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D. Rochman, for the NEA WPNCS SG12

# Decay heat of irradiated nuclear fuels – A status report from the NEA WPNCS

ICNC 2023 – The 12th International Conference on Nuclear Criticality Safety, October 1st – 6th, 2023, Sendai, Japan

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# Summary

- Introduction & background
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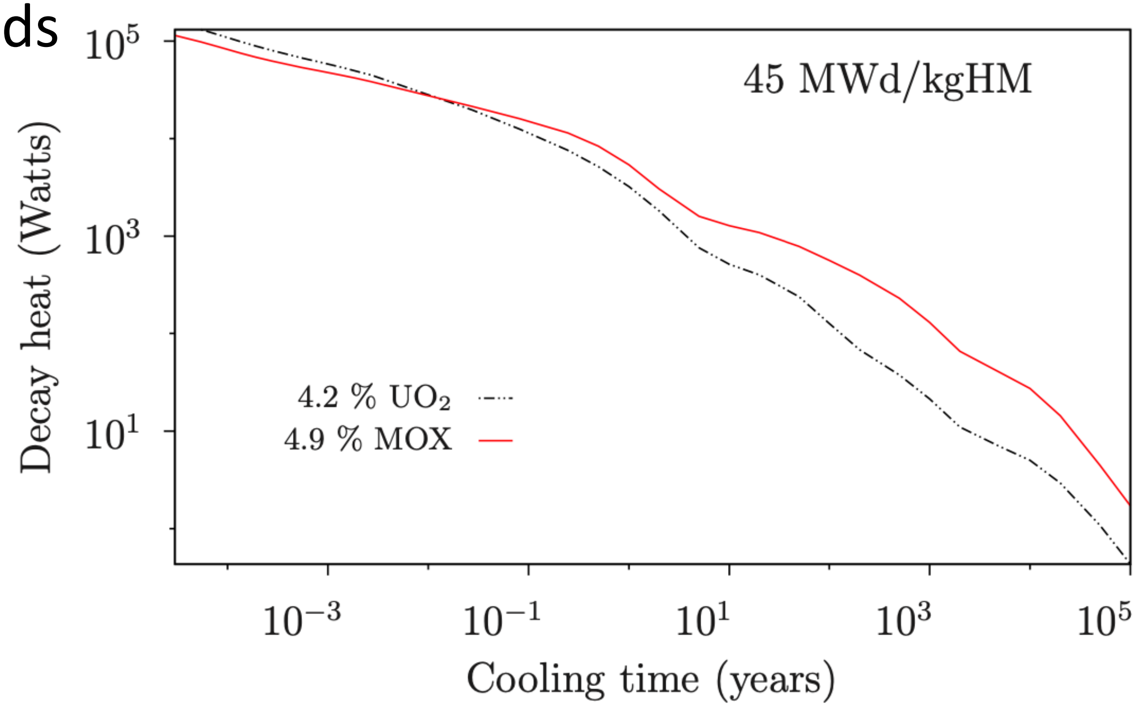

