

## PROSPECTS FOR JOINT GRAVITATIONAL WAVE AND SHORT GAMMA-RAY BURST OBSERVATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

We present a detailed evaluation of the expected rate of joint gravitational-wave and short gamma-ray burst (GRB) observations over the coming years. We begin by evaluating the improvement in distance sensitivity of the gravitational wave search that arises from using the GRB observation to restrict the time and sky location of the source. We argue that this gives a 25% increase in sensitivity when compared to an all-sky, all-time search, corresponding to more than doubling the number of detectable gravitational wave signals associated with GRBs. Using this, we present the expected rate of joint observations with the advanced LIGO and Virgo instruments, taking into account the expected evolution of the gravitational wave detector network. We show that in the early advanced gravitational wave detector observing runs, from 2015-2017, there is only a small chance of a joint observation. However, as the detectors approach their design sensitivities, there is a good chance of joint observations provided wide field GRB satellites, such as Fermi and the Interplanetary Network, continue operation. The rate will also depend critically upon the nature of the progenitor, with neutron star–black hole systems observable to greater distances than double neutron star systems. The relative rate of binary mergers and GRBs will depend upon the jet opening angle of GRBs. Consequently, joint observations, as well as accurate measurement of both the GRB rate and binary merger rates will allow for an improved estimation of the opening angle of GRBs.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Mergers of binary neutron star (BNS) or neutron star–black hole (NSBH) systems are a strong candidate for the progenitor of short gamma ray bursts (GRBs) (Eichler et al. 1989). Binary mergers are also strong emitters of gravitational waves (GW), at frequencies which the LIGO and Virgo detectors have good sensitivity (Thorne 1987). Consequently, there is an increased chance of observing a gravitational wave signal around the time and sky location of a short GRB. To date, numerous searches for gravitational waves associated with short GRBs (Abadie et al. 2012; Aasi et al. 2014) have been performed with the data from the initial LIGO and Virgo detectors (Abbott et al. 2009; Acernese et al. 2007). While no signals have been found, the non-detection of gravitational waves associated with GRB 051103 (Hurley et al. 2010; Abadie et al. 2012) and GRB070201 (Hurley et al. 2007; Abbott et al. 2008) provided weight to the argument that these events were extra-galactic giant magnetar flares. Overall, gravitational wave searches have been performed around the time of 80 short GRBs (Aasi et al. 2014), with no evidence of a signal. Given the sensitivity of the detectors (tens of Mpc for BNS and NSBH mergers) and the typical measured redshifts of short GRBs (median  $z=0.4$ ), this was to be expected.

The second generation of gravitational wave interferometric detectors (Advanced LIGO (Harry 2010) and Advanced Virgo (Acernese et al. 2009)) are under construction and expected to be operational in 2015, and

approach design sensitivity over 3–5 years (Aasi et al. 2013). They will provide a factor of ten increase in sensitivity over a broad range of frequencies, and will therefore be sensitive to binary mergers within a few hundred Mpc for BNS and up to 1 Gpc for NSBH, comparable with the distances to the closest short GRBs. The observation of a gravitational wave signal in coincidence with a GRB is therefore a realistic prospect. Such an observation would firmly establish binary mergers as the progenitors of short GRBs and also allow us to distinguish a BNS or NSBH progenitor in many cases. This paper will discuss in detail the prospects of such a joint observation as the advanced detector network evolves towards its design sensitivity.

In order to accurately evaluate the detection prospects, we must evaluate the search sensitivity. A knowledge of the time and sky location of a short GRB significantly reduces the size of the parameter space to be searched, in comparison to an all-time, all-sky search. Given reasonable estimates of the rates of binary mergers (Abadie et al. 2010b) and GRBs (Wanderman & Piran 2014), we estimate that it is over a thousand times more likely for there to be an observable signal in the few seconds of data around a short GRB than in a comparable stretch of data without a GRB observation. Using this information, we evaluate the appropriate detection threshold for a gravitational wave – GRB search and argue that it will be around 25% lower than for the corresponding all sky search. This reduction in threshold will allow us to extract signals from the data that would otherwise have been undetectable. Nevertheless, the vast majority of short GRBs will occur at distances outside the detection range of the advanced LIGO-Virgo network. However, in the fortuitous case where the redshift of a nearby GRB can be measured, we show that this information can be

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included into the analysis to improve the search sensitivity.

The electromagnetic emission from short GRBs is believed to be beamed. The jet beaming angle can be measured by observing a jet break in the electromagnetic emission (Sari et al. 1999), and several opening angles have been measured to be less than  $10^\circ$ , with other short GRBs having lower limits up to  $20^\circ$  (Berger 2014). It will be difficult to constrain the opening angle based on the observation of a gravitational wave signal, due to the low signal to noise ratio of the observations, and an inability to independently measure distance and binary inclination. However, the beaming angle will also affect the relative rates of observed binary mergers and short GRBs: more tightly beamed emission will lead to a lower fraction of binary mergers with observable gamma-ray emission. Consequently, the accurate measurement of both the local GRB rate and the binary merger rate will allow us to infer the (average) beaming angle. Even in the absence of a gravitational wave detection, we can place lower bounds on the short GRB jet opening angle. We also present the expected bounds from early advanced detector runs.

This paper is laid out as follows: in section 2 we briefly review the evidence for the binary merger model of short GRBs. In section 3, we discuss targeted gravitational wave searches, providing a brief discussion of previous searches and an evaluation of the sensitivity improvement afforded by a GRB observation. We present the prospects for joint observations in section 4 and in section 5 we discuss the benefits of these observations, focusing on redshift measurements and constraining the opening angle. We end, in section 6, with a discussion.

## 2. THE BINARY MERGER MODEL FOR SHORT GRBS

Two distinct classes of gamma ray bursts were first proposed by Kouveliotou et al. (1993), who argued for two populations of bursts with different durations and spectral hardness. The separation between short and long bursts is typically taken to be a duration of two seconds. Long GRBs have subsequently been associated with the death of massive stars, based on the localization of afterglows to the star forming regions of galaxies (Bloom et al. 1998) and the association of long GRBs with supernovae (Hjorth et al. 2003).

