

Investigating the Invisible Higgs Coupling at a Muon Collider

Yongik Jang^a



Jan. 20, 2026

In collaboration with
Kyu Jung Bae^a, Kyoungchul Kong^b, and Myeonghun Park^c

The 2nd "AI+HEP in East Asia" workshop @ KEK

^aDepartment of Physics, Kyungpook National University, Daegu 41566, Republic of Korea

^bDepartment of Physics and Astronomy, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, USA

^cSchool of Natural Sciences, Seoul National University of Science and Technology, Seoul 01811, Republic of Korea

Introduction

- Investigating the invisible Higgs coupling at a MuC with a dedicated forward muon detector
- Clean experimental environment of MuC enables high sensitivity, especially when combined with ML techniques
- After observing a signal, it is crucial to verify whether the Higgs truly mediates the process
- ML-based hypothesis test provides strong discrimination between the signal and alternative models

The signal model

BSM particle pair;
we cannot see,
missing energy

$$\mathcal{L}_{\text{int.}} \supset -\frac{1}{\Lambda} |H|^2 \bar{\chi} \chi$$

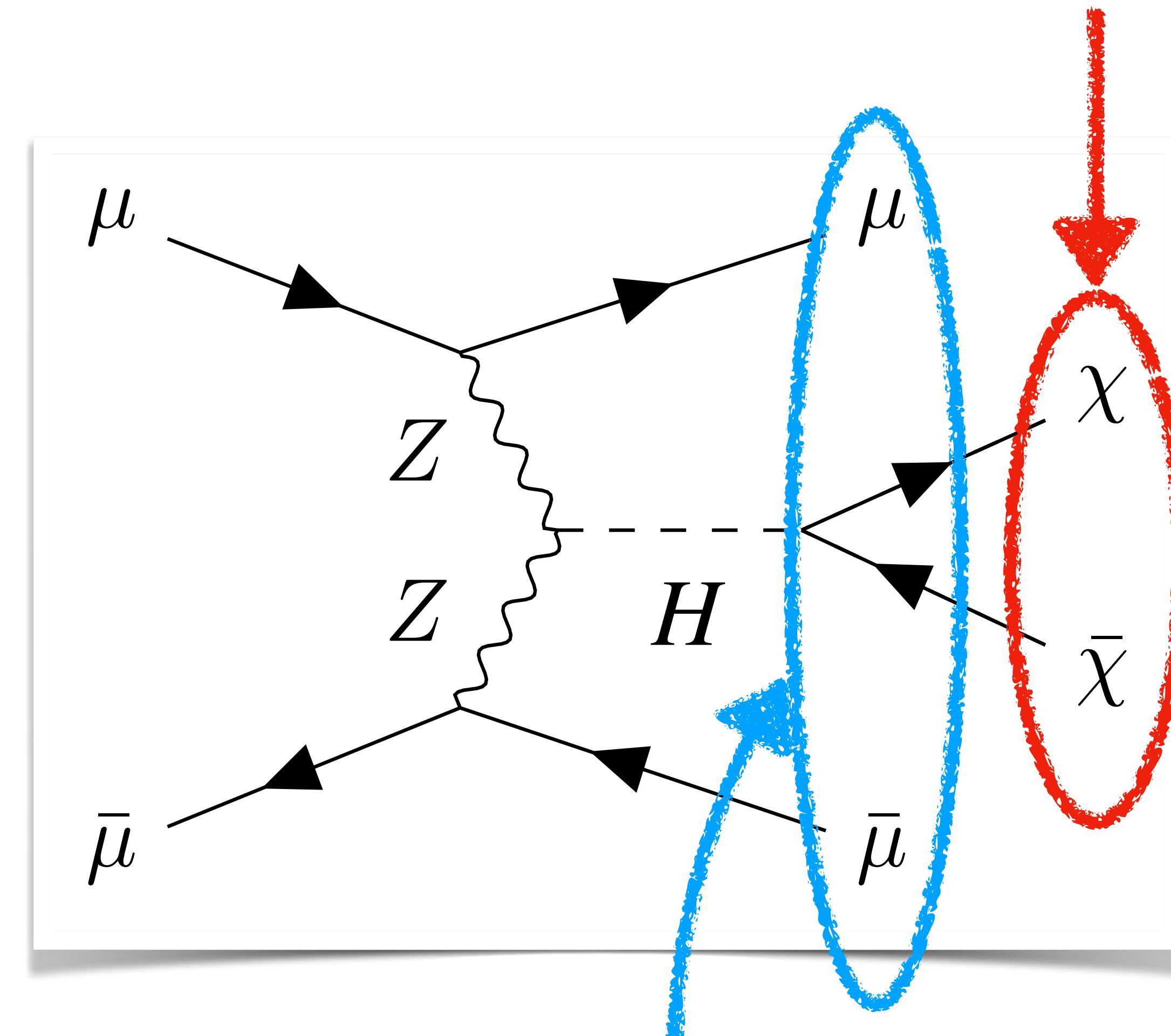
χ : Heavy dirac fermion

$$\mu \bar{\mu} \rightarrow \mu \bar{\mu} \chi \bar{\chi}$$

At high energy, $Z_L Z_L \rightarrow \chi \bar{\chi}$ is dominant

→ $\sigma \propto \frac{1}{\Lambda^2} \log^2 \left(\frac{s}{4M_\chi^2} \right)$

$\sqrt{s} \gg M_\chi > m_H, m_Z$



Forward muon pair;
we can see

Discovery potential

Benchmark experiment scenario & detector setting

- $\sqrt{s} = 10 \text{ TeV}$
- $\mathcal{L} = 10 \text{ ab}^{-1}$
- $|\eta_{\text{main}}| < 2.44$
- $2.44 < |\eta_{\text{forward}}| < 6.0;$

Only muons and antimuons are detected in this region

- $\delta E_{\text{forward}} = 10\%;$

Only uncertainties in the forward detector region

Discovery potential

Background consideration & baseline cut

Two types of backgrounds

1. $\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \bar{\mu}\mu + \text{Neutrinos}$
2. $\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \bar{\mu}\mu + \text{Visible particles escaping the main detector;}$
Undetected by forward muon detector

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \mu\bar{\mu}\nu\bar{\nu}$

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \tau\bar{\tau}, \quad \tau \rightarrow \mu\nu\nu$

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow W^-W^+\nu\bar{\nu}, \quad W \rightarrow \mu\nu$

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \mu\bar{\mu}\gamma$

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \mu\bar{\mu}ff, \quad f \in \{l, q\}$

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \mu\bar{\mu}W^-W^+, \quad W \rightarrow l\nu \text{ or } q\bar{q}$

- $6.0 > |\eta_{\mu(\bar{\mu})}|$
- $\eta_\mu > 0 > \eta_{\bar{\mu}}$
- $\Delta R_{\mu\bar{\mu}} > 0.4$
- $E_{\min} > 500 \text{ GeV}$

- $p_T^{\mu\bar{\mu}} > 50 \text{ GeV}$

← Select VBF

Suppress elastic scattering

$\mu\bar{\mu} \rightarrow \mu\bar{\mu}$

$$\Delta R_{\mu\bar{\mu}} = \sqrt{\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}^2 + \Delta\eta_{\mu\bar{\mu}}^2}$$

$$\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}} = \phi_\mu - \phi_{\bar{\mu}}$$

$$\Delta\eta_{\mu\bar{\mu}} = \eta_\mu - \eta_{\bar{\mu}}$$

$$E_{\min.} = \min(E_\mu, E_{\bar{\mu}})$$

$$p_T^{\mu\bar{\mu}} = p_T^\mu + p_T^{\bar{\mu}}$$

Discovery potential

Neural network

- Clean environment of a muon collider enables a well-reconstructed final state
→ Conventional kinematic variables are sufficient as input features:

