^{222}Rn detection

The design...

Performance…

Conclusions

A novel low background cryogenic detector for ^{222}Rn in gas

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The design...

Performance…

Conclusions

1. Selected detection techniques of ^{222}Rn in gases

- Pre-concentration and counting using GALLEX/GNO low-level proportional counters

  - highly sensitive measurements of ^{222}Rn in nitrogen and argon (liquid nitrogen/liquid argon)
  - detection limit: ~0.5 µBq/m^3 **(Appl. Rad. Isot. 52 (2000) 691)**

- Electrostating chambers

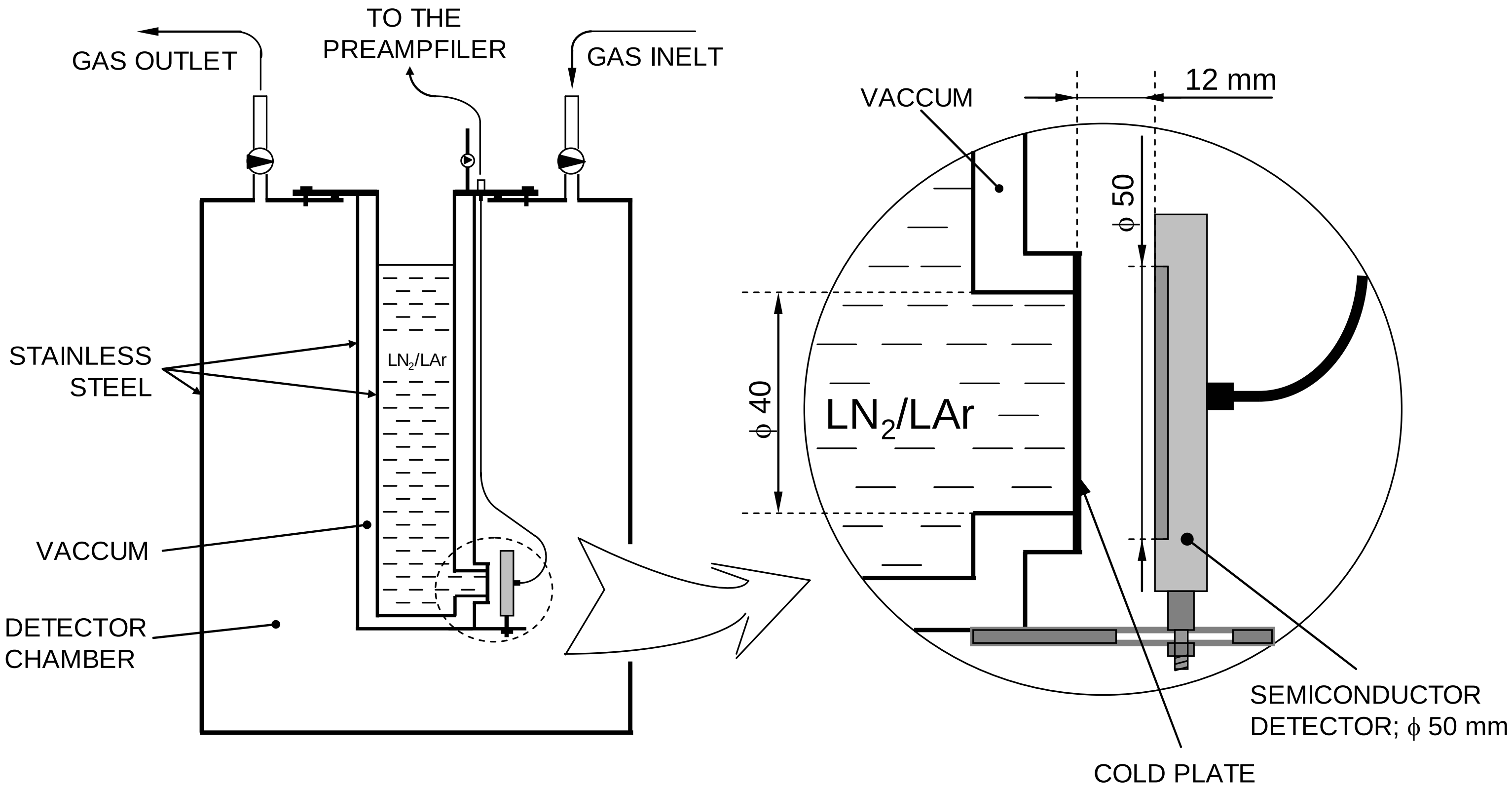
  - high sensitive online ^{222}Rn monitoring (clean rooms, clean benches etc.)
  - detection limit 0.1 - 1 mBq/m^3 **(NIM A460 (2001) 272)**