Mergers of double neutron star or neutron star-black hole binaries have long been a preferred progenitor for short GRBs (Eichler et al. 1989). In recent years, there have been several key pieces of observational evidence to support this model. Here, we will briefly review the observations that support the binary merger model for short GRBs, and refer the reader to Nakar (2007) or Berger (2014) for more details. The afterglows of several short GRBs have been observed in both the X-ray (Gehrels et al. 2005) and optical (Hjorth et al. 2005) and consequently localized to galaxies. Despite several low redshift observations, there has been no observation of a supernova associated with any of these events. Additionally, the host galaxies of short GRBs are much more varied than long, with a large fraction of late type galaxies which are not observed as hosts of long GRBs. In the binary merger model, the delay time between formation and merger of the binary can take a wide range of values (Dominik et al. 2012), explaining the range of

galaxy types observed as hosts of short GRBs. There is also evidence of “hostless” short GRBs that have been ejected from the galaxy (Fong & Berger 2013) which arise naturally from supernova kicks imparting a velocity to the binary, coupled with the long delay time to merger. The strongest evidence for the merger model is the recent observation of a kilonova associated with GRB130603B (Tanvir et al. 2013; Berger et al. 2013). Taken together, these observations provide good evidence for the binary merger model for at least a subset of short GRBs. We note, however, that some fraction may still be mis-classified long GRBs (Bromberg et al. 2013) or soft gamma repeaters in nearby galaxies (Abbott et al. 2008; Hurley et al. 2010).

Given the evidence for a binary merger progenitor for short GRBs, it is interesting to compare the observed and predicted rates of short GRBs and binary mergers. There have been numerous efforts recently to estimate the rate of short GRBs, based primarily on redshift measurements of GRBs observed by Swift (Coward et al. 2012; Wanderman & Piran 2014; Siellez et al. 2014).<sup>5</sup> There is some variation in the rate estimates, but they all lie in the range  $1 - 10 \times 10^{-9} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$  with a median rate around  $3 \times 10^{-9} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$ . This is somewhat lower than earlier estimates based on a smaller sample of GRBs (Guetta & Piran 2005; Nakar 2007).

To compare the observed GRB rates to those of binary mergers, we also must take into account the beaming of the GRB jet. The evidence for beaming in short GRBs comes primarily from the observation of jet breaks, at which time the material in the jet starts to spread out, leading to a break in the light curve. The observation of such a break can be used to infer the jet’s opening angle (Sari et al. 1999). The observation of a jet break in a number of short GRB afterglows (see for example Fong et al. (2014); Panaitescu (2006); Guelbenzu et al. (2012)) has been used to infer opening angles between  $3^\circ$  and  $8^\circ$ . In others, the lack of an observed break has been used to set a lower limit on the beaming angle. In many cases this leads to a limit of only a few degrees, however, GRB 050724 had no observed break after 22 days, leading to an inferred opening angle of at least  $20^\circ$ . See Berger (2014) for a summary of observations to date.

The rate of observed short GRBs can be related to the all sky rate of binary mergers through

$$R_{\text{GRB}} = f_\gamma (1 - \cos \theta_j) R_{\text{merger}} \quad (1)$$

where  $\theta_j$  is the average jet opening angle of the gamma ray emission, and the factor  $f_\gamma$  encodes the fraction of binary mergers which produce a gamma ray burst. The rate of neutron star binary (BNS) mergers, inferred from binary pulsar observations and population synthesis modelling, is taken to lie between  $1 \times 10^{-5} - 1 \times 10^{-8} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$  (Abadie et al. 2010b). To date, no neutron star-black hole (NSBH) systems have been observed as binary pulsars, but the rate can still be predicted through population synthesis, constrained by the observations of double neutron star binaries, to be  $10^{-6} - 6 \times 10^{-10} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$ .

In Fig. 1, we compare the observed and predicted rates

<sup>5</sup> A nice summary of recent rate estimates is provided in Table 4 of (Wanderman & Piran 2014)

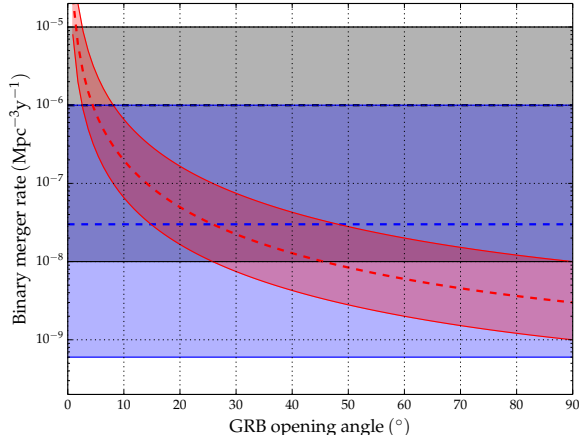


FIG. 1.— The rate of binary mergers in the local universe. The figure shows the predicted rates of binary neutron star and neutron star black hole mergers, taken from Abadie et al. (2010b). The shaded regions mark the range of reasonable values, while the dashed lines show the best estimate of the rate. We can also infer the rate of GRB progenitors, given an opening angle, as plotted in red. Over a broad range of opening angles, the GRB rate is consistent with the BNS rate. However, it appears difficult to explain the observed GRB rate based solely on NSBH mergers. It would require either a very high NSBH rate, a wide beaming angle or both.

for short GRBs to those for BNS and NSBH mergers. As has been observed elsewhere (Guetta & Piran 2005), there is a remarkable concordance between the GRB and BNS rates, with the observed beaming angles compatible with the best guess BNS rate, with a lower rate of BNS mergers requiring larger GRB opening angles. For NSBH, the rates are not in such good agreement. A  $5^\circ$  jet angle requires an NSBH rate right at the top of the predicted range; alternatively a lower NSBH rate is consistent with a wider opening angle than has been inferred from observations. Furthermore, it is likely that a reasonable fraction of NSBH mergers will not produce any electromagnetic emission as the NS will be swallowed whole, leaving no material from which to form an accretion disk and, hence, GRB jet (Pannarale & Ohme 2014). Thus, based on rate estimates, it seems unlikely that NSBH mergers can account for *all* observed short GRBs.

### 3. GRAVITATIONAL WAVE SEARCHES FOR GRB PROGENITORS

As we have discussed above, there is good evidence that binary mergers are the progenitors of short GRBs. They are also one of the strongest gravitational-wave emitters. Consequently, it makes sense to search for gravitational-wave signals originating at a time and sky position consistent with the observed GRB signal. Doing so allows for a vast reduction in the size of the gravitational wave parameter space that must be searched by restricting the time, sky location and masses of the binary. It would also allow for the unambiguous identification of a binary merger origin of a short GRB, providing the strongest possible backing for the favoured progenitor model.