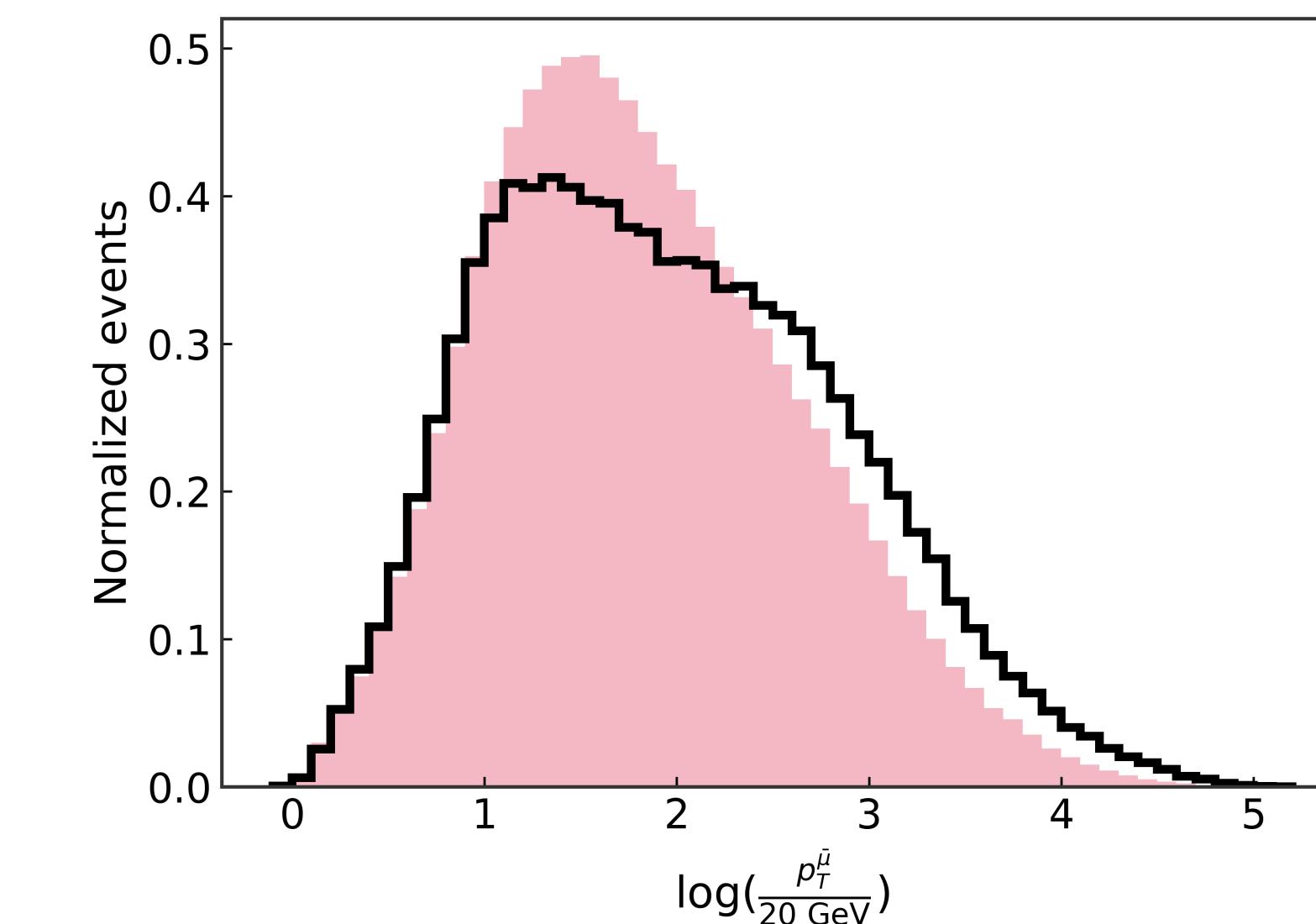
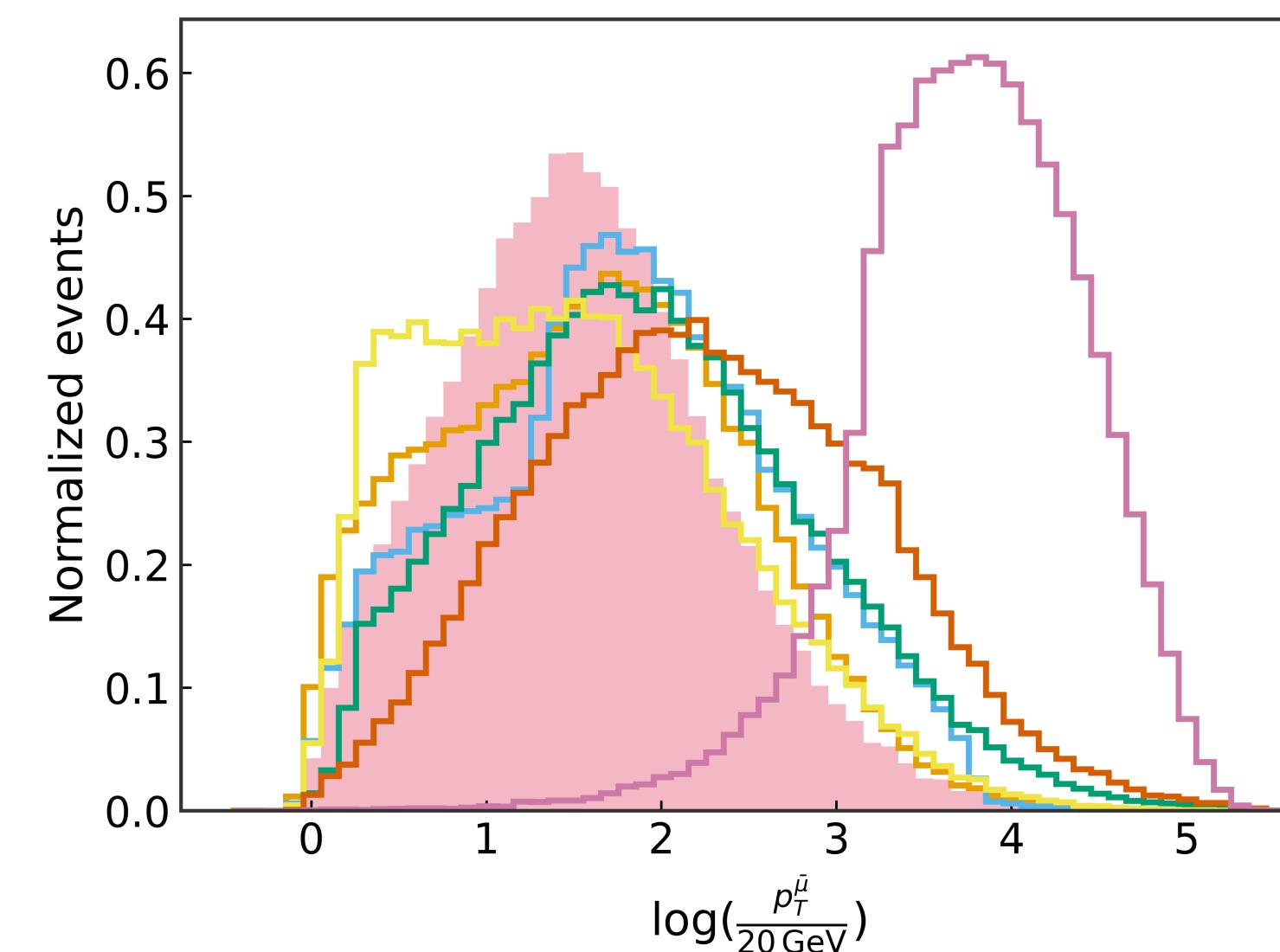
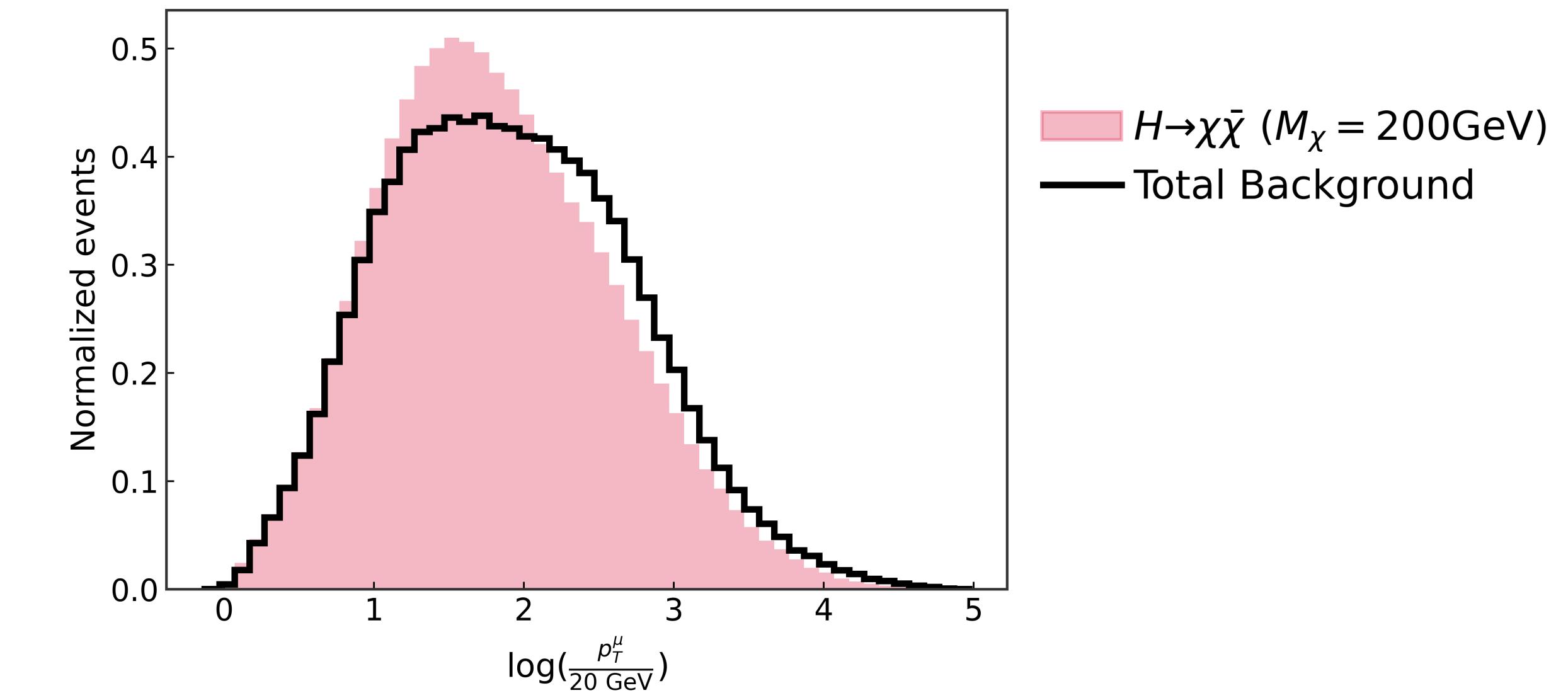
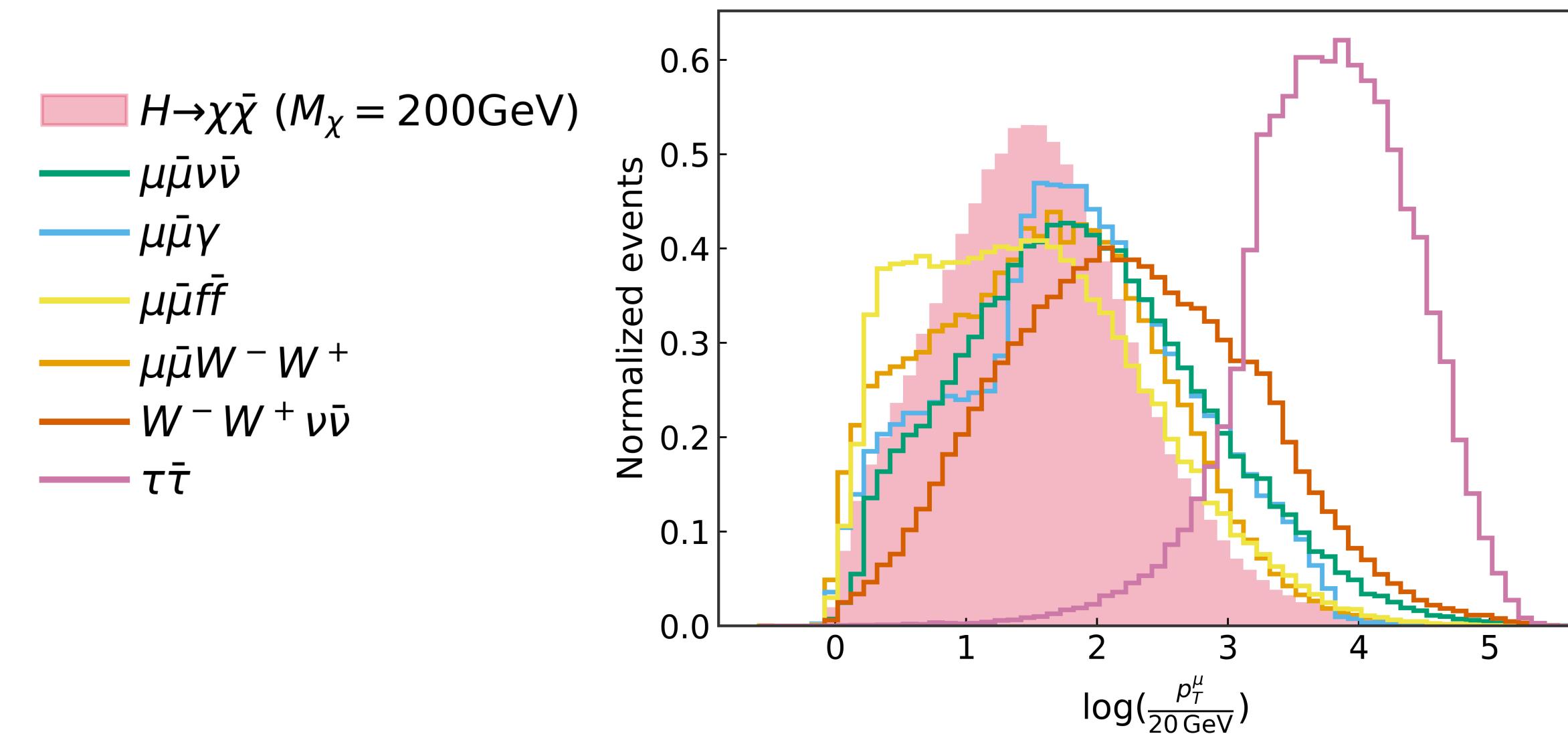
$$\log\left(\frac{p_T^{\mu(\bar{\mu})}}{20 \text{ GeV}}\right), \quad \log\left(\frac{p_T^{\mu\bar{\mu}}}{50 \text{ GeV}}\right), \quad \frac{\eta_{\mu(\bar{\mu})}}{6}, \quad \frac{\Delta\eta_{\mu\bar{\mu}}}{12}, \quad \frac{|\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}|}{\pi}, \quad \frac{E_{\min}}{\sqrt{s}/2}, \quad \frac{M_{\mu\bar{\mu}}}{\sqrt{s}}, \quad \frac{M_{\chi\bar{\chi}}^2}{s}$$