- Scintillator Lucas cells

  - online ^{222}Rn monitoring (laboratories, air etc.)
  - insensitive to gas contaminations and easy to use detectors
  - detection limit: ~ 0.5 Bq/m^3 **(NIM A345 (1994) 351)**

^{222}Rn detection
The design...
Performance…
Conclusions

2. The design of the cryogenic detector



Detector : ORTEC ULTRA™ diode, 50 mm diameter
Cold plate : 40 mm diameter, 12 mm distance from the diode
Cooling : Liquid nitrogen
Volume : 65 L
Material : Electropolished stainless steel

^{222}Rn detection
The design...
Performance…
Conclusions

3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.1 Background

- ORTEC ULTRA™ diode (impurities + cosmic rays)

$$A_D = (0.93 \pm 0.31)\ \text{cpd}$$

- Emanation of ^{222}Rn (detector components, welds etc.)

$$A_E = (23.6 \pm 3.5)\ \text{cpd}$$

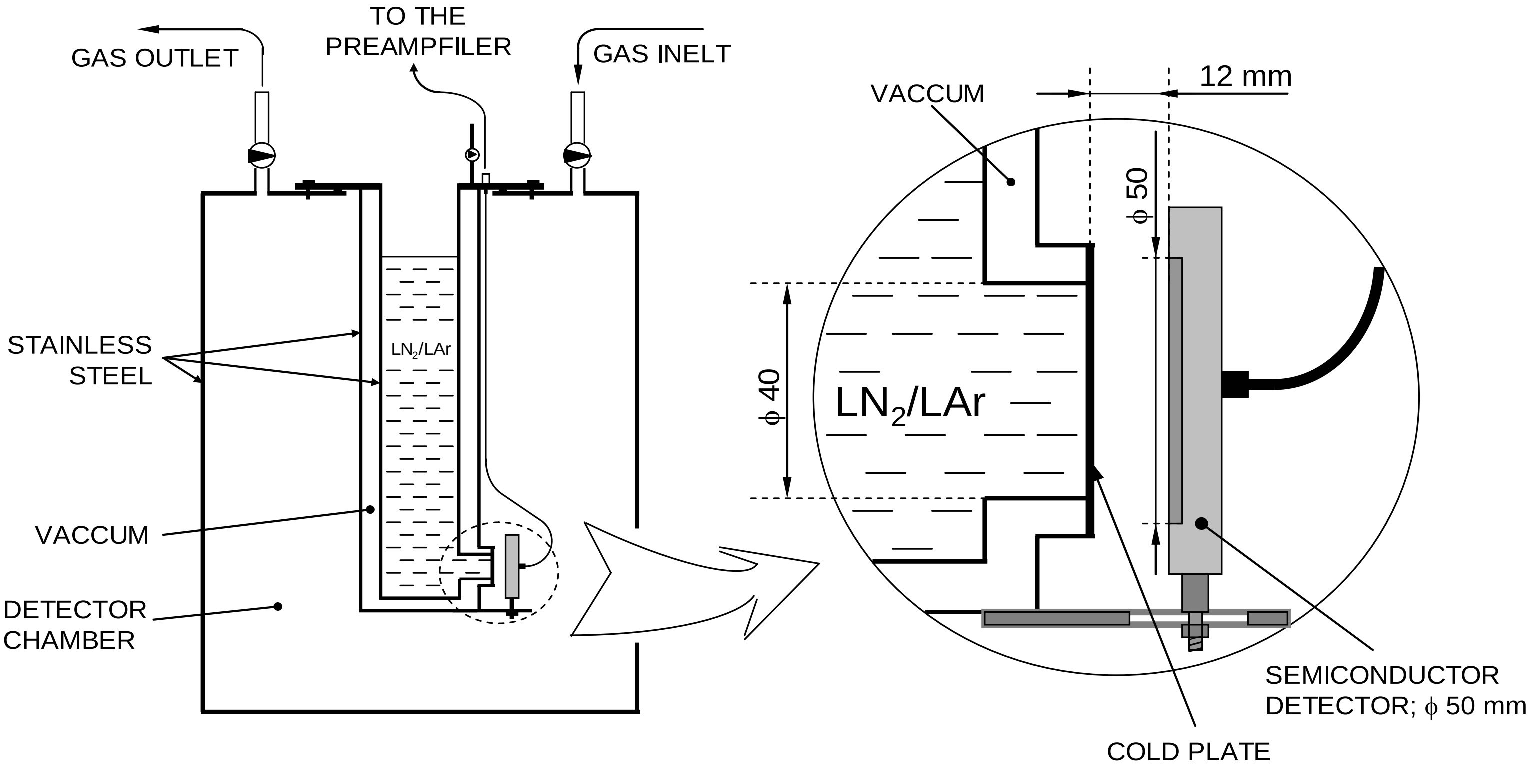
- Total

$$\boldsymbol{A_B = (24.5 \pm 3.5)\ \text{cpd}}$$

^{222}Rn detection
The design...
Performance…
Conclusions

3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.1 Background – ^{222}Rn daughters deposition

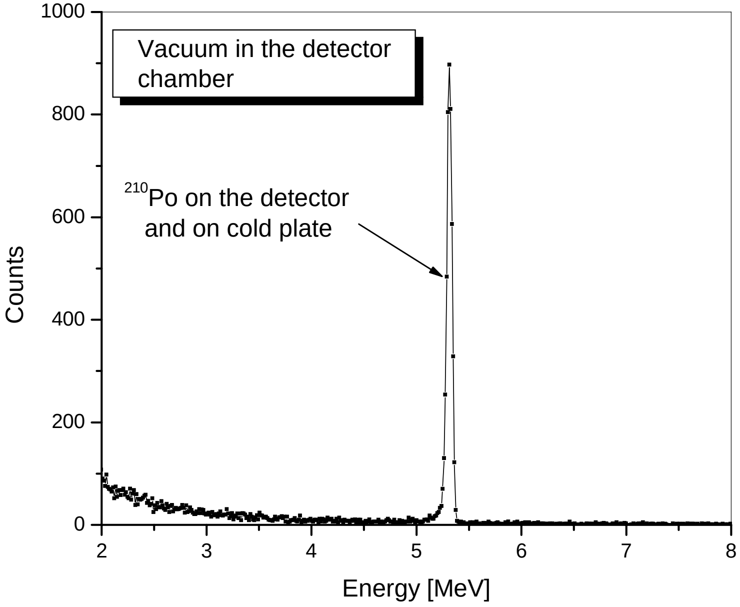


3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.1 Background after many test with high ^{222}Rn activities

