

Rydberg-induced optical nonlinearities from a cold atomic ensemble trapped inside a cavity

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arXiv:1512.08480 [quant-ph], to appear in J. Phys. B special issue on Rydberg atoms

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<http://arxiv.org/abs/1512.08480> [2]

We experimentally characterize the optical nonlinear response of a cold atomic medium placed inside an optical cavity, and excited to Rydberg states. The excitation to S and D Rydberg levels is carried out via a two-photon transition in an EIT (electromagnetically induced transparency) configuration, with a weak (red) probe beam on the lower transition, and a strong (blue) coupling beam on the upper transition. The observed optical nonlinearities induced by S states for the probe beam can be explained using a semi-classical model with van der Waals' interactions. For the D states, it appears necessary to take into account a dynamical decay of Rydberg excitations into a long-lived dark state. We show that the measured nonlinearities can be explained by using a Rydberg bubble model with a dynamical decay.

- [RySQ](#) [3]
- [Result](#) [4]
- [17.80.+h Hybrid systems](#) [5]
- [15.10.Ry Rydberg atoms](#) [6]
- [15.20.Ca Cavity QED](#) [7]

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[4] <http://qurope.eu/category/attribute/result>

[5] <http://qurope.eu/category/qics/10-quantum-computation/17-other-implementations/1780h-hybrid-systems>

[6] <http://qurope.eu/category/qics/10-quantum-computation/15-implementations-quantum-optics/15-10ry-rydberg-atoms>

[7] <http://qurope.eu/category/qics/10-quantum-computation/15-implementations-quantum-optics/15-20ca-cavity-qed>