- We train NNs for each M_χ and obtain optimal sensitivity limit

$$\boxed{\begin{aligned} M_{\mu\bar{\mu}} &= \sqrt{(p^\mu + p^{\bar{\mu}})^2} \\ M_{\chi\bar{\chi}}^2 &= (p_i - p^\mu - p^{\bar{\mu}})^2 \\ p_i &= (\sqrt{s}, \vec{0}) \end{aligned}}$$

$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

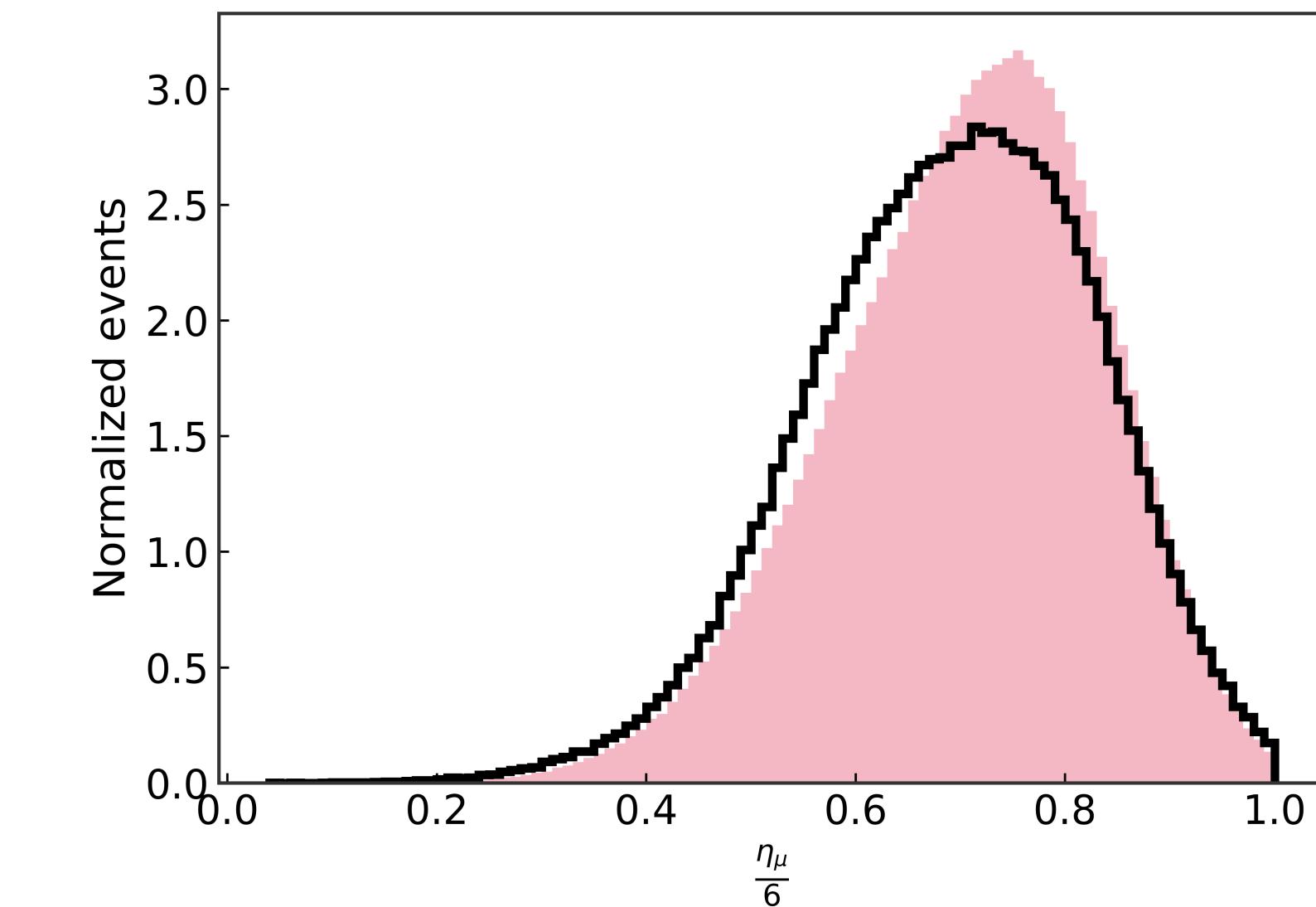
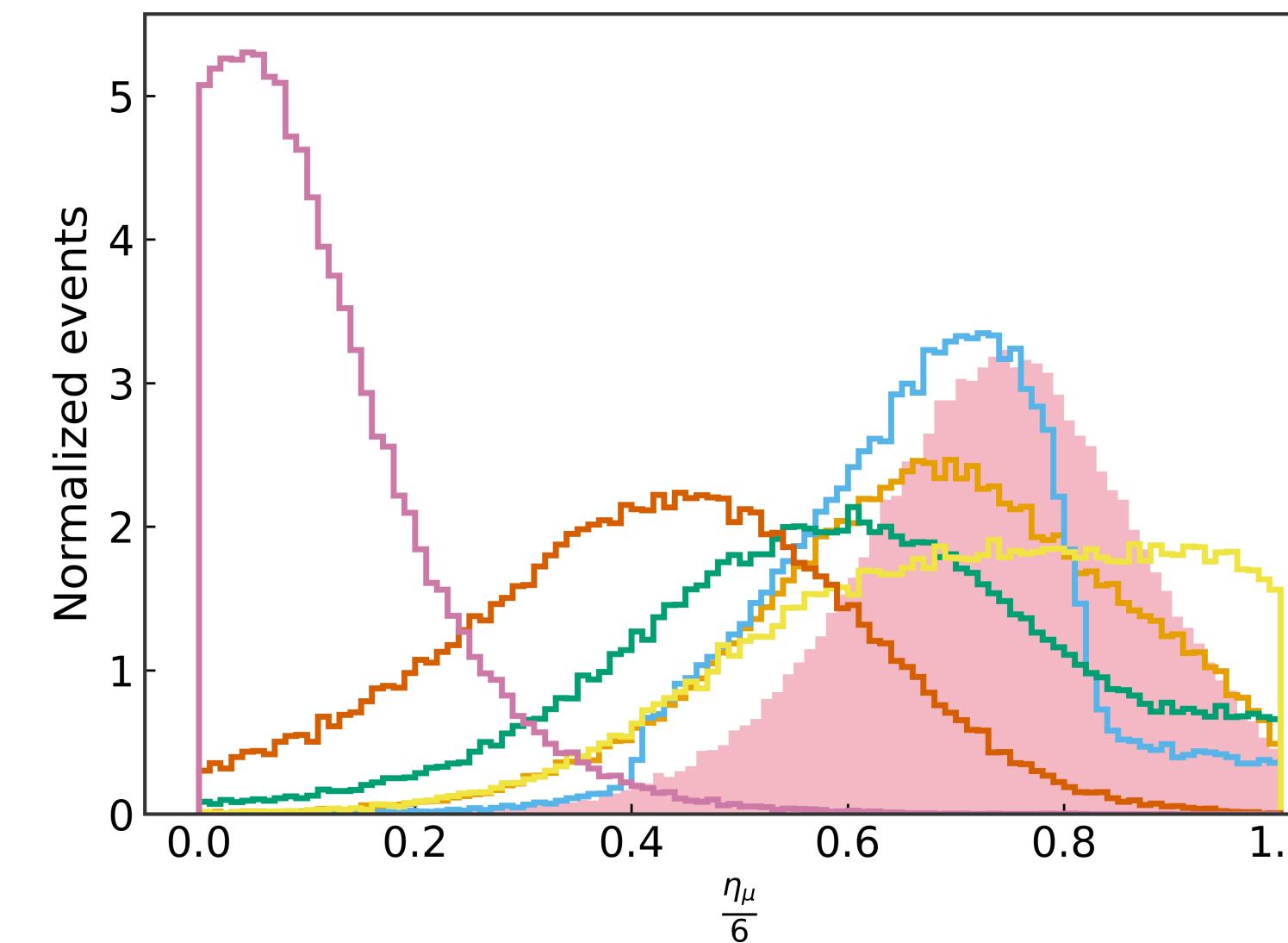
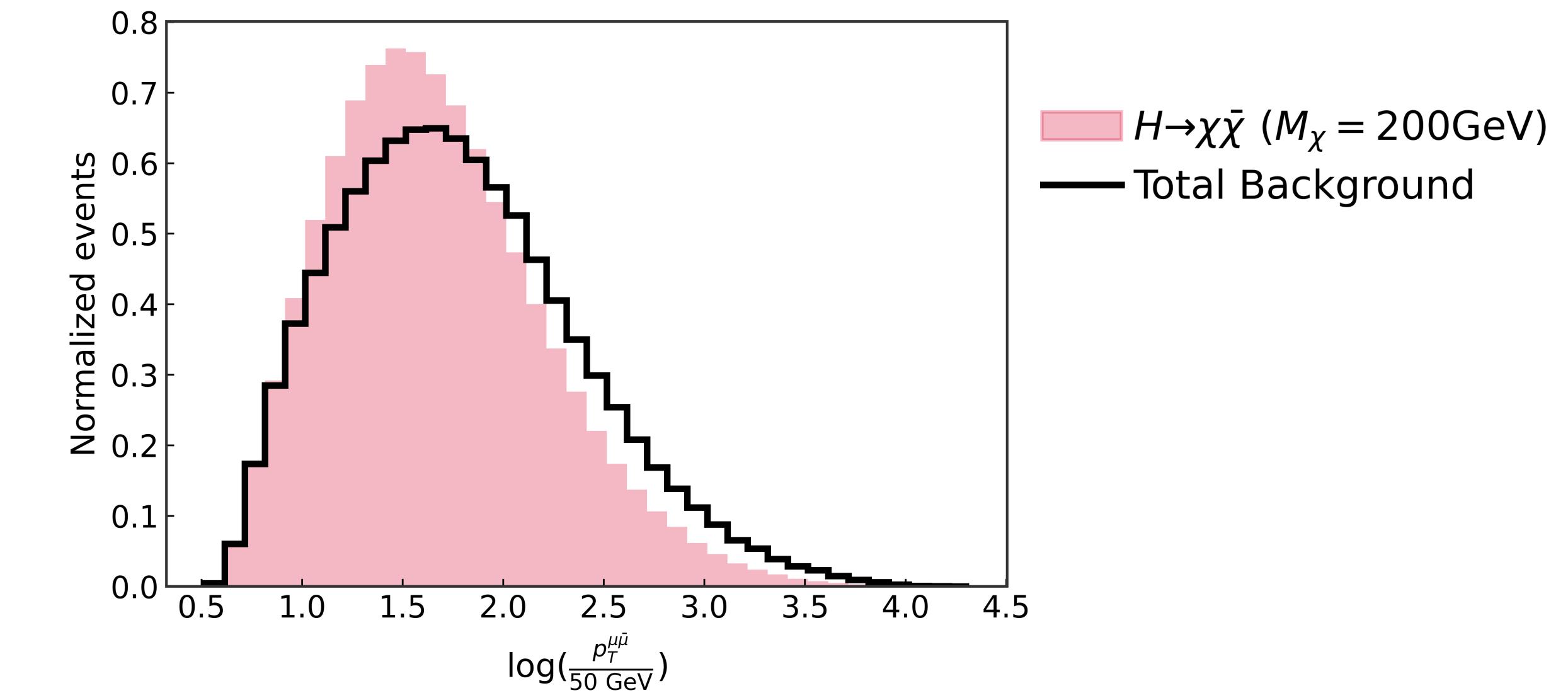
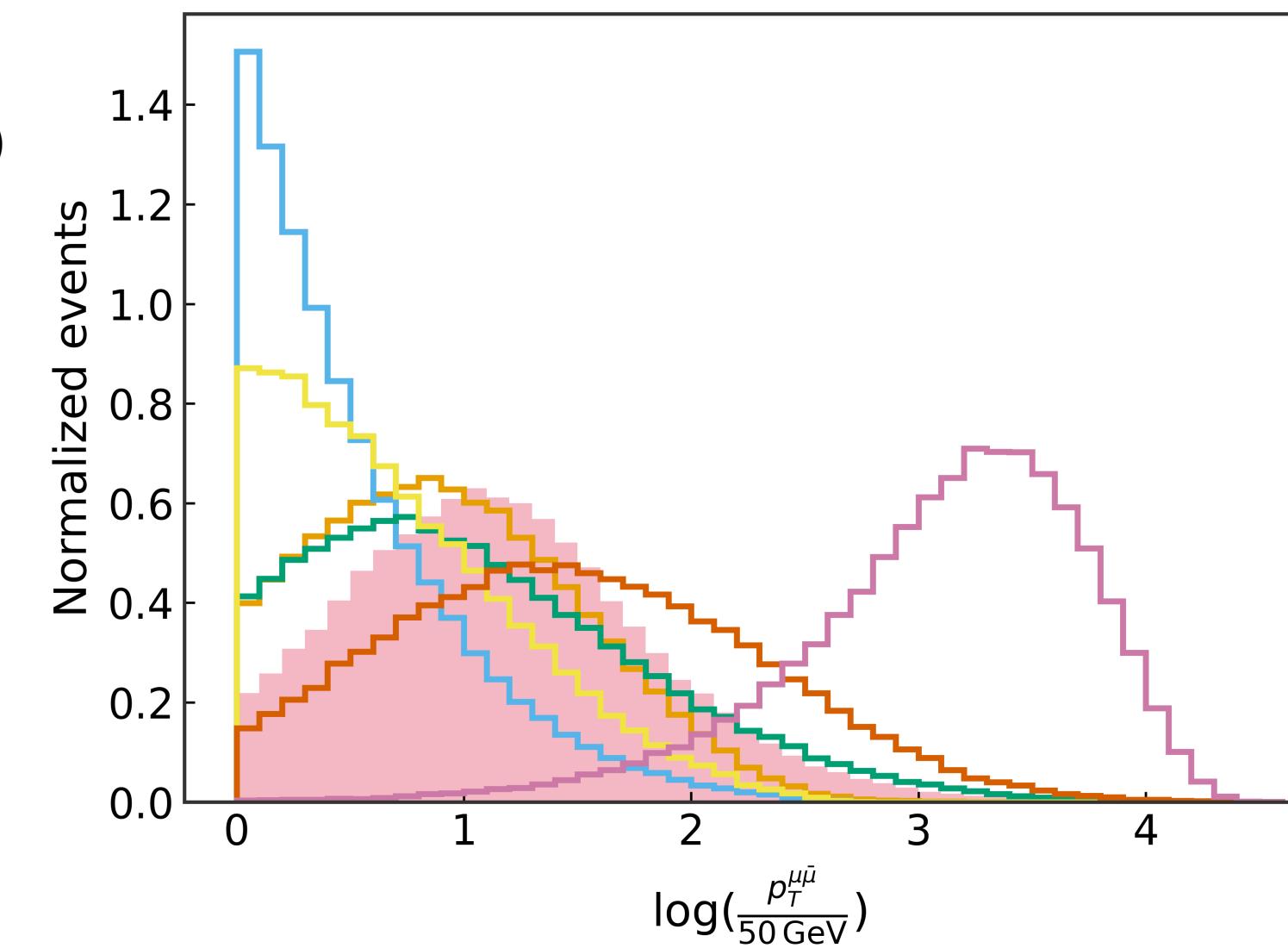
NN