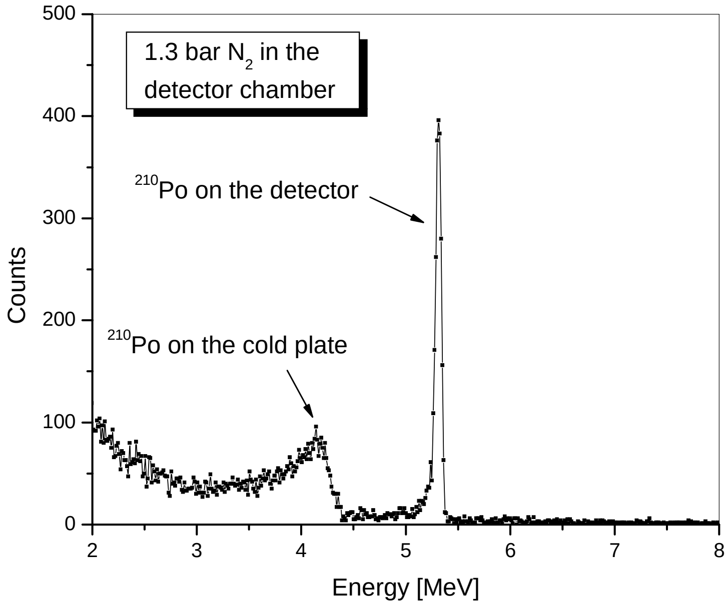
- ^{222}Rn detection
- The design...
- Performance…
- Conclusions

p ~ 0 mbar



A_D = (174 ± 6) cpd

p = 1300 mbar



A_D = (57.6 ± 2.6) cpd

~1/3 of the ^{210}Po is deposited on the detector:
sputtering + low temperature collection

3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.2 Absolute detection efficiency at low pressure (~ 2 mbar)

^{222}Rn detection
The design...
Performance…
Conclusions

- Nitrogen as a carrier gas

$$\varepsilon_N = (31.2 \pm 0.9)\ \%$$

- Helium as a carrier gas

$$\varepsilon_{He} = (31.7 \pm 0.9)\ \%$$

- Average value

$$\boldsymbol{\varepsilon = (31.5 \pm 0.6)\ \%}$$

3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.3 Minimum Detectable Activity (MDA)

^{222}Rn detection

The design...

Performance…

Conclusions

$$A_0(0)_{\min} = \frac{\lambda e^{\lambda t_s}\left(1+\sqrt{1+4(\Delta t^2\sigma_{A_B}^2+\Delta t A_B)\left(\delta^2-\delta_\varepsilon^2\right)}\right)}{2\varepsilon(1-e^{-\lambda\Delta t})\left(\delta^2-\delta_\varepsilon^2\right)}$$

A_B – background (total)