# 25 co-authors

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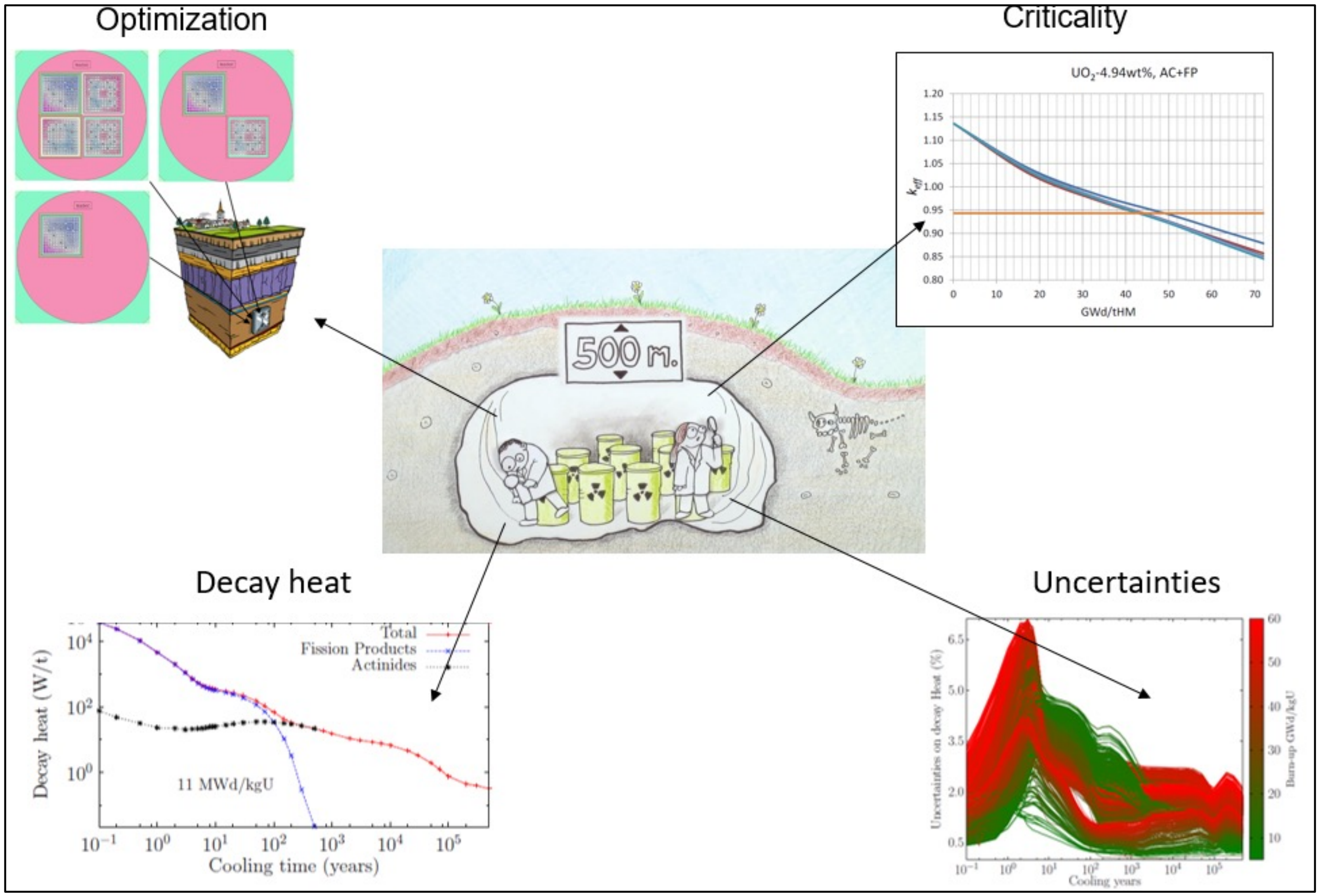
# Introduction

- Precise knowledge on SNF decay heat is required for
  - Core transients (short cooling time, a few seconds to minutes),
  - Safe and economical storage, transport and long-term repository (long cooling time, weeks to 1 billion of years)



# Goals of the WPNCS SG12

The WPNCS SG12 was created in January 2022, with about 50 participants and 12 organizations, to:

- Gather interested participants from different horizons: industries, technical support organizations, waste management organizations, and safety authorities, in order to **exchange information** on decay heat for existing SNF: current knowledge, interest, needs.

- Raise the awareness of the current prediction capabilities, and limitations due to the lack of **experimental data**.

- Establish a **state-of-the-art report** regarding the decay heat for existing SNF, leading to discussions on existing biases and uncertainties, the impact of nuclear data libraries, assumptions in modelling, or irradiation history.

- Finally organize a **decay heat benchmark**, based on a fuel assembly with measured values, eventually to be started with a new dedicated subgroup.