$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

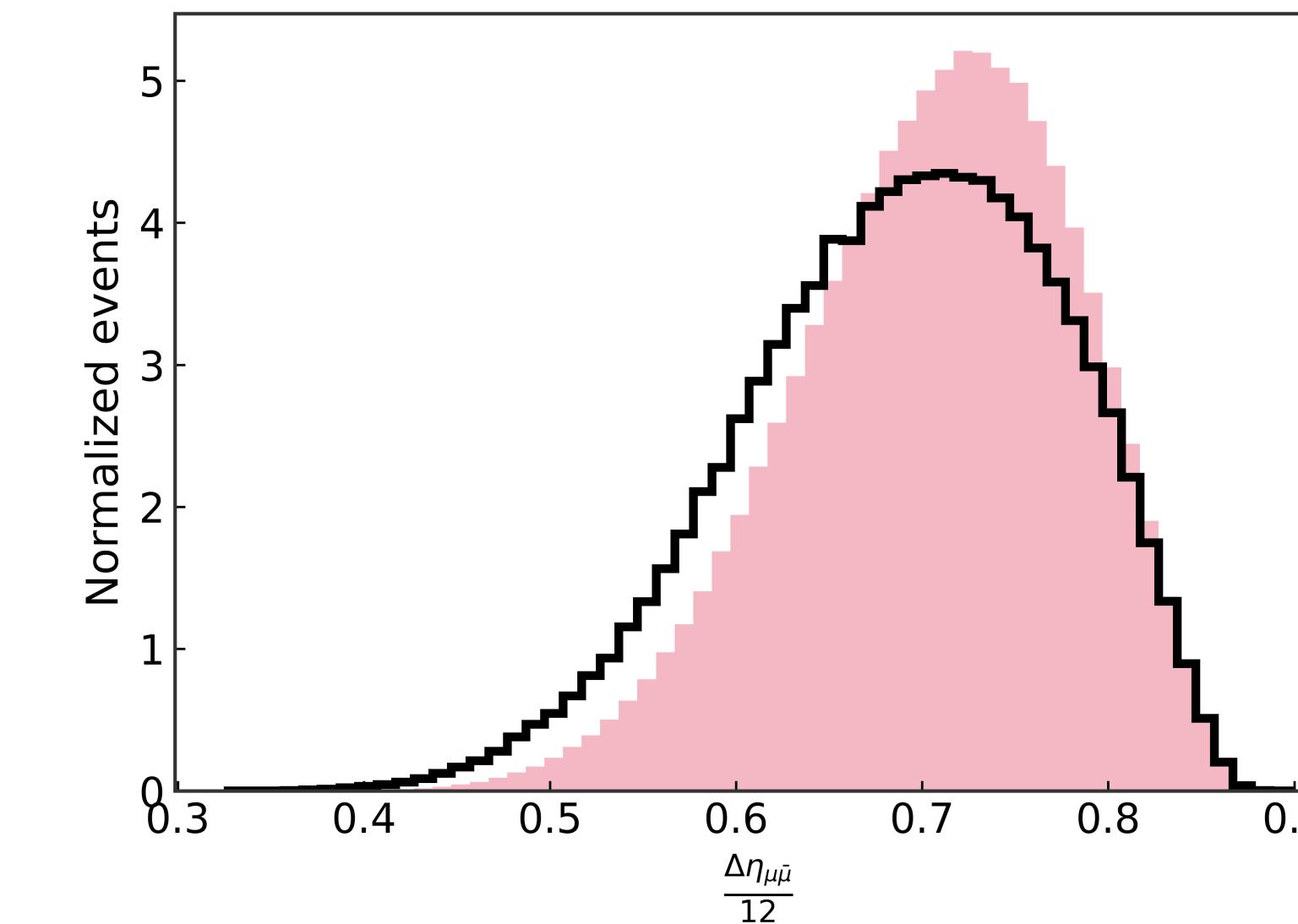
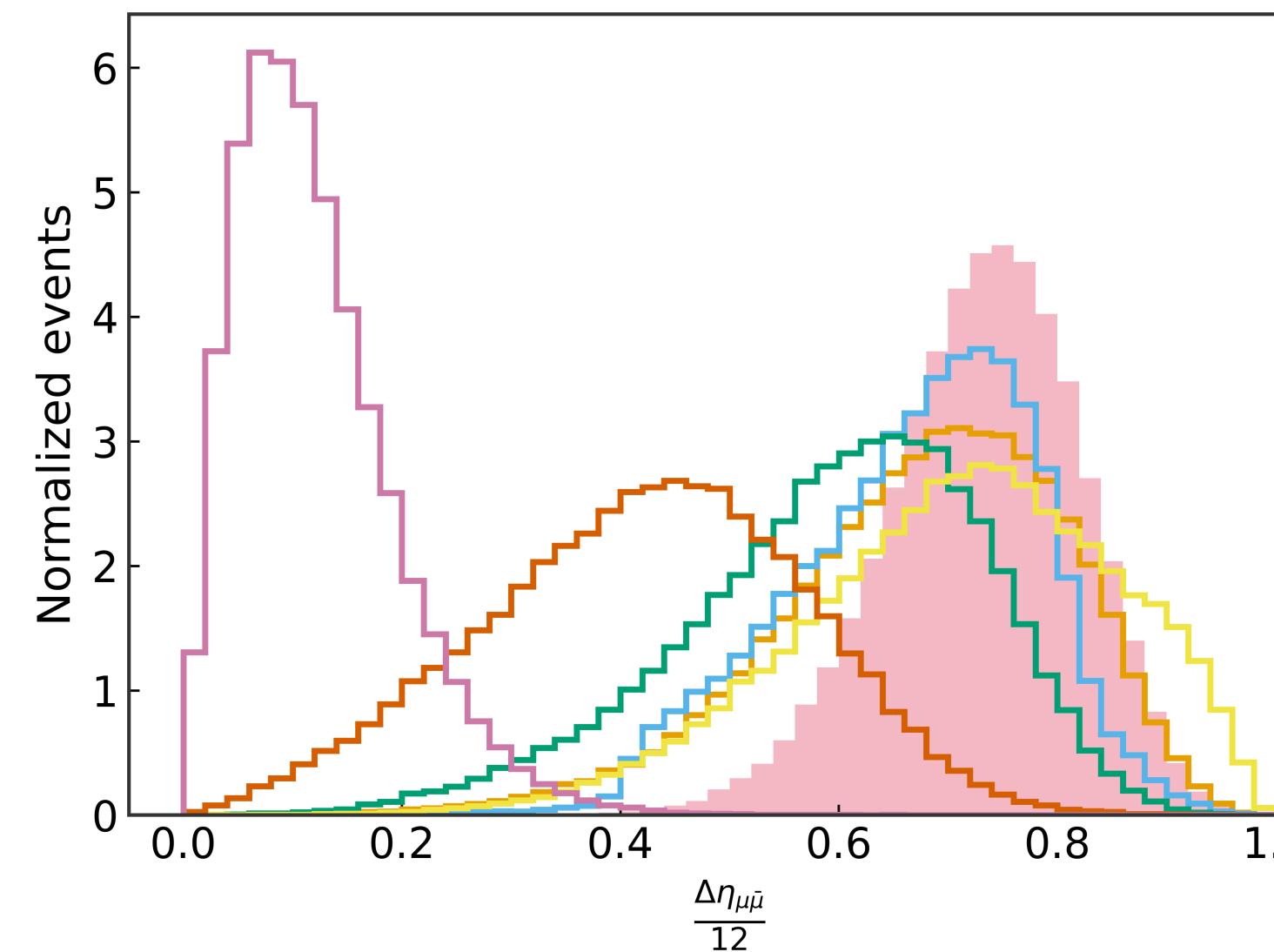
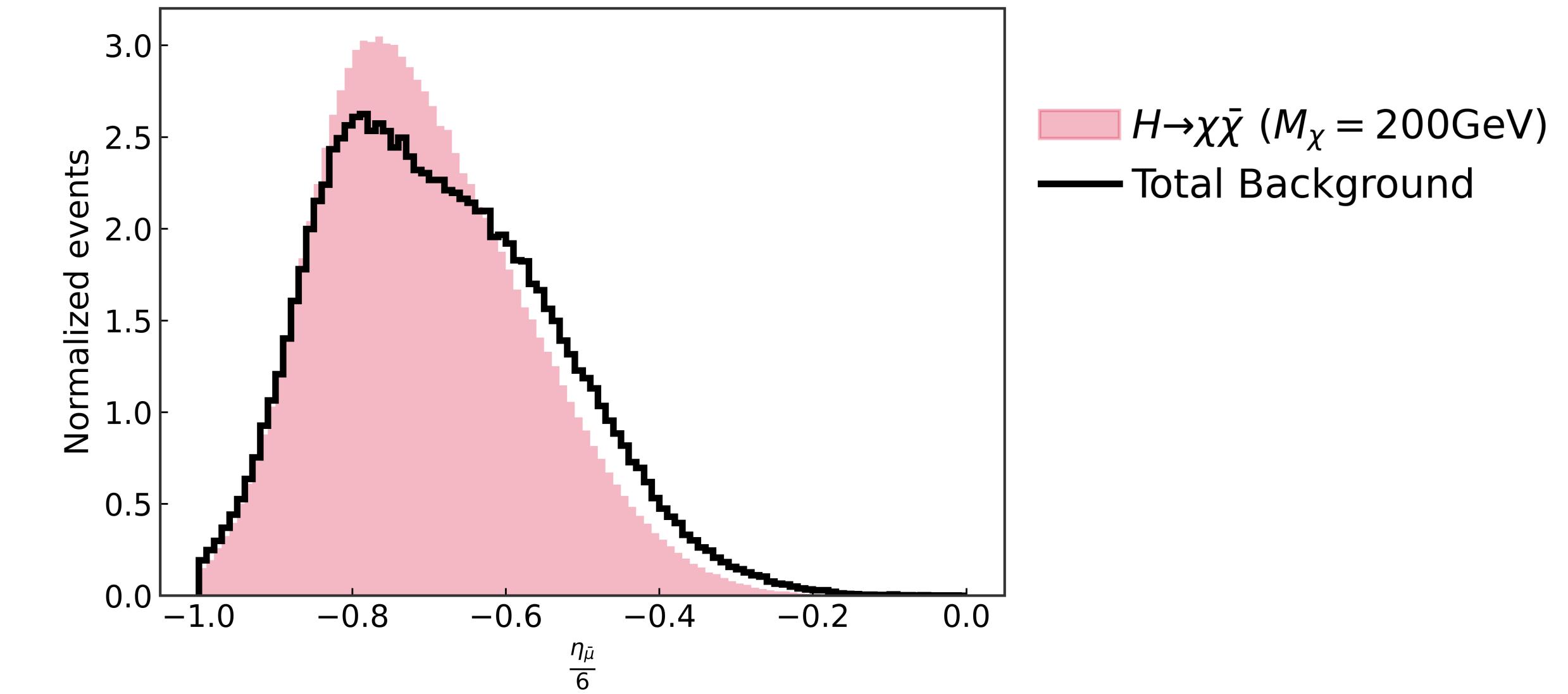
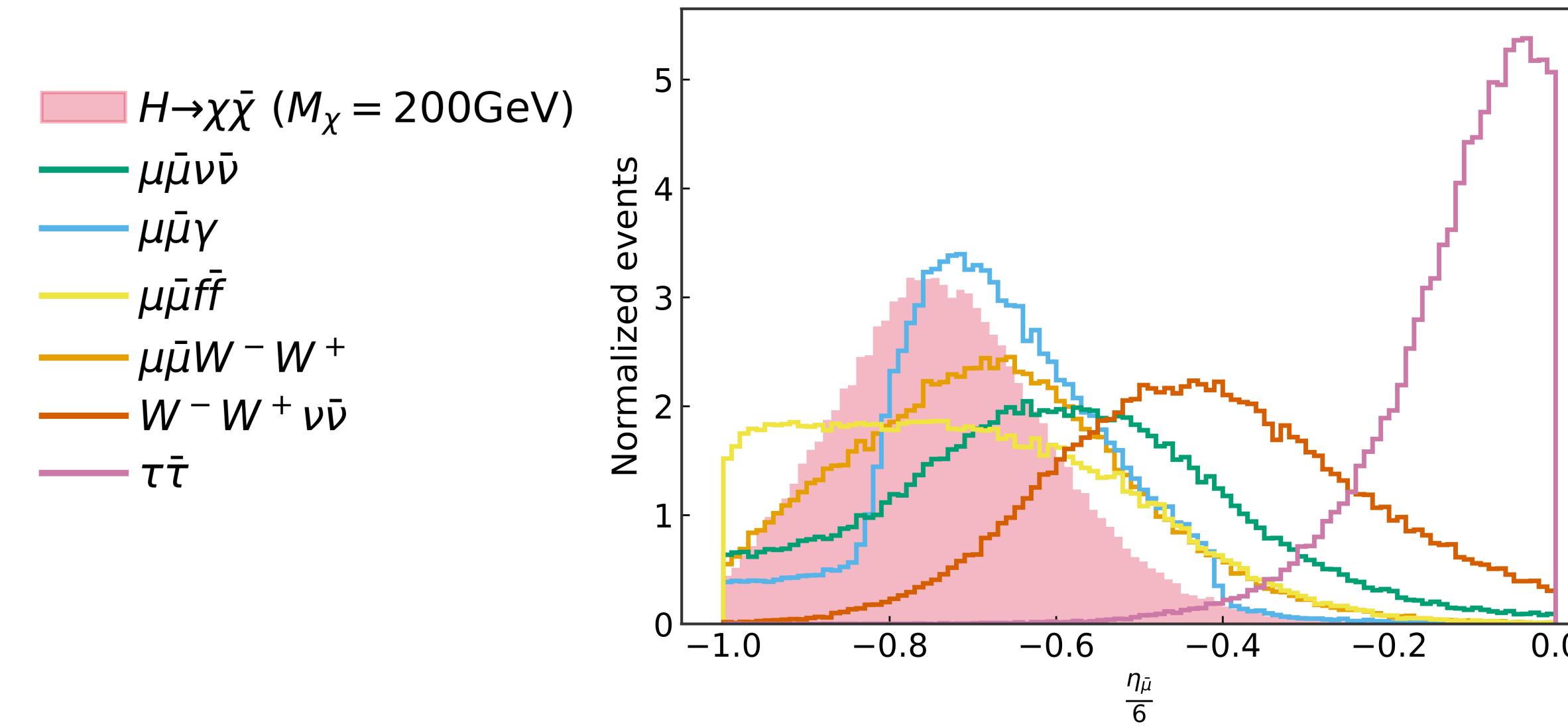
NN
→