In this section, we give a brief overview of gravitational wave detectors and GRB satellites, before providing a summary of the joint search method. In the final part,

we estimate the improvement in the sensitivity of the gravitational wave search that can be achieved by making use of a short GRB observation.

#### 3.1. GRB Satellites

The first GRBs were observed by the Vela satellites, although it was not until the Burst and Transient Source Explorer (BATSE) instrument on the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory, that they were shown to be of cosmological origin, and classified into two families.

GRB observations were revolutionised by the Swift satellite which, as well as a large area Burst Alert Telescope (BAT), also carries sensitive X-ray and UV-optical telescopes which can be slewed rapidly to observe the burst afterglow (Gehrels et al. 2004). Swift has been operational since 2004, has detected over 800 GRBs to date, including 75 short bursts, and has a field of view of approximately 2 sr (around one sixth of the sky). Swift BAT observes around 10 short GRBs per year<sup>6</sup>. It typically gives localizations with arc minute accuracy, or better if the burst is followed up with the onboard X-ray telescope. Swift’s ability to localise sources rapidly and accurately has enabled the follow-up observation of numerous short burst afterglows, measurements of redshifts and identification of galaxy hosts. The Swift satellite is expected to continue operations until at least 2020.

The Fermi satellite was launched in 2008 and carries on board the Gamma-ray Burst Monitor (GBM) and the Large Area Telescope (LAT)<sup>7</sup>. It is GBM which provides the broadest sky coverage and is essentially an “all-sky” telescope with a *minimum* field of view of 8 sr (about 60% of the sky). Fermi GBM typically observes around 45 short bursts per year, of which only a small fraction are seen in LAT. The Fermi localisation is typically accurate to tens or hundreds of square degrees (von Kienlin et al. 2014), making optical followup of these events challenging. To date, no afterglow from a short GRB observed only by Fermi has been observed, and consequently the redshifts of these bursts are not known. Recent work (Pelassa et al. 2014) has demonstrated that Swift and Fermi are observing the *same* population of short GRBs – essentially every burst observed by Swift that was in the field of view of Fermi was observed by GBM and vice versa. Fermi is currently operational, with its 10 year funding cycle ending in 2018, though it may continue operations further.

The Space-based multi-band astronomical Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) satellite<sup>8</sup> is a recently approved Chinese-French mission that is scheduled for launch in 2021. SVOM will have a similar sky coverage to Swift, and will also carry X-ray, optical and UV telescopes that can be rapidly and automatically slewed to observe afterglows. (Basa et al. 2008)

Finally, the set of instruments which make up the Inter-Planetary Network (IPN)<sup>9</sup>, are not dedicated GRB satellites, but instead have GRB monitors on board (Hurley et al. 2003). The majority of satellites in the network are unable to localize the bursts individually but it is possible to localize bursts observed in numerous satellites

<sup>6</sup> <http://swift.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://fermi.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.svom.fr/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://heasarc.gsfc.nasa.gov/W3Browse/all/ipngrb.html>

using triangulation. The sizes and shapes of these error regions vary greatly, depending upon the number of satellites and their locations (more distant satellites greatly improve localization). The IPN provides essentially all sky coverage for GRBs, although, given the sensitivity of the detectors, the GRBs observed tend to be closer.

### 3.2. Gravitational wave detectors

From 2005 to 2010, the LIGO and Virgo detectors undertook a number of extended data taking runs at and around their design sensitivities (Abbott et al. 2009; Acernese et al. 2007). The detectors' sensitivity corresponded to a sky-location and binary orientation weighted average sensitive distance of 10 to 20 Mpc for BNS systems and double that for NSBH binaries. During this time, gravitational wave searches were performed for signals associated with GRBs observed by Swift BAT, Fermi GBM and the InterPlanetary Network (Abadie et al. 2010c; Abadie et al. 2012; Aasi et al. 2014). No evidence of a gravitational wave signal was found, which was consistent with the observed redshifts of GRBs and the range of the detectors. Exclusion distances for individual GRBs and a population were calculated. Of particular interest were GRB 051103 (Hurley et al. 2010; Abadie et al. 2012) and GRB070201 (Hurley et al. 2007; Abbott et al. 2008), both of which had sky localization error boxes that overlapped nearby galaxies. The non-detection of a gravitational wave signal excluded, with high significance, a binary merger progenitor in those galaxies. The overall population exclusion does not constrain current models of GRBs.

The advanced LIGO and Virgo detectors will provide a factor of ten sensitivity improvement, across a broad range of frequencies, over the initial detectors Harry (2010). The first observing runs are expected in 2015, with sensitivity reaching the design specification towards the end of the decade. At design sensitivity, the aLIGO range for BNS mergers will be 200Mpc and for AdV, 130Mpc. Around 2022, a third LIGO detector in India is expected to begin observing with comparable sensitivity. A detailed description of the expected observing runs, and associated sensitivities is presented in Aasi et al. (2013). Here, we make use of the expected schedule to predict the expected rate of joint gravitational wave-short GRB observations.

Throughout, we make the assumption that *all* short GRBs within the range of the gravitational wave detectors will be observed by the GRB detectors if they are within the field of view. Obviously, this is the most optimistic scenario but it seems reasonable as GRBs are detected out to cosmological distances. This assumption is generally made in the GRB community and is in essence factored into the rate estimates provided above as they are derived from Swift observations. We note, however, that other authors (for example Kelley et al. (2013)) argue that this is overly optimistic.

### 3.3. Implementation of a targeted search

The details of the targeted search for gravitational waves associated with short GRBs are presented in Harry & Fairhurst (2011); Williamson et al. (2014). Given the time and sky location of the GRB, the search is restricted to a six second span of data around the GRB, allowing

for a merger time 5 seconds before and 1 second after the time of the GRB. This allows for most realistic delays between the merger and GRB signal. The data from the available gravitational wave detectors is combined coherently, by appropriately time shifting and weighting the data from each detector to account for the known sky location of the source, to produce data streams sensitive to the two gravitational wave polarisations. The data is then searched through matched filtering using a template bank of binary merger waveforms (Blanchet 2014; Owen & Sathyaprakash 1999). GRBs observed by Swift are localised to well under a square degree which, for the gravitational wave search means they are effectively localised to a single sky location. For GRBs observed by Fermi GBM or the InterPlanetary Network, the sky location may be poorly constrained by satellite observations, with uncertainties of tens to hundreds of square degrees. In this case, a grid of sky points is searched (Predoi & Hurley 2012; Williamson et al. 2014). Additional signal consistency tests (Allen 2005; Harry & Fairhurst 2011), designed to eliminate glitches which have a different signal morphology than binary merger signals, are used to eliminate spurious events due to non-Gaussian noise. The background is evaluated from data surrounding the six second stretch used in the search and simulated signals are added to the data to evaluate the search sensitivity.

