar neutrino–hard X-ray flux ratios were found for three of IceCube’s Seyfert galaxies, raising the possibility of a common neutrino production mechanism that may not involve a strong jet. I will discuss how future observations could test the jet origin of blazar neutrinos.

Primary author: BARTOS, Imre (University of Florida)

Presenter: BARTOS, Imre (University of Florida)

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