# Decay heat estimation

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Annals of Nuclear Energy
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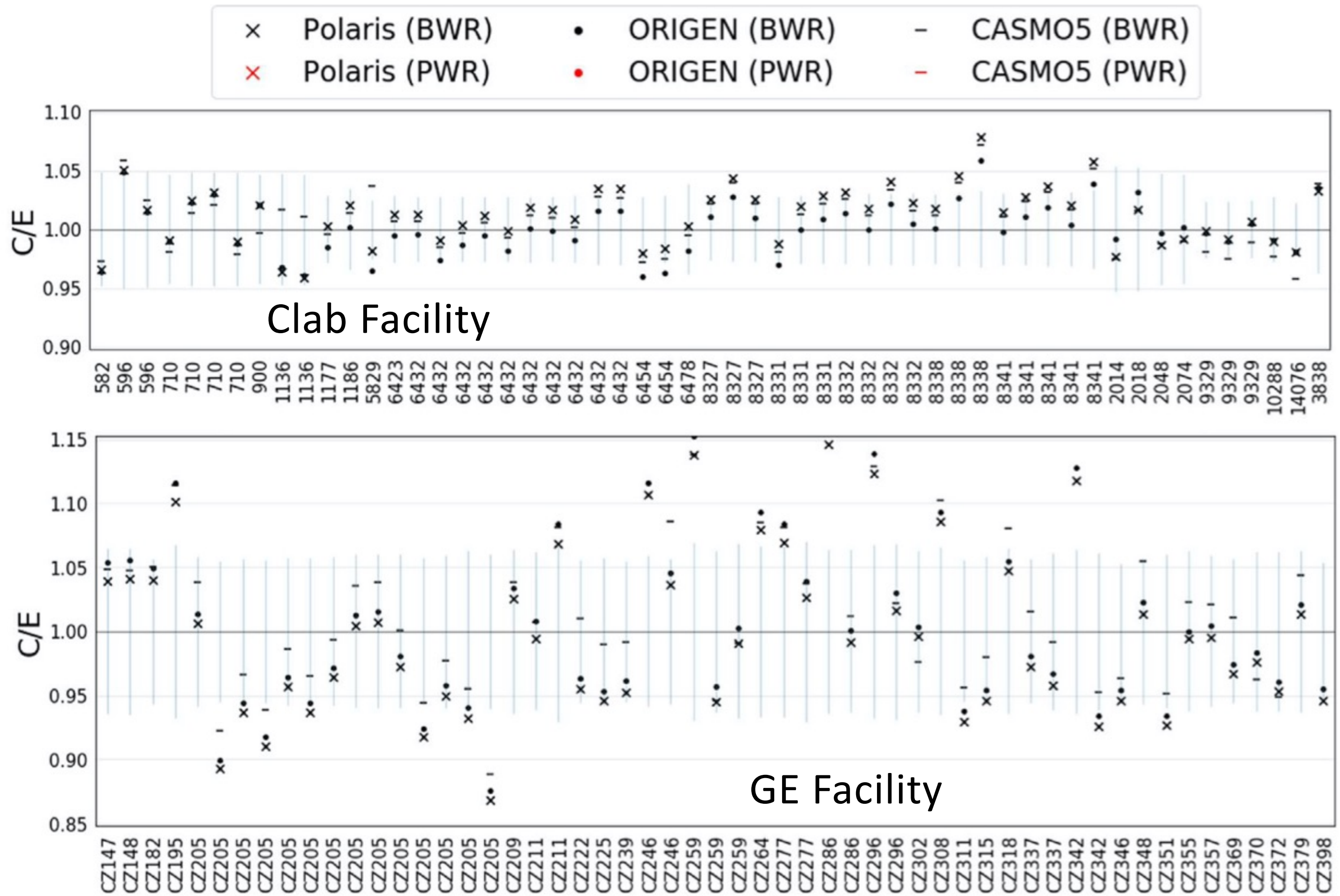
Validation of spent nuclear fuel decay heat calculations using Polaris, ORIGEN and CASMO5

Ahmed Shama[a,b,*], Dimitri Rochman[c], Stefano Caruso[d,b], Andreas Pautz[a,c]

- How well can we estimate SNF decay heat ?

