OBSERVATIONAL EVIDENCE FROM SUPERNOVAE FOR AN ACCELERATING UNIVERSE AND A COSMOLOGICAL CONSTANT

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ABSTRACT

We present spectral and photometric observations of 10 Type Ia supernovae (SNe Ia) in the redshift range $0.16 \leq z \leq 0.62$. The luminosity distances of these objects are determined by methods that employ relations between SN Ia luminosity and light curve shape. Combined with previous data from our High-z Supernova Search Team and recent results by Riess et al., this expanded set of 16 high-redshift supernovae and a set of 34 nearby supernovae are used to place constraints on the following cosmological parameters: the Hubble constant (H_0), the mass density (Ω_M), the cosmological constant (i.e., the vacuum energy density, Ω_Λ), the deceleration parameter (q_0), and the dynamical age of the universe (t_0). The distances of the high-redshift SNe Ia are, on average, 10%–15% farther than expected in a low mass density ($\Omega_M = 0.2$) universe without a cosmological constant. Different light curve fitting methods, SN Ia subsamples, and prior constraints unanimously favor eternally expanding models with positive cosmological constant (i.e., $\Omega_\Lambda > 0$) and a current acceleration of the expansion (i.e., $q_0 < 0$). With no prior constraint on mass density other than $\Omega_M \geq 0$, the spectroscopically confirmed SNe Ia are statistically consistent with $q_0 < 0$ at the 2.8 σ and 3.9 σ confidence levels, and with $\Omega_\Lambda > 0$ at the 3.0 σ and 4.0 σ confidence levels, for two different fitting methods. Fixing a "minimal" mass density, $\Omega_M = 0.2$, results in the weakest detection, $\Omega_\Lambda > 0$ at the 3.0 σ confidence level from one of the two methods. For a flat universe prior ($\Omega_M + \Omega_\Lambda = 1$), the spectroscopically confirmed SNe Ia require $\Omega_\Lambda > 0$ at 7 σ and 9 σ formal statistical significance for the two different fitting methods. A universe closed by ordinary matter (i.e., $\Omega_M = 1$) is formally ruled out at the 7 σ to 8 σ confidence level for the two different fitting methods. We estimate the dynamical age of the universe to be 14.2 ± 1.7 Gyr including systematic uncertainties in the current Cepheid distance scale. We estimate the likely effect of several sources of systematic error, including progenitor and metallicity evolution, extinction, sample selection bias, local perturbations in the expansion rate, gravitational lensing, and sample contamination. Presently, none of these effects appear to reconcile the data with $\Omega_\Lambda = 0$ and $q_0 \geq 0$.

Key words: cosmology: observations — supernovae: general

MEASUREMENTS OF Ω AND Λ FROM 42 HIGH-REDSHIFT SUPERNOVAE

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ABSTRACT

We report measurements of the mass density, Ω_M, and cosmological-constant energy density, Ω_Λ, of the universe based on the analysis of 42 type Ia supernovae discovered by the Supernova Cosmology Project. The magnitude-redshift data for these supernovae, at redshifts between 0.18 and 0.83, are fitted jointly with a set of supernovae from the Calán/Tololo Supernova Survey, at redshifts below 0.1, to yield values for the cosmological parameters. All supernova peak magnitudes are standardized using a SN Ia light-curve width-luminosity relation. The measurement yields a joint probability distribution of the cosmological parameters that is approximated by the relation $0.8\Omega_M - 0.6\Omega_\Lambda \approx -0.2 \pm 0.1$ in the region of interest ($\Omega_M \lesssim 1.5$). For a flat ($\Omega_M + \Omega_\Lambda = 1$) cosmology we find $\Omega_M^{flat} = 0.28^{+0.09}_{-0.08}$ (1 σ statistical) $^{+0.05}_{-0.04}$ (identified systematics). The data are strongly inconsistent with a $\Lambda = 0$ flat cosmology, the simplest inflationary universe model. An open, $\Lambda = 0$ cosmology also does not fit the data well: the data indicate that the cosmological constant is nonzero and positive, with a confidence of $P(\Lambda > 0) = 99\%$, including the identified systematic uncertainties. The best fit age of the universe relative to the Hubble time is

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