### 3.4. The benefit of a targeted search

The observation of a short GRB provides a good estimate of the merger time, sky location and (possibly) distance of a potential binary merger signal. This significantly reduces the parameter space of a follow-up gravitational wave search. In addition, the presence of a short GRB will, in many cases, increase the chances of there being a detectable gravitational wave signal in the short stretch of data around the GRB time, relative to an equivalent, arbitrary stretch of data. This allows for a reduction in the detection threshold in the ensuing gravitational wave search (Dietz et al. 2013; Kelley et al. 2013; Chen & Holz 2013). Here, we will evaluate in detail the sensitivity improvement afforded by the GRB observation. In contrast to most previous studies, we will make use of the results obtained from searches on real data and make use of the results of previous analyses (Abadie et al. 2012; Williamson et al. 2014).

To investigate the impact of reducing the parameter space for GRB searches, we will deliberately avoid the question of first gravitational wave detection — where a “5-sigma” observation may well be required (Abadie et al. 2012). Instead, we consider a later observation for which we might require a specific false positive rate: i.e. a limit on the fraction gravitational wave observations are spurious. In that case, the threshold for announcing a detection is tied to the true signal rate. Since neither the GRB or BNS rates are known with great accuracy, for this discussion we will adopt with the “realistic” rates of  $10^{-6}\text{Mpc}^{-3}\text{y}^{-1}$  for BNS mergers and  $3 \times 10^{-9}\text{Mpc}^{-3}\text{y}^{-1}$  for short GRBs.

A detailed evaluation of the expected rate of BNS observations is provided in Aasi et al. (2013). There, a false rate of one event per century is chosen, corresponding to a signal to noise ratio of 12 in the advanced detectors. When the advanced LIGO and Virgo detectors are oper-

ating at design sensitivity, the expected rate of observed BNS mergers is 20 per year. Thus the threshold corresponds to a false positive rate of 1 in 2000.

We would now like to fix a comparable SNR threshold for the GRB search. To do this, we need to evaluate both the expected foreground and background around the time of a short GRB. Using the results of Williamson et al. (2014) we estimate a background rate of 1 in 1,000 for event with an SNR above 8 in the GRB search, with the background decreasing by a factor of 100 for a unit increase in SNR.<sup>10</sup>

$$P_{\text{BG}}(\rho > \rho^*) = \begin{cases} 10^{-(3+2[\rho-8])} & \rho > 6.5 \\ 1 & \rho \leq 6.5 \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

Next, we must determine the probability of any given GRB occurring at a low enough redshift that the gravitational wave signal would be observable by the advanced LIGO and Virgo network. As discussed previously, the sky and binary orientation averaged sensitivity of the network is 200Mpc. However, it is natural to assume that the GRB jet is beamed perpendicular to the plane of the binary's orbit (see e.g. Piran et al. (2013)). The gravitational wave signal is also (weakly) beamed in this direction: the amplitude for a face on signal is a factor of 1.5 greater than the orientation averaged amplitude.<sup>11</sup> The gravitational wave beaming is rather weak and the amplitude falls off slowly with opening angle, for example even with opening angles up to 30° the mean amplitude is only reduced by 5% from the face on case (Dietz et al. 2013). Thus, the nominal sensitivity for GRB signals in the advanced detector network is 300 Mpc, rather than 200 Mpc for signals of arbitrary orientation. A local GRB rate of  $3 \times 10^{-9} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$  gives one signal every three years within this distance. And, during that time, there will be around 200 short GRBs detectable by Swift or Fermi — approximately 70 per year, of which 10 are in the field of view of Swift and 45 Fermi GBM. Thus we can approximate the chance of a GRB occurring within a distance  $D^*$  as

$$P_{\text{GRB}}(D < D^*) \approx \frac{1}{200} \left( \frac{D^*}{300 \text{Mpc}} \right)^3. \quad (3)$$

This is broadly consistent with the observed redshifts from Swift, where the smallest of 30 measurements is  $z=0.12$ , corresponding to a distance of 550Mpc. Obviously, this relationship will break down at larger distances where cosmological effects, variation of the intrinsic GRB rate and detection efficiencies all become

<sup>10</sup> The analysis in Williamson et al. (2014) was performed for the initial LIGO and Virgo detectors and, assuming that GRB emission is beamed and the jet is perpendicular to the plane of the binary, we obtain a background of 1 in  $10^5$  above SNR of 8. However, we must include a trials factor due to requiring a larger template bank for the advanced detectors (Owen & Sathyaprakash 1999) and consequently we (somewhat conservatively) increase the background by a factor of 100 as was done in Aasi et al. (2013)

<sup>11</sup> The sensitivity of a detector to binary mergers is typically quoted in two different ways: either the range — the sky and orientation averaged sensitivity; or the horizon — the maximal sensitivity, for binaries which are directly overhead the detector and face on. The horizon distance is a factor of 2.26 greater than the range. Here, we are assuming all sources are face on, but still averaging over sky positions. It turns out that the averaging over orientation and sky give the same factor, so performing just one average increases the sensitivity by  $\sqrt{2.26} = 1.51$ .

significant.

In the GRB search, an SNR threshold of 9.1 will give a false positive rate of 1 in 2000 — a reduction in SNR of 25% relative to the all-sky search. At this SNR, the sky averaged sensitivity of the network is 400Mpc, so that there is a 1% chance of the gravitational wave signal from a short GRB being observable, while the background is  $5 \times 10^{-6}$ . While neither the rates of both BNS and GRB signals nor the noise background of the advanced detectors are known at this time, the predicted increase in sensitivity of the GRB search is relatively robust. The observed background for the BNS and GRB searches is very similar in nature and, in particular, both show the same, rapid rate of falloff at large SNR. Thus, changes in the required detection confidence will affect both searches in the same way. Additionally, even factors of ten uncertainty in rates translate to a change in SNR of only 0.5. Consequently, the ratio of the search thresholds is unlikely to change considerably.