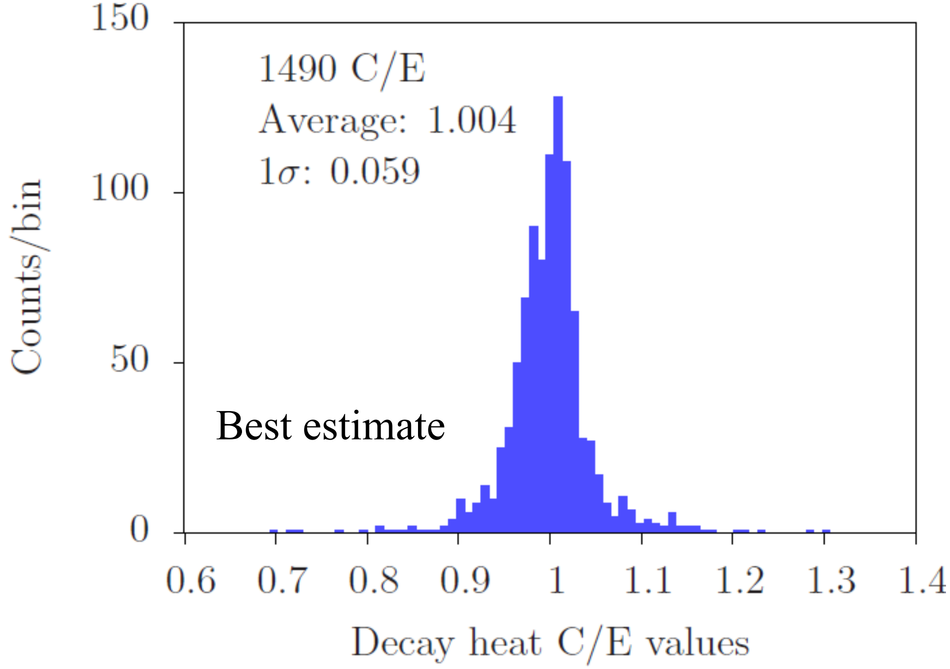


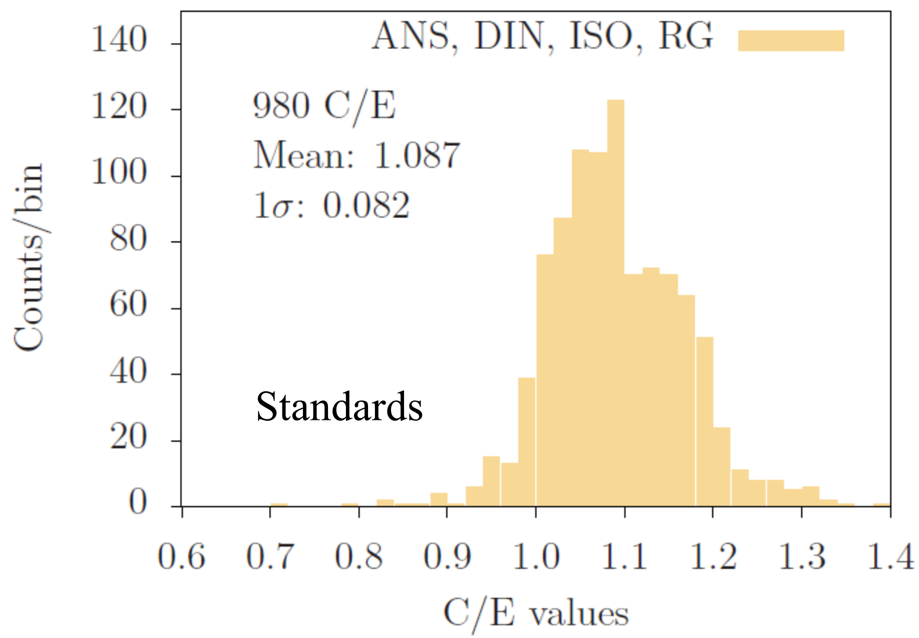

- Integral measurements (calorimeter on full SNF): mixed agreement between C and E

# Decay heat estimation

- How well can we estimate SNF decay heat ?