σ_{AB} – standard deviation of A_B

ε – total detection efficiency

δ_ε – standard deviation of ε

δ – assumed measurement accuracy

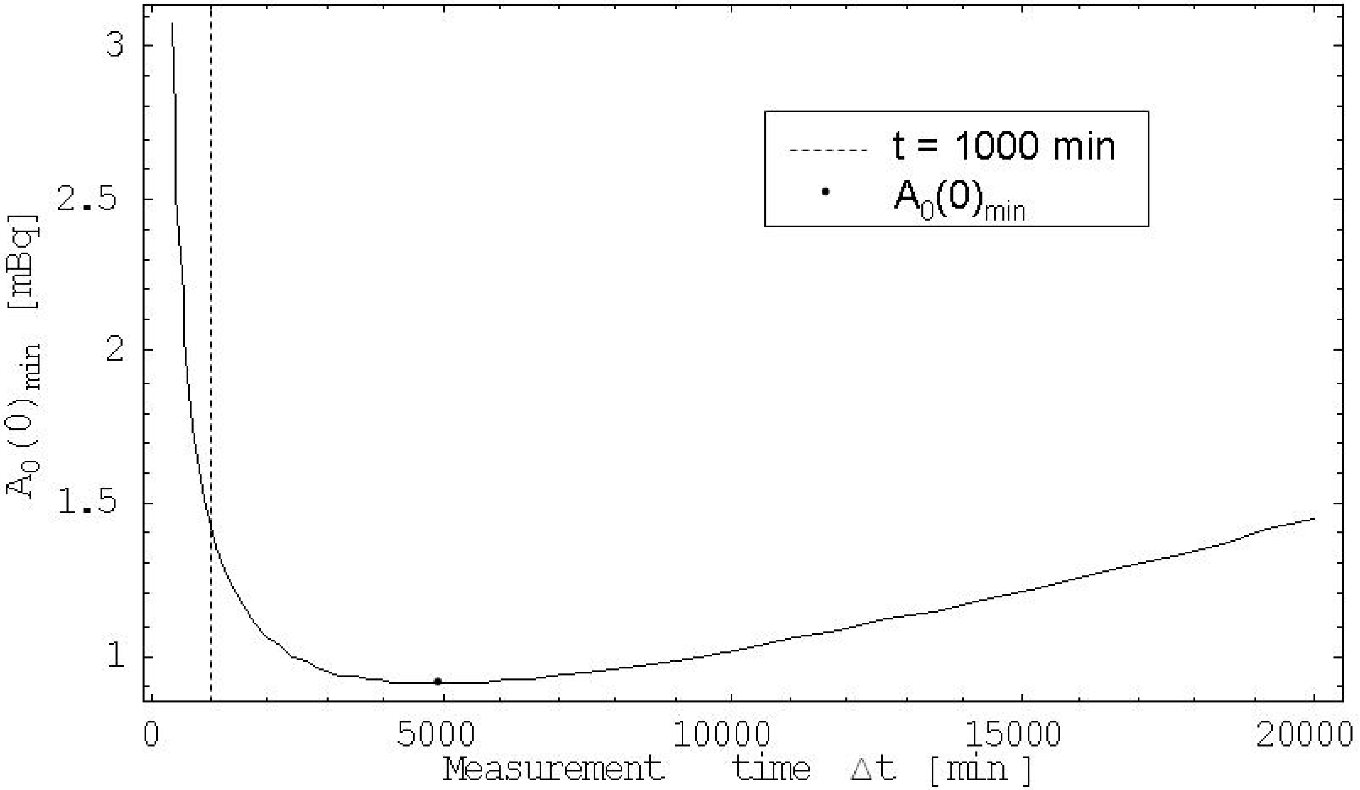
t_s – time between ^{222}Rn filling and measurement start

Δt – measurement time

λ – ^{222}Rn decay constant

3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.3 Minimum Detectable Activity (MDA) - continued