Reducing the detection threshold by 25% will more than double the number of detectable signals. In other words, less than half of gravitational wave signals associated with GRBs will be detected based on the gravitational wave signal alone — it is only with a joint search that makes use of the GRB observation that these additional signals will be seen. It is instructive to ask why the detection threshold can be lowered by 25% for the GRB search. The answer is twofold. First, the expected rate of signals is significantly higher in the time around a GRB. In equation (3), we gave the probability of there being an observable signal in the 6 seconds of data around the time of a GRB, as a function of the sensitive distance. We can do the same for an arbitrary six seconds of data. Let us assume that the BNS rate takes its fiducial value of  $10^{-6} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$ . Then, for a six second time window, the chance of there being a signal within a distance  $D^*$  is

$$P_{\text{BNS}}(D < D^*) \approx 6 \times 10^{-6} \left( \frac{D^*}{200 \text{Mpc}} \right)^3 \quad (4)$$

Thus, assuming that BNS are GRB progenitors, it is approximately 2,000 times more likely that we observe a signal within the 6 seconds around a GRB than in an arbitrary six seconds of data. In addition, the GRB background is further reduced because searching a small time window makes a fully coherent search feasible (Harry & Fairhurst 2011), and this increases the sensitivity relative to the all sky search (Babak et al. 2013). These factors combine to lead to the 25% reduction in threshold that can be achieved by the search.

#### 4. EXPECTED RATE OF JOINT OBSERVATIONS

In this section, we make use of the expected evolution of the advanced detector sensitivities, as described in Aasi et al. (2013), as well as the results of the previous section to evaluate the expectations for joint short GRB–gravitational wave observations in the coming years.

The expected rates of short GRB observations, assuming a BNS progenitor, are given in Table 1. For each observing run, a range of possible detector sensitivities is quoted, to take into account the uncertain nature of commissioning and operating the advanced detectors. Then, using a merger rate between  $10^{-5}$  and  $10^{-8} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$ , we can calculate the expected number of BNS observa-

TABLE 1

THE EXPECTED RATE OF JOINT GRAVITATIONAL WAVE–GRB OBSERVATIONS IN THE UPCOMING SCIENCE RUNS, ASSUMING THAT THE PROGENITOR OF EVERY SHORT GRB IS A BNS MERGER. FOR FERMI GBM, WE TAKE A SKY COVERAGE OF 8 SR; SWIFT BAT 2 SR AND ASSUME THAT EVERY SHORT GRB WITHIN THE GRAVITATIONAL WAVE DETECTORS’ RANGE WILL BE OBSERVED BY THE GRB SATELLITES. SENSITIVITIES, RUN DURATIONS AND BNS RATES TAKEN FROM (AASI ET AL. 2013).

Epoch	Run Duration	BNS Range (Mpc)		Number of BNS detections	Number of GW–GRB detections		
		LIGO	Virgo		All Sky	Fermi GBM	Swift BAT
2015	3 months	40 - 80	-	0.0004 - 3	$3 \times 10^{-4}$ - 0.02	$2 \times 10^{-4}$ - 0.02	$4 \times 10^{-5}$ - 0.004
2016–17	6 months	80 - 120	20 - 60	0.006 - 20	0.004 - 0.2	0.003 - 0.1	$7 \times 10^{-4}$ - 0.03
2017–18	9 months	120-170	60 - 85	0.04 - 100	0.03 - 0.9	0.02 - 0.6	0.004 - 0.1
2019+	(per year)	200	65 - 130	0.2 - 200	0.1 - 2	0.1 - 1	0.01 - 0.3
2022+	(per year)	200	130	0.4 - 400	0.3 - 5	0.2 - 2	0.04 - 0.5

tions, where the range reflects the uncertainty in both the detector sensitivities and the rate of sources (Aasi et al. 2013). We also present the expected rates of joint gravitational wave–GRB observations. We take the short GRB rate to lie in the range  $10^{-8} - 10^{-9} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$  and assume that *all* short GRBs have BNS progenitors and, furthermore, that *all* BNS mergers within the gravitational wave network’s sensitivity would be observed if they lie in the GRB detectors’ field of view. Based on the discussion in the previous section, we allow for a 25% decrease in detection threshold associated with a dedicated GRB search when compared to an all-sky all-time gravitational-wave search. We provide the expected rate for all-sky GRB coverage, as well as the expected rates for the Fermi GBM and Swift BAT detectors. We have not included a separate entry for SVOM; since it is expected to have similar sky coverage to Swift BAT, the numbers will be comparable.

The expected number of joint observations in the early advanced LIGO-Virgo science runs is much less than one. However, by the 2017–18 observing run, there is a real chance of a joint observation and, with the network operating at design sensitivity, an excellent chance of joint gravitational wave–GRB observations during an extended science run. We note, however, how critical it is to continue monitoring the sky for GRBs: it is only with the coverage provided by Fermi and the InterPlanetary Network that we confidently expect to make joint observations.

Fig. 2 shows the expected annual rate of joint observations, as a function of GRB opening angle for the 2019+ configuration of Table 1. The dependence of the rate on the GRB opening angle is due to the beaming of the gravitational wave signal: the amplitude for a face on signal is a factor of 1.5 greater than the orientation averaged signal, giving a factor of 3.4 between small opening angles and no beaming. Fig. 3 shows the expected all sky BNS merger rate, as a function of GRB opening angle under the assumption that *all* BNS mergers produce gamma-ray emission. As discussed in Chen & Holz (2013), there is a crossover point, where we see more gravitational waves associated with GRBs than in an all sky, all time search. This will obviously depend upon the sky coverage afforded by GRB satellites, but assuming all sky coverage, this occurs around  $40^\circ$ . If the beaming angle is larger than this, the GRB search will detect more signals than the all sky all time search, due to the ability to lower thresholds around the time of observed GRBs.

The expected rates of short GRB observations, assuming a NSBH progenitor are given in Table 2. For

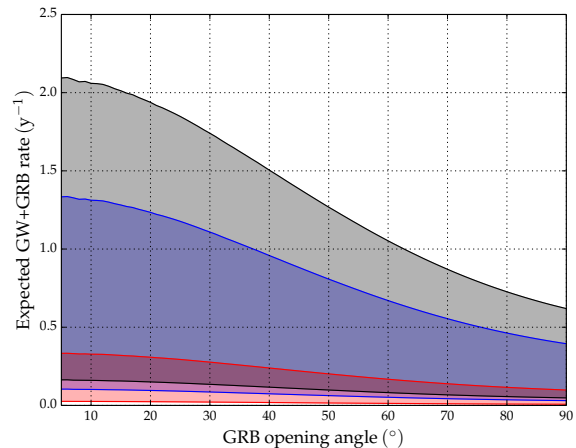


FIG. 2.— The expected rate of observed gravitational wave–GRB signals when the LIGO and Virgo detectors are operating at their design sensitivity. We take the intrinsic short GRB rate to be in the range  $1 - 10 \times 10^{-9} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$  and assume that BNS are the progenitor source of all short GRBs. The grey region shows the range of expected rates with all-sky GRB coverage. The observed rate increases with a small opening angle as the systems are close to face on and thus have the maximum gravitational wave emission. The blue region shows the expected rate for joint observations with Fermi GBM and the red region for Swift BAT. For preferred opening angles (less than  $30^\circ$ ) we expect to see at least one GRB per year in coincidence with Fermi GBM.