Histograms of the ratios of calculated (C) over experimental (E) decay heat values

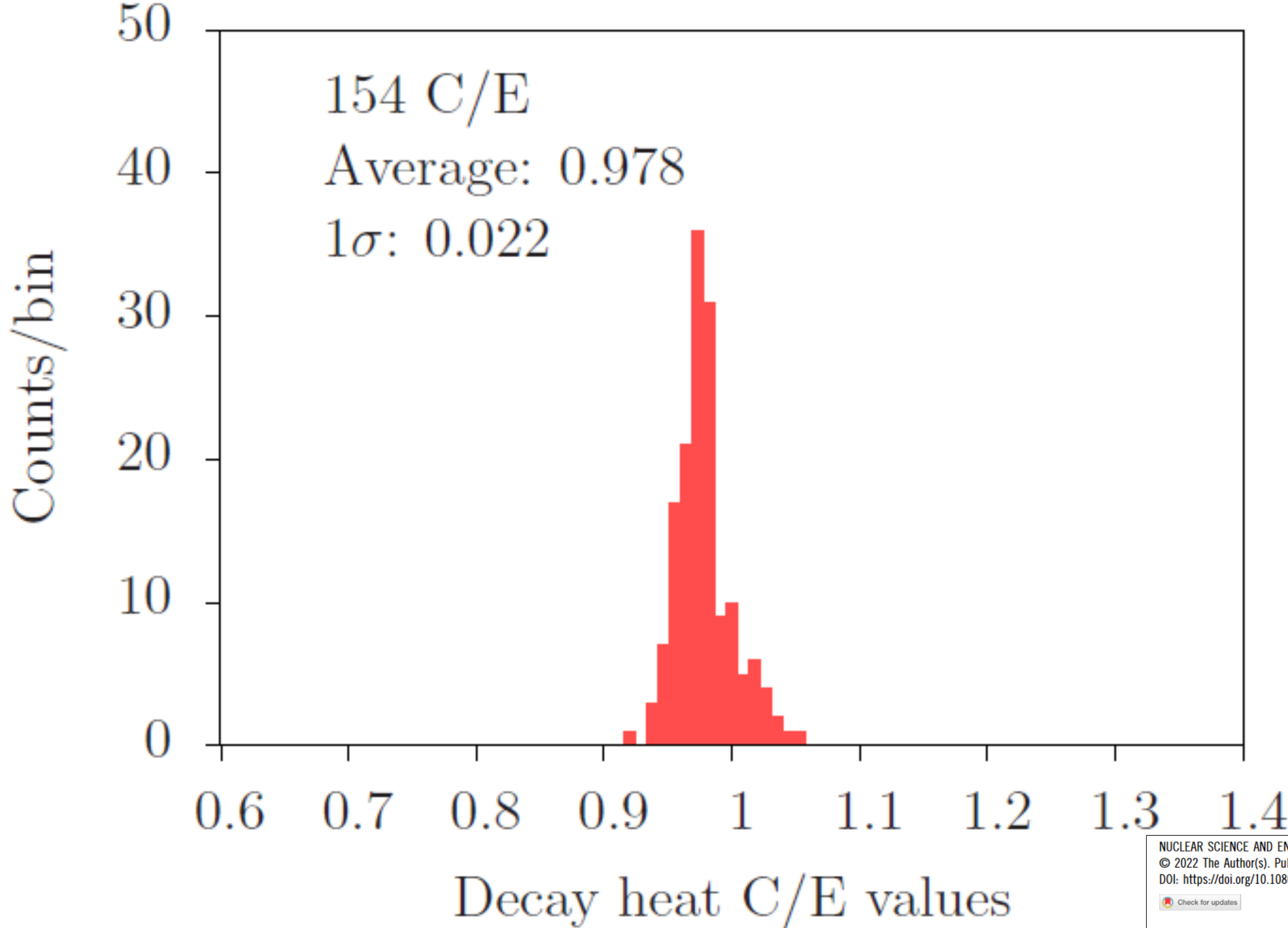


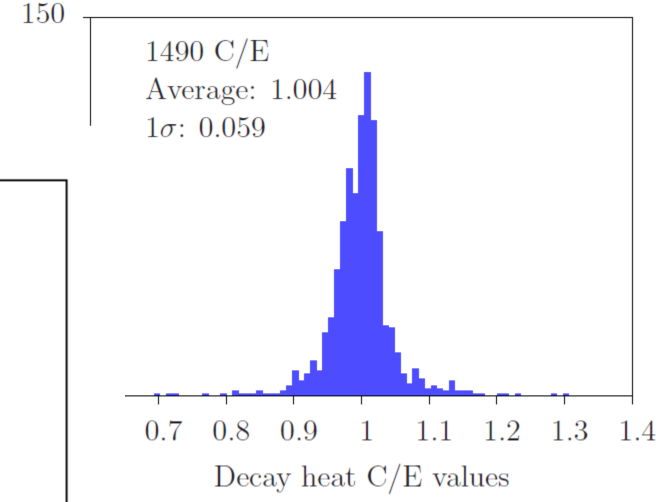




- Best-estimate calculations provide good average C/E, but large 1**σ**
- Standard calculations provide on average over-estimated values (but not systematically)

# Decay heat estimation

- How well can we estimate SNF decay heat ? → blind test

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**Blind Benchmark Exercise for Spent Nuclear Fuel Decay Heat**