$A_B = (24.5 \pm 3.5)$ cpd

$\varepsilon = (31.5 \pm 0.9)$ %

$t_s = 1.5$ h

$\delta = 30$ %

⇒ **A_{min} = 0.8 mBq (12 mBq/m^3)**

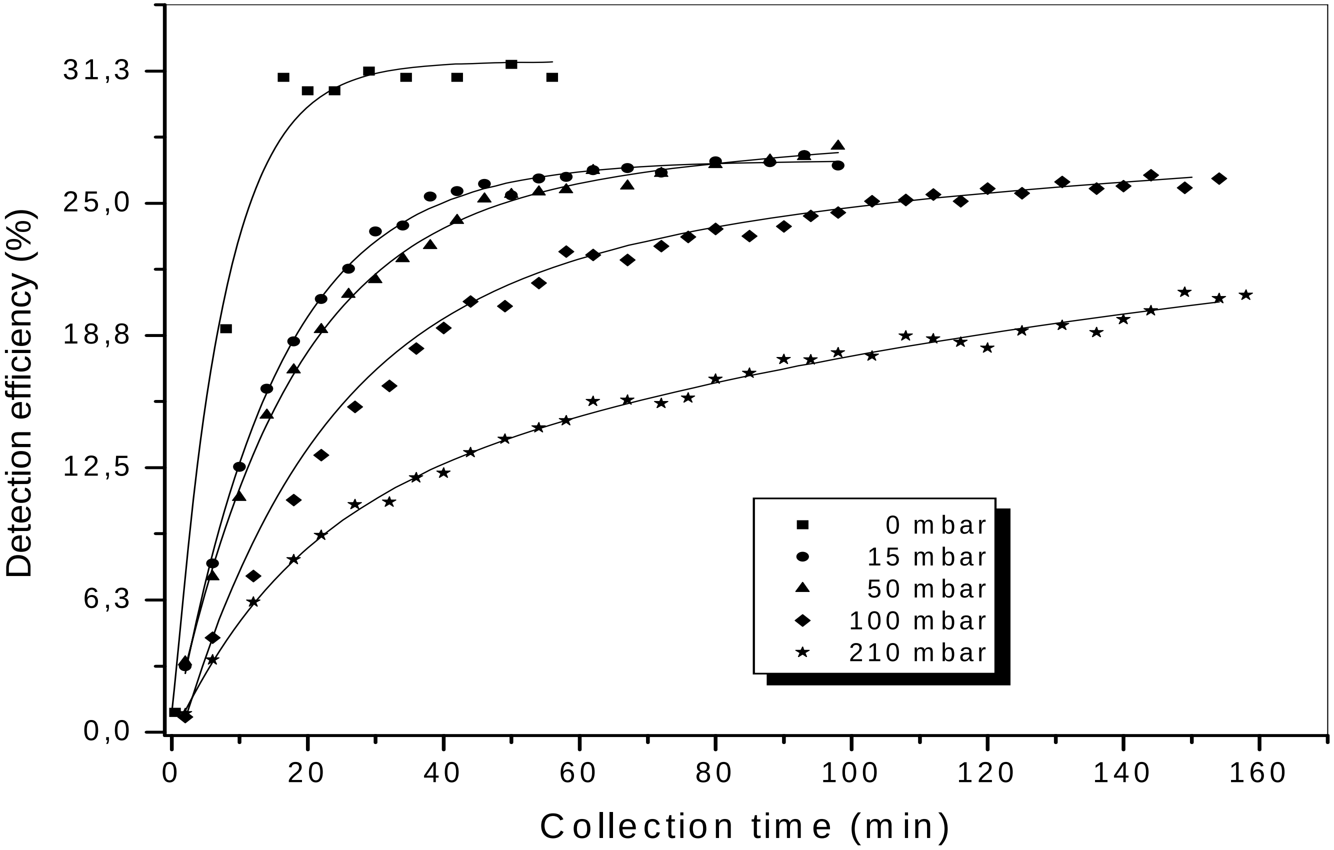
⇒ **A_{1000} = 1.3 mBq (21 mBq/m^3)**

3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.4 Detection efficiency at higher pressures