NSBH mergers, the masses and spins of the system have a stronger effect upon the expected rates of observation. Higher masses and large, aligned spins result in greater gravitational wave emission increasing the distance to which the sources can be observed. For simplicity, we take the system to be a neutron star of mass  $1.4M_\odot$  and a non-spinning black hole of mass  $5.0M_\odot$ . Following the same procedure as before, we assume that *all* GRB progenitors are NSBH binaries and also assume that *all* GRBs within the gravitational wave detectors’ sensitive range, which are within the field of view of a satellite, are observed.

As we have discussed previously, there is already a tension between the observed GRB rates and predicted NSBH rates. Specifically, as is clear from Fig. 1, for *all* short GRBs to have an NSBH origin requires a merger rate at the high end of the predicted range, a relatively large GRB opening angle, or both. Additionally, numerical simulations indicate that for a large fraction of NSBH mergers, there will not be sufficient matter in the accretion disk to power a GRB, making the rates even less



TABLE 2

THE EXPECTED RATE OF JOINT GRAVITATIONAL WAVE–GRB OBSERVATIONS IN THE UPCOMING SCIENCE RUNS, ASSUMING THAT THE PROGENITOR OF EVERY SHORT GRB IS A NSBH MERGER. FOR FERMI GBM, WE TAKE A SKY COVERAGE OF 8 SR; SWIFT BAT 2 SR AND ASSUME THAT EVERY SHORT GRB WITHIN THE ADVANCED LIGO AND VIRGO RANGE WILL BE OBSERVED BY THE GRB SATELLITES. SENSITIVITIES AND RUN DURATIONS TAKEN FROM (AASI ET AL. 2013), WE ASSUME A FIDUCIAL NSBH WITH A NEUTRON STAR MASS OF  $1.4M_{\odot}$  AND A BLACK HOLE MASS OF  $5.0M_{\odot}$ .

Epoch	Run Duration	NSBH Range (Mpc)		Number of NSBH detections	Number of GW–GRB detections		
		LIGO	Virgo		All Sky	Fermi GBM	Swift BAT
2015	3 months	100 - 200	-	0.0002 - 2	$6 \times 10^{-4} - 0.2$	$4 \times 10^{-4} - 0.1$	$1 \times 10^{-4} - 0.03$
2016–17	6 months	200 - 300	50 - 150	0.003 - 20	0.01 - 1	0.007 - 1	0.002 - 0.2
2017–18	9 months	300- 425	150 - 215	0.02 - 80	0.07 - 6	0.04 - 4	0.01 - 1
2019+	(per year)	500	175 - 325	0.1 - 200	0.4 - 15	0.2 - 10	0.06 - 2
2022+	(per year)	500	325	0.2 - 300	0.7 - 20	0.4 - 15	0.06 - 4

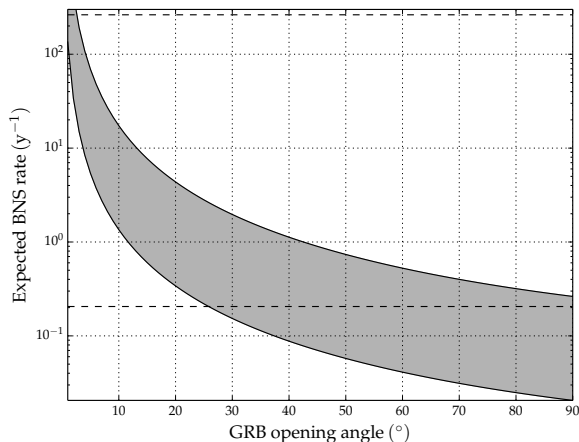


FIG. 3.— The expected rate of observed BNS signals when the LIGO and Virgo detectors are operating at their design sensitivity. We take the intrinsic GRB rate to be in the range  $110 \times 10^{-9} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$ . The rate increases with smaller opening angles as this implies a greater fraction of sources which are not observed as GRBs. The horizontal lines bound the predicted number of observations based upon estimates of BNS rates. At the largest opening angles, only the higher GRB rates are consistent with the BNS predictions.

compatible (Foucart 2012). Thus, the assumption that *all* GRBs are due to NSBH mergers seems difficult to accommodate, meaning that the highest rates in Table 2 are not realistic. Nonetheless, even if 15% of GRBs have NSBH progenitors, this would double the expected rate of joint observations. Alternatively, the absence of a joint gravitational wave–GRB observation could be used to limit the fraction of short GRBs which have a NSBH progenitor.

## 5. BENEFITS OF JOINT OBSERVATIONS

Numerous previous papers have discussed the benefits of joint gravitational wave–GRB observations, including: the potential to confirm (or rule out) the binary merger progenitor model (Eichler et al. 1989); measuring the time-delay between the binary merger and the GRB signals to understand jet breakout; the ability to probe GRB jet opening angles (Dietz 2011; Chen & Holz 2013); the independent measurement of distance and redshift used as a probe of cosmology (Schutz 1986; Nissanke et al. 2010). We will not discuss all of these in detail, but will focus on two issues. First, we discuss how the measurement of a GRB redshift may actually assist in the

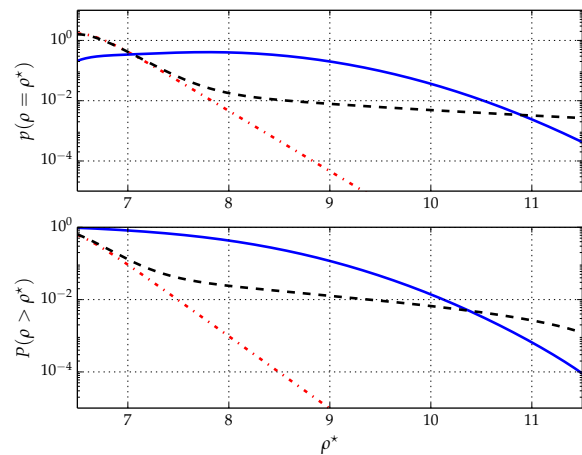


FIG. 4.— The probability of obtaining an event of a given SNR for: noise only (the red curve); a GRB progenitor at an unknown distance (the black curve) and a known distance (the blue curve). In this example, we have used the parameters from GRB080905A with a distance of 550 Mpc which gives a signal SNR of 7.7. The top plot shows the probability distribution function, while the bottom plot gives the cumulative probability of observing an event as loud or louder.

detection of a gravitational wave counterpart. Then, we discuss prospects for measuring or constraining opening angles.