# Decay heat estimation: origin

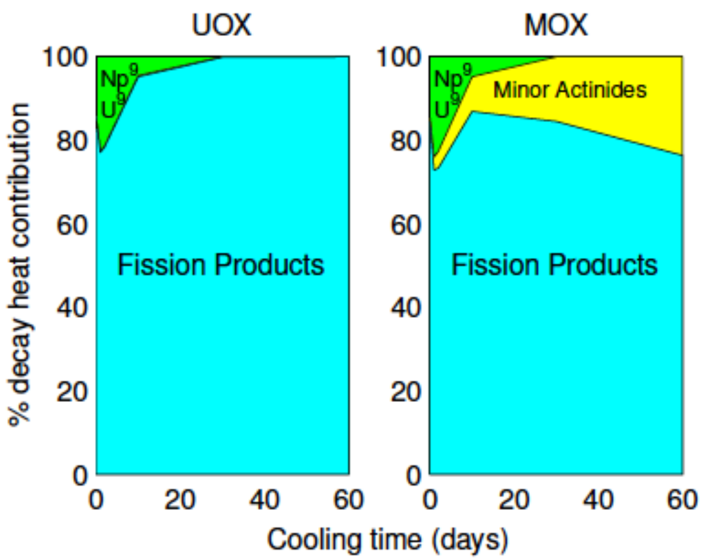


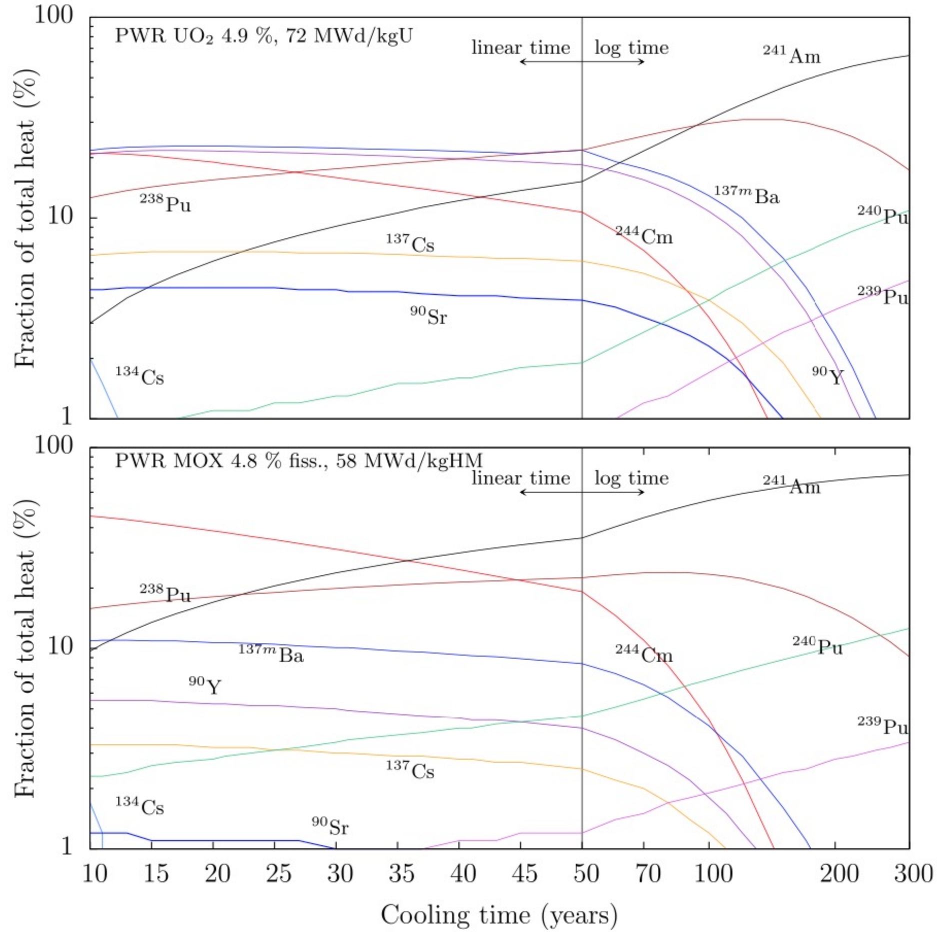

Figure 1 : Contribution of Fission Products, $^{239}$U and $^{239}$Np and other actinides (essentially $^{242}$Cm) in low irradiated (3 GWd/t) UOx with 3.7% $^{235}$U initial enrichment and equivalent MOx fuels.

A new decay heat standard proposition based on a technical specifications guide for computation codes