- ^{222}Rn detection
- The design...
- Performance…
- Conclusions

Nitrogen as a carrier gas



3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

3.4 Detection efficiency at higher pressures - continued

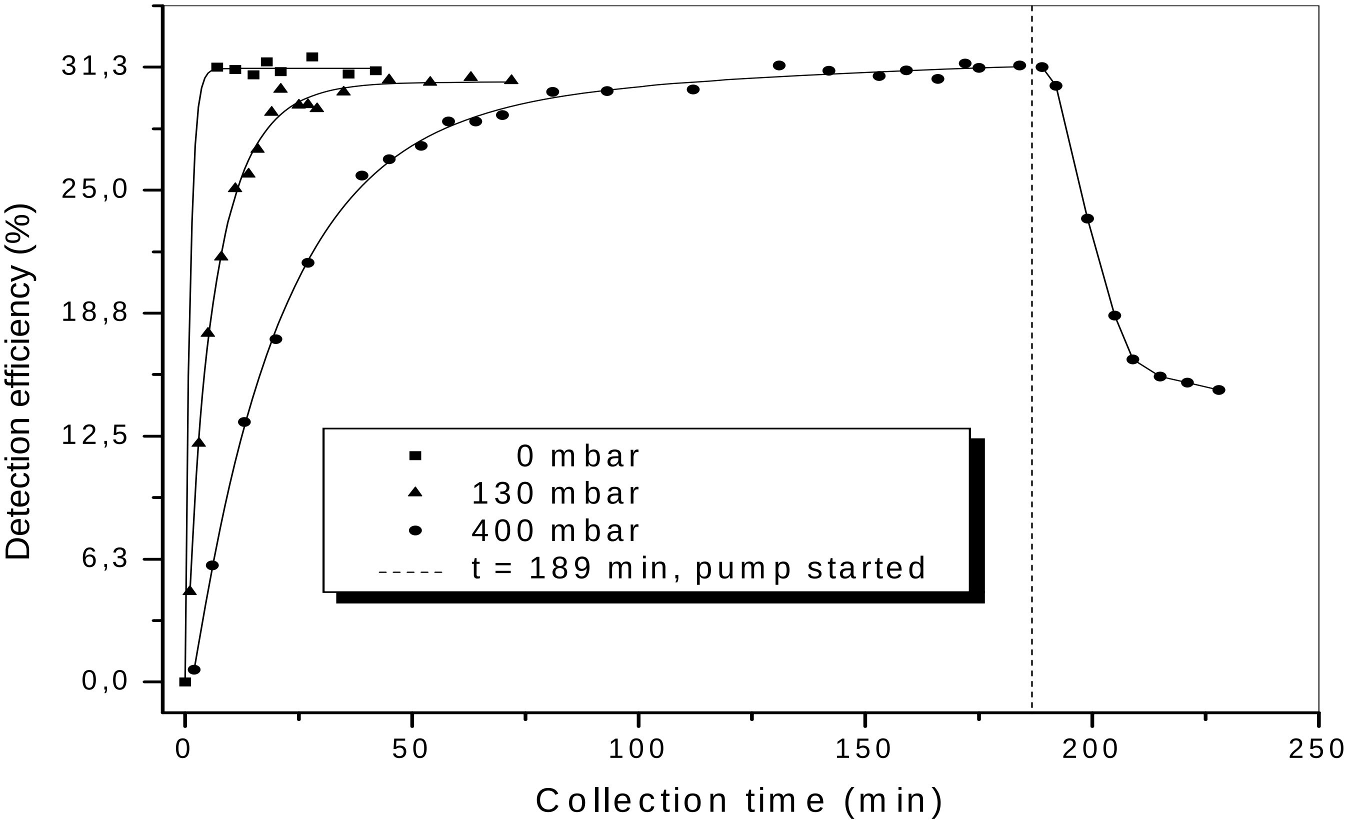
^{222}Rn detection

The design...