### 5.1. Detecting a GRB with measured redshift

The advanced detector network will, on average, be sensitive to a BNS merger associated with a GRB within a distance of 400 Mpc, or  $z \lesssim 0.1$ . The closest observed short GRB is GRB 080905A with a measured redshift of  $z = 0.12$  (Rowlinson et al. 2010). It is interesting to ask whether this GRB could have been observed by the advanced LIGO–Virgo network. While the GRB was at a distance of 550 Mpc, it was at a favourable sky location for the advanced LIGO and Virgo network and a BNS merger associated with this GRB may have been marginally detectable, but only once the redshift information is folded in.

Let us look at the expected distribution of the observed SNR in the gravitational wave search, under three distinct scenarios: no observed gravitational wave signal; a BNS merger signal associated with a short GRB at an unknown distance; a BNS merger signal at 550 Mpc. To obtain the distribution in the absence of a signal, we simply use the empirical estimate provided in Eq. (2). For

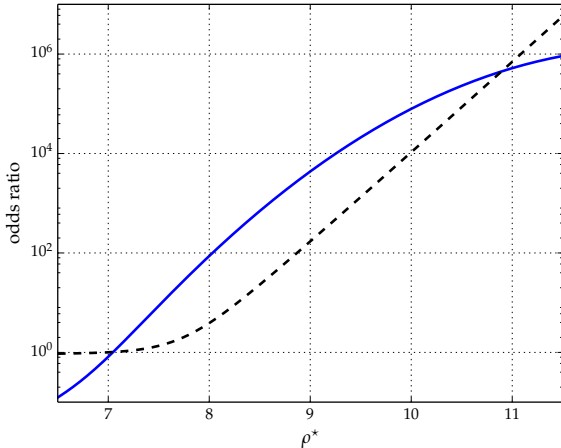


FIG. 5.— The odds ratio between the signal and noise models. We consider two signal models: a GRB at unknown distance (black, dashed line) and a GRB at a known distance (blue, solid line). In this example, we have used the parameters from GRB080905A with a distance of 550 Mpc which gives an expected SNR of 7.7. The blue curve gives the odds ratio for a BNS signal at that distance, as a function of SNR. The black curve gives the odds ratio for a BNS signal at an unknown distance. At low SNR, knowledge of the distance increases the odds ratio significantly; at higher SNRs it decreases the odds as the observed SNR is no longer consistent with the distance.

a signal at 550 Mpc in the direction of GRB080905A, a BNS merger will generate an expected network SNR of 7.7. The expected, maximum SNR observed in the gravitational wave search then follows a non-central  $\chi^2$  with four degrees of freedom (Harry & Fairhurst 2011) overlaid on the noise background given in equation (2). Finally, for a GRB with unmeasured redshift, we use the distance distribution as given in Eq. 3, i.e. signals distributed uniformly in  $D^3$  at low redshift, with only a small probability of the GRB occurring within the LIGO-Virgo sensitive range.

In figure 4, we show the probability distribution for the SNR of the gravitational wave event under these three scenarios. The figure shows both the probability distribution as well as the cumulative probability of observing an event above a given SNR. In this example, the knowledge of the distance greatly increases the chance of observing a signal with a moderate SNR. For example, the chance of observing an event with  $\text{SNR} > 7.5$  due to noise alone is around 1%, if there is a BNS merger at unknown distance it is 3% whilst when the distance is known to be 550 Mpc it is 60%.

One way to visualise the benefit of a redshift measurement is through the odds ratio: the ratio of the signal probability to the noise probability. This is plotted in Fig. 5. For an observed SNR above 7.5, the signal model is favoured over the noise by a factor of 10, increasing to 100 at SNR of 8. Thus, even at these low SNRs, this would be an event candidate. However, if the distance is not known, a larger SNR (of 8.5 or 9) is required before the signal model is strongly favoured over the noise. Thus, if this GRB had occurred during the advanced detector era, there is a real chance that measuring the redshift would make the difference between identifying a gravitational wave candidate and not.

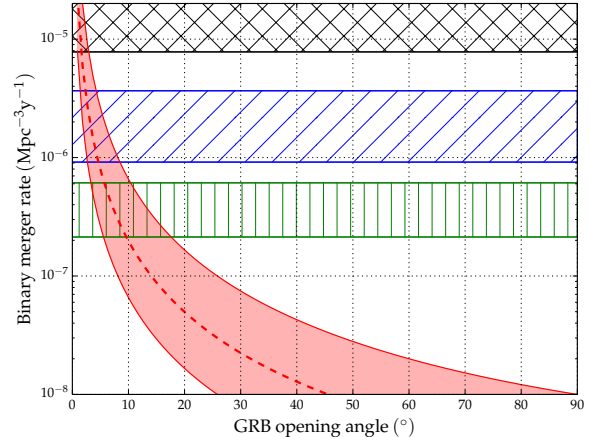


FIG. 6.— The expected upper limit on BNS rate for the planned observing runs, assuming that no GW events are observed: 2015 in black; 2016–17 in blue and 2017–18 in green. The ranges correspond to the uncertainties in detector sensitivity as detailed in Table 1. The expected rate of GRB progenitors as a function of the GRB opening angle is overlaid in red. Assuming that all GRBs correspond to BNS, we can read off the lower limit on opening angle that would be obtained at the end of each run.

## 5.2. Constraining the jet opening angle

A joint gravitational wave-GRB observation would provide a measurement of the binaries inclination angle and consequently, would provide a constraint on the jet opening angle of GRBs. However, the majority of observed gravitational wave signals are likely to be weak, with an SNR of ten or less, and this will make accurate parameter recovery difficult. Accurate measurement of the binary inclination angle is further complicated by the fact that it is highly degenerate with the distance, particularly when the signal is close to face on. Specifically, the overall amplitude of the two polarisations scale as  $\frac{(1+\cos^2\iota)}{2D}$  and  $\frac{\cos\iota}{D}$  and, at SNR of 10, we would expect to measure these amplitudes with roughly a 10% accuracy.