Frédéric Laugier[a,1], Cheikh Diop[b], Sylvie Ebalard[c], Claude Garzenne[a], Antonio Sargeni[d]



*International Conference on the Physics of reactors "Nuclear Power: A Sustainable Resource"*
Casino-Kursaal Conference Center, Interlaken, Switzerland, September 14-19, 2008



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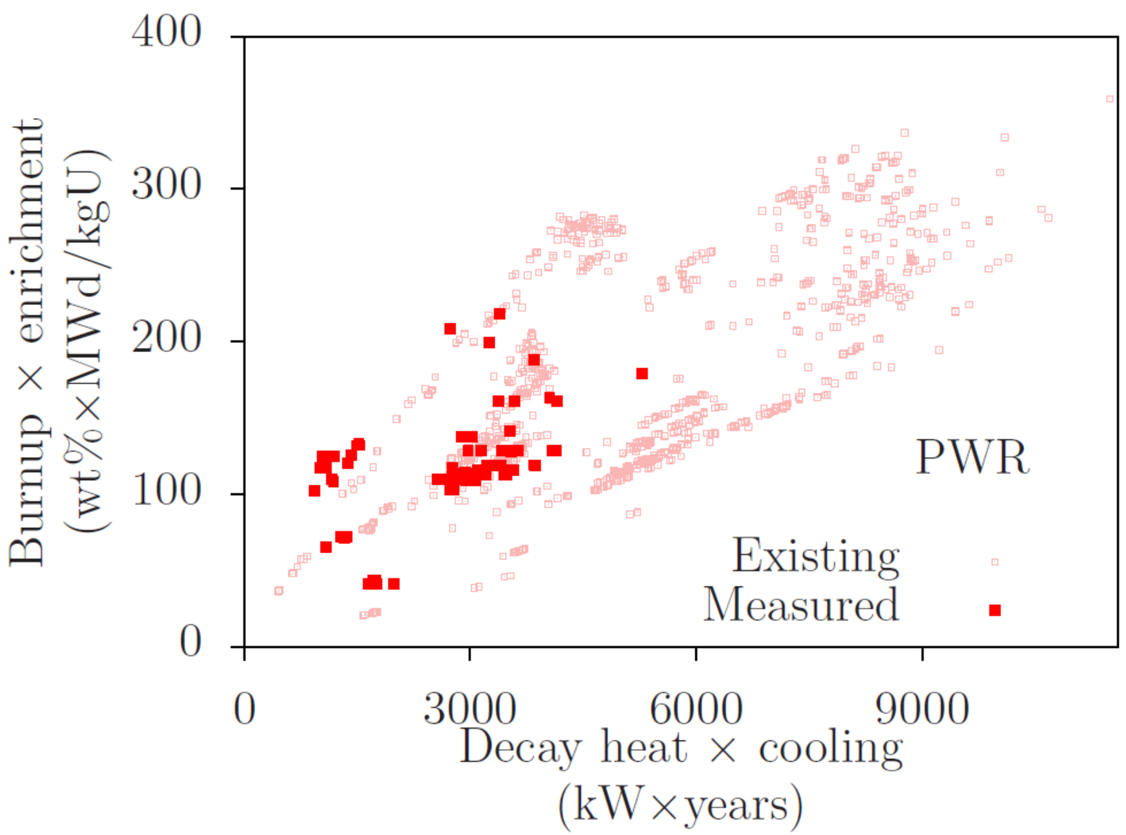
journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/nucengdes