Performance…

Conclusions

Helium as a carrier gas



3. Performance of the cryogenic detector

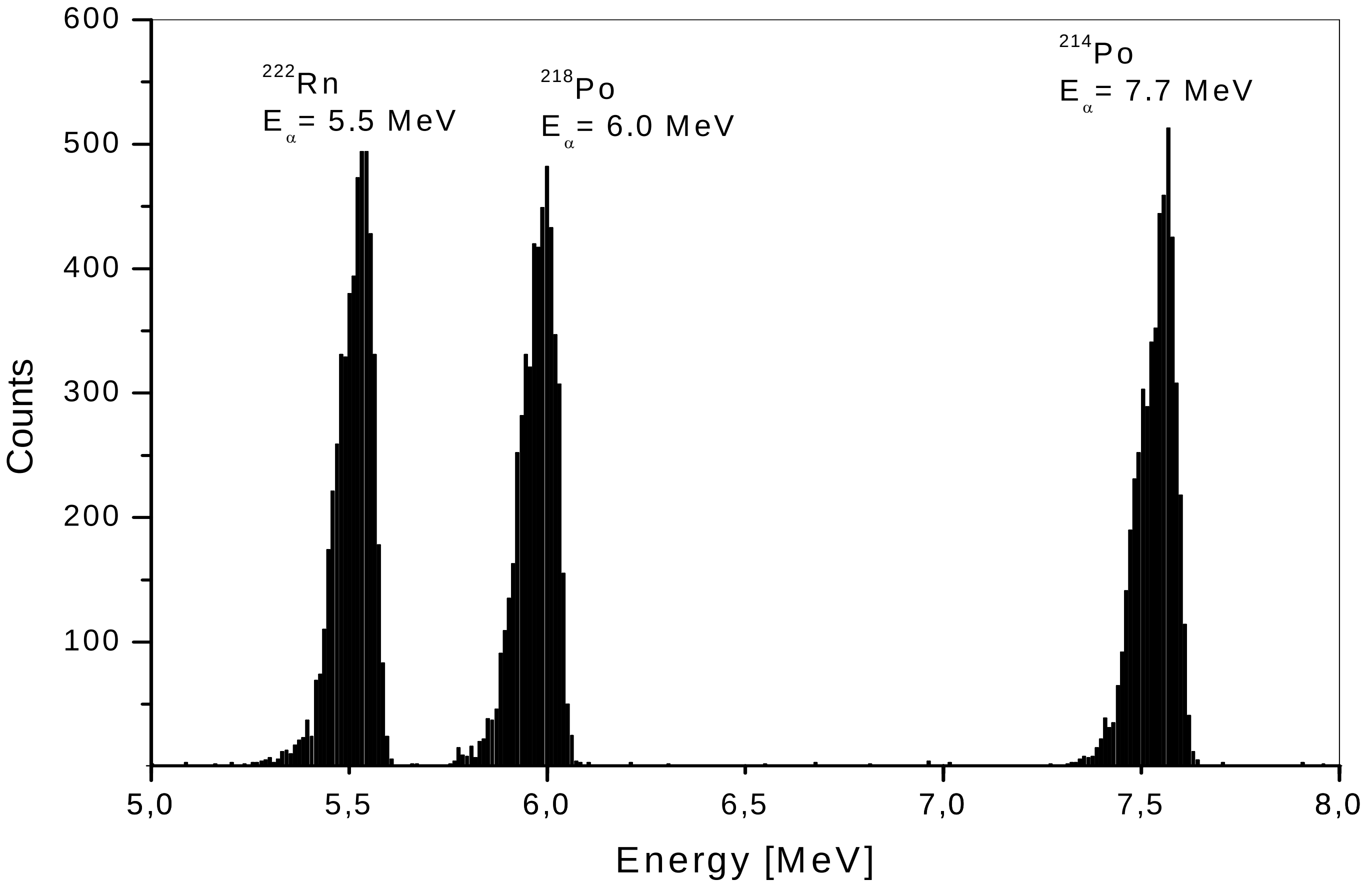
3.5 Energy spectrum

^{222}Rn detection

The design...

Performance…

Conclusions



Energy resolution for ^{222}Rn: 105 keV (FWHM)

^{222}Rn detection
The design...
Performance…
Conclusions

4. Conclusions

- The prototype of the cryogenic detector works as expected
- Reached sensitivity is acceptable (12 mBq/m^3) however the goal for a target detector is $\leq$ 1 mBq/m^3
- Possibilities of improvement

  - background reduction
    - → careful construction and selection of materials
    - → use of an ultra-low background alpha detector
  - increase of the detection efficiency
    - → use of an alpha detector able to work at LN_2 temperature (smaller distances between the diode and the cold plate possible)
    - → use of liquid argon for cooling (higher ^{222}Rn collection efficiency for N_2)
  - increase of the active volume of the detector up to 1 m^3
- Cryogenic detector has a possibility measure others Rn isotopes (^{219}Rn/^{220}Rn)
- Rn emanation tests from solids can also be conducted