For a face on signal (with  $\iota \approx 0$  or  $\pi$ ), the two amplitudes are equal. They differ by 1% for an inclination angle of  $30^\circ$  and by 10% for an inclination of  $50^\circ$ . Thus, while the gravitational wave observation will constrain opening angles, it is most likely to limit the angle to be  $\lesssim 45^\circ$ . In the case where the redshift, and consequently distance, is known there will still be a  $\sim 10\%$  uncertainty in  $\cos\iota$  corresponding to a constraint on the opening angle of  $\lesssim 25^\circ$ . Even for the loudest signals, we are faced with an uncertainty in the Hubble constant of 1% and a likely instrumental calibration error of 1% or more (Abadie et al. 2010a) making it difficult to constrain the opening angle to less than  $10^\circ$ .

It is more likely that the observed populations of short GRBs and binary mergers will allow us to restrict the opening angle of GRB jets. It is clear from Figure 1 how this would be done: if the permitted range of BNS merger rates can be reduced from three orders of magnitude to a factor of two, then the GRB opening angle will be highly constrained. First, let us consider the case where the early science runs do not yield a gravitational wave detection. We assume that, in the absence of a de-



TABLE 3

THE EXPECTED BOUNDS ON GRB OPENING ANGLE DURING THE EARLY ADVANCED LIGO-VIRGO OBSERVING RUNS. THESE RESULTS ASSUME THAT NO GRAVITATIONAL WAVE SIGNAL IS OBSERVED AND USE THE OBSERVED GRB RATE TO INFER THE MINIMUM JET OPENING ANGLE CONSISTENT WITH THE LACK OF GRAVITATIONAL WAVE DETECTION. THE RESULTS IN THE TWO COLUMNS ASSUME THAT ALL GRBs ARE EITHER BNS (FIRST COLUMN) OR NSBH (2ND). IN BOTH CASES, THE RANGE QUOTED TAKES INTO ACCOUNT BOTH THE UNCERTAINTY IN THE DETECTOR PERFORMANCE IN THESE RUNS AS WELL AS THE UNCERTAINTY IN THE LOCAL RATE OF GRBs.

Epoch	Run Duration	BNS Range (Mpc)		limit on GRB opening angle (°)	
		LIGO	Virgo	BNS	NSBH
2015	3 months	40 - 80	-	0 - 3	1 - 8
2016-17	6 months	80 - 120	20 - 60	1 - 8	3 - 20
2017-18	9 months	120-170	60 - 85	3 - 18	10 - 50

tection, the loudest event is consistent with background and estimate the expected rate upper limit as  $2.3/VT$  — where  $V$  is the volume searched and  $T$  the time. (Brady & Fairhurst 2008). From this, we can read off the smallest opening angle consistent with the rate upper limit by re-arranging equation 1 to obtain

$$1 - \cos \theta \geq \frac{R_{\text{GRB}}}{f_{\gamma} R_{\text{BNS}}^{\text{ul}}} \quad (5)$$

Thus the tightest limit on  $\theta$  is given by assuming the maximum BNS rate, i.e. right at the upper limit, and an  $f_{\gamma}$  of unity, i.e that all BNS mergers produce GRBs. In Fig. 6 we plot the expected upper limits, in the absence of a gravitational wave detection, from the early observing runs. The bands here correspond to the uncertainties in detector sensitivities as given in Fig. 1. For example, at the end of the 2016-17 run, the lack of a detection can place a constraint on the GRB opening angle between  $2^{\circ}$  and  $8^{\circ}$  depending upon the detector sensitivity achieved and the assumed GRB rate. Thus, even in the absence of an observation, we are starting to impact measurements from GRB observations. In Table 3, we summarise the results for BNS signals, and also for NSBH. In both cases, we are assuming that all GRBs are produced by one particular type of merger. This, of course, is unrealistic. Although we cannot know the fraction of GRBs which have a BNS or NSBH progenitor, we might reasonably assume that *all* GRB progenitors are mergers. Since the sensitivity to BNS mergers is less than NSBH, the conservative limit comes from assuming that all mergers are BNS. Alternatively, it is possible to make reasonable assumptions of priors for the various parameters and then marginalise over them to obtain a distribution for the opening angle (Clark et al. 2014).

Of course, we hope to observe gravitational waves from binary mergers. Even a handful of observations will provide a measurement of the rate within a factor of two, which will correspond to a much tighter horizontal band on figure 1. If, for example, the rate is  $10^{-6} \text{Mpc}^{-3} \text{y}^{-1}$  then this will restrict the GRB opening angle to be between about  $3$  and  $8^{\circ}$ .

## 6. DISCUSSION

We have presented in detail the expectations for gravitational wave observations associated with short gamma ray bursts in the coming years. The evidence for a binary merger progenitor of short GRBs is strong, and we have focused on this scenario. Then, by making use of

the known time and sky location of the source, we have argued that it is appropriate to lower the gravitational wave search threshold by around 25% relative to the all sky, all time search. This decrease in threshold will double the number of gravitational wave events that can be detected in association with a GRB. We have also demonstrated that if the redshift is measured to be within the sensitive range of gravitational wave network, the detection threshold can be further reduced. Using this threshold reduction and the expected evolution of gravitational wave detector sensitivities given in Aasi et al. (2013), a joint gravitational wave-GRB observation is possible in the 2015 and 2016-17 observing runs, but unlikely. However, as the detectors approach their design sensitivity the rate of joint observations increases and could be one or two per year for a BNS progenitor and even higher if the majority of GRBs have NSBH progenitor. This, of course, depends critically upon the continued operation of wide-field of view GRB satellites, such as Fermi, as well as the continued operation of the InterPlanetary Network.

The joint observation of gravitational wave and GRB signals will be a major milestone in understanding short GRBs, and will finally prove (or disprove) the binary merger progenitor scenario. It will also shed light on the GRB central engine by probing delays between the signals and a bound on the jet opening angle. We have argued that the measurement of binary inclination from gravitational wave observations will have large uncertainties, due in part to the degeneracy with the measurement of distance, and is unlikely to constrain the opening angle tightly. However, an accurate measurement of the populations of both short GRBs and binary neutron star (or neutron star-black hole) mergers will allow us to constrain the opening angle. Even in the early advanced detector runs, we will be able to place lower bounds on the beaming angle of short GRBs that will confront current observations.

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