Comparison of calculated and measured spent nuclear fuel decay heat with CASMO5, *SNF* and standard methods


D. Rochman[a,*], J. Taforeau[b], T. Simeonov[c], A. Shama[d]

# Experimental needs

- Limited overlap between measured SNF decay heat and SNF currently in storage
- Current SNF:
  - high enrichment,
  - high burnup,
  - long cooling,
  - high decay heat




- No measurements for MOX, and for VVER or CANDU fuels
- Only one (currently in Sweden) existing calorimeter (two additional in design/plan phase, France and Switzerland)

# Recommendations 1/3

- Current experimental uncertainties: between 1 and 5 %

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## INTERVIEW WITH ANDERS SJÖLAND (SFC WP LEADER)

**In a nutshell, could you describe how SFC contributes to a safer disposal of spent nuclear fuel?**

The spent nuclear fuel has a number of very dangerous properties, which make us go to such length to safely dispose of it, literally forever. These properties are the radiation, the ability to become critical, the decay power giving heat, and the nuclide inventory giving radiation on release (as well as, in some cases, being chemically toxic). In order to safely handle the spent fuel, these properties must be accurately known in all steps of the back-end of the nuclear fuel cycle. There are limits on how many of these can be accepted in the various parts of the cycle

information on the composite nuclides. For the operational situation, it is not possible to routinely destroy the fuel in order to analyse it.

Simply put, a one sigma uncertainty of 2 % is a realistic aim for a well characterised fuel. For other fuels, it has been shown in a number of prominent SFC journal papers that the uncertainties in nuclear data (cross sections etc.) can be up to 10 % on the calculated decay power. The question on the number of sigma's to apply is a complicated one because of the complicated statistics of the spent fuels, and is the focus of an intense international debate in various organisations. The result

P. 3

# Recommendations 2/3

- Current experimental uncertainties: between 1 and 5 %
- Current calculated uncertainties: between 2 and 10 %
  - Nuclear data
  - Operating conditions & Modeling impact
  - Manufacturing tolerances
  - Burnup induced changes

- Need for new measurements (burnup, enrichment, cooling time, fuel type) and facilities

- Need for improved theoretical understanding and nuclear data
  - For different cooling periods
  - For different fuel types

- Recommendations are needed for the use of standards, calculation methods, code improvement

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# Recommendations 3/3

- Redundancy
  - Experimental (multi measurements of same SNF, and multi facility)
  - Simulation (double check, different codes)

- Comparisons of code implementation
  - Module
  - Solvers, inputs, assumed values

- Use of blind benchmarks
  - Based on experimental values
  - Or computational benchmark

- User effect due to
  - Interpretation of the same information
  - Ambiguity of definition
  - Different options
  - Mistakes

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# Conclusions

- Decay heat is one of the most important quantities from SNF characterization perspective

- It is linked to other SNF quantities, such as criticality, burnup, as well as in-core irradiation, nuclear data

- WPNCS SG12 has successfully gather actors of the nuclear industry, leading to common understandings regarding
  - State-of-the art (submitted to a journal)
  - Needs (seconds to billion years)
  - Future developments

- More measurements needed (using recent fuel assemblies)

- Smaller estimated uncertainties for predictions (simulations)

- Next step in WPNCS: setting up of a computational benchmark.

# Wir schaffen Wissen – heute für morgen