- $H \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi} (M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV})$
- $\mu\bar{\mu}\nu\bar{\nu}$
- $\mu\bar{\mu}\gamma$
- $\mu\bar{\mu}f\bar{f}$
- $\mu\bar{\mu}W^-W^+$
- $W^-W^+\nu\bar{\nu}$
- $\tau\bar{\tau}$



$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

NN



$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

NN

$H \rightarrow \chi\bar{\chi} (M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV})$

$\mu\bar{\mu}\nu\bar{\nu}$

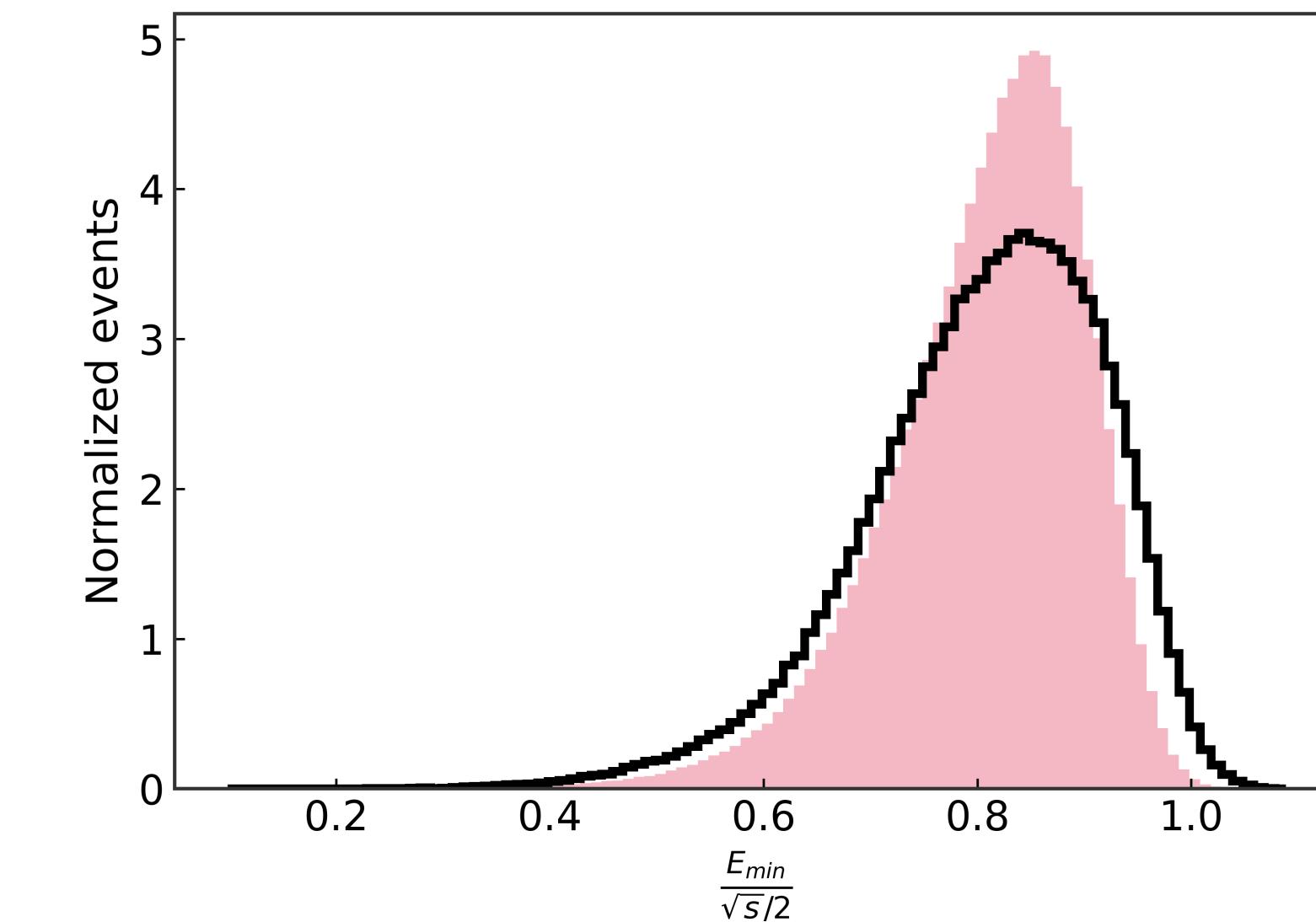
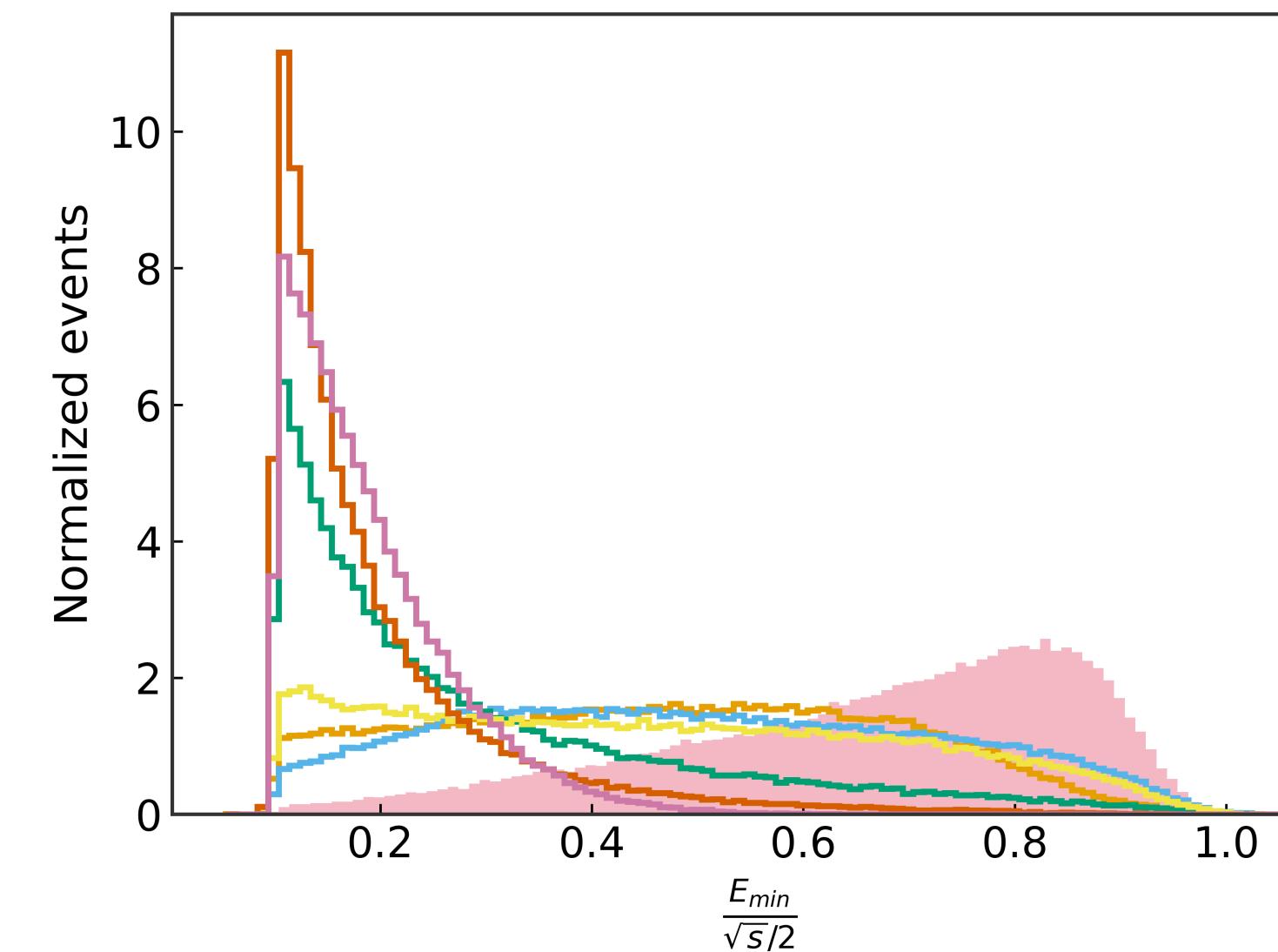
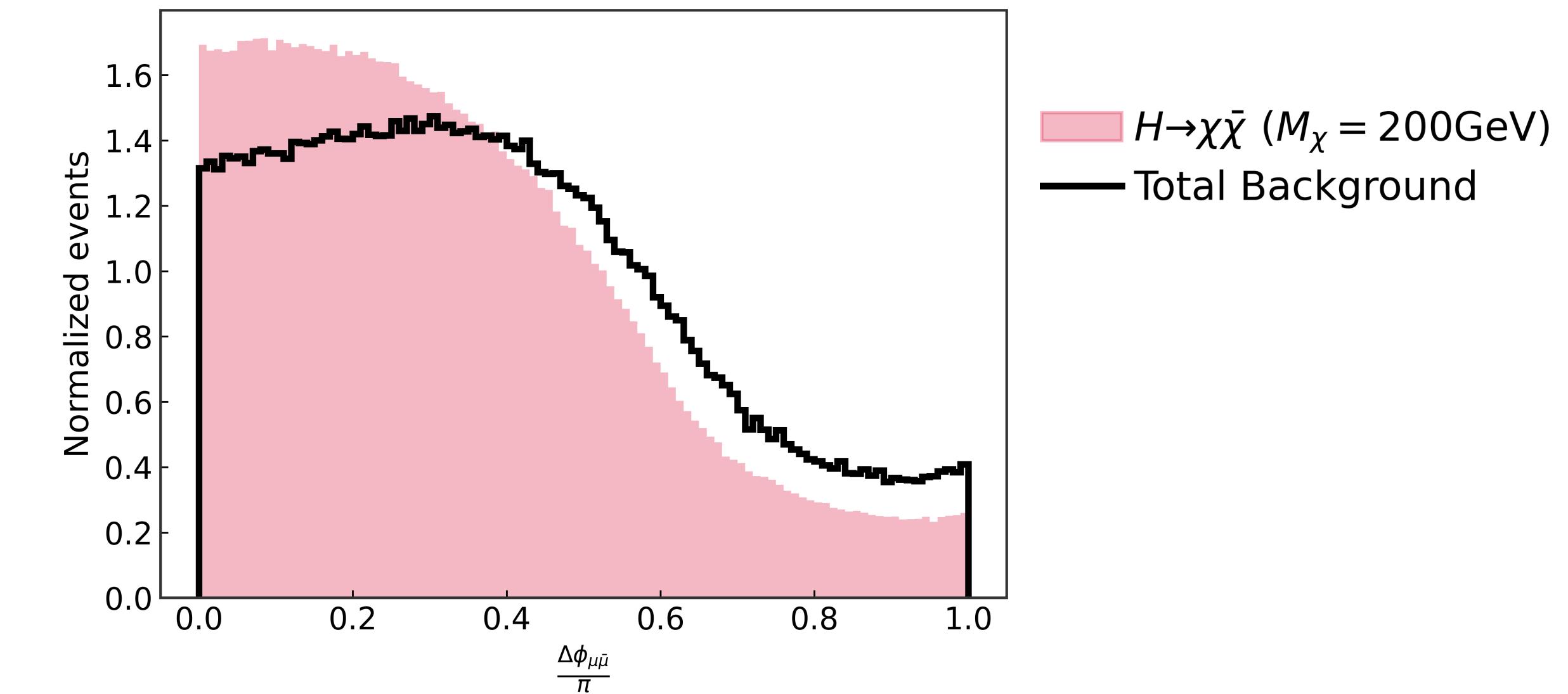
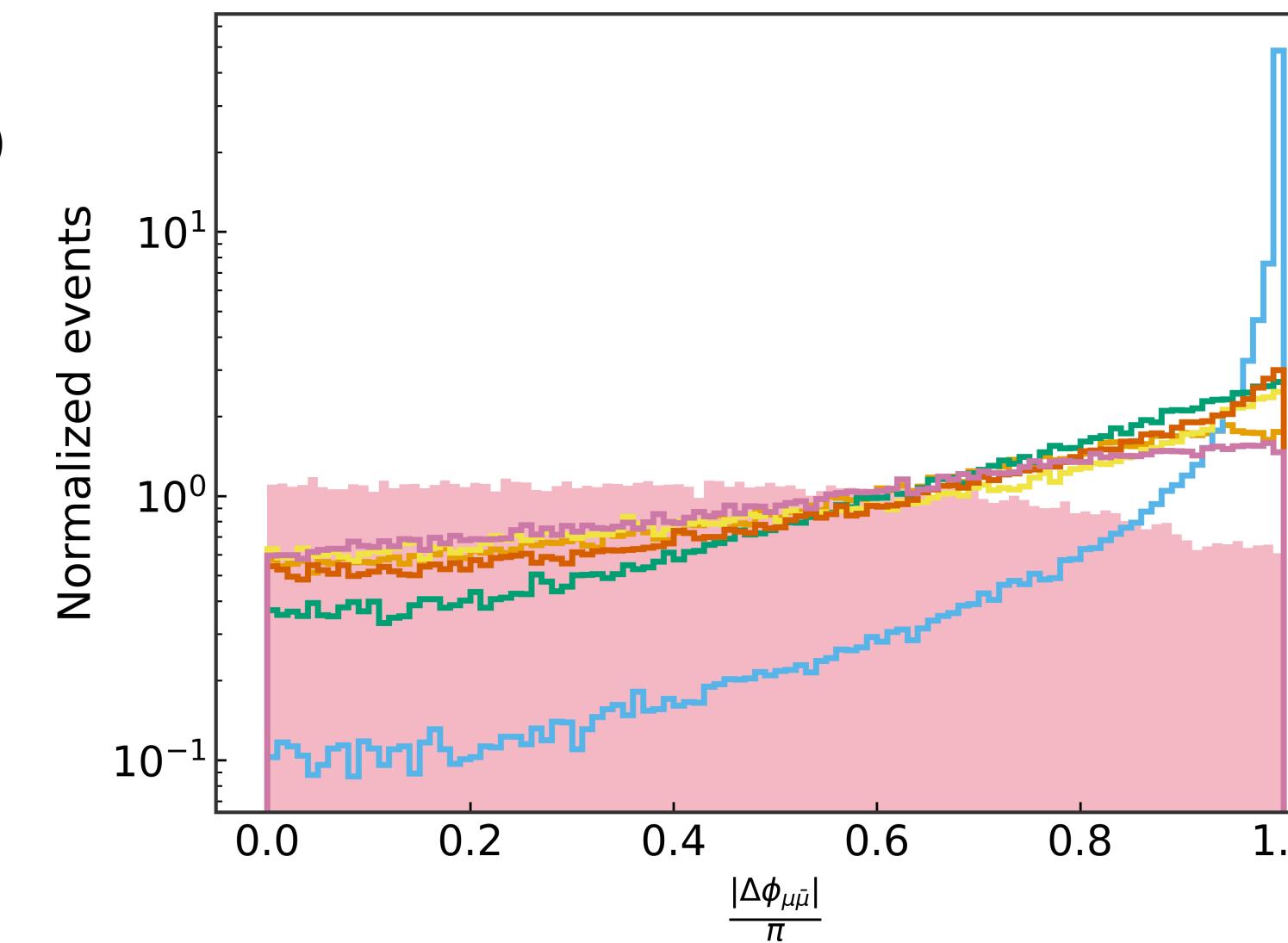
$\mu\bar{\mu}\gamma$

$\mu\bar{\mu}f\bar{f}$

$\mu\bar{\mu}W^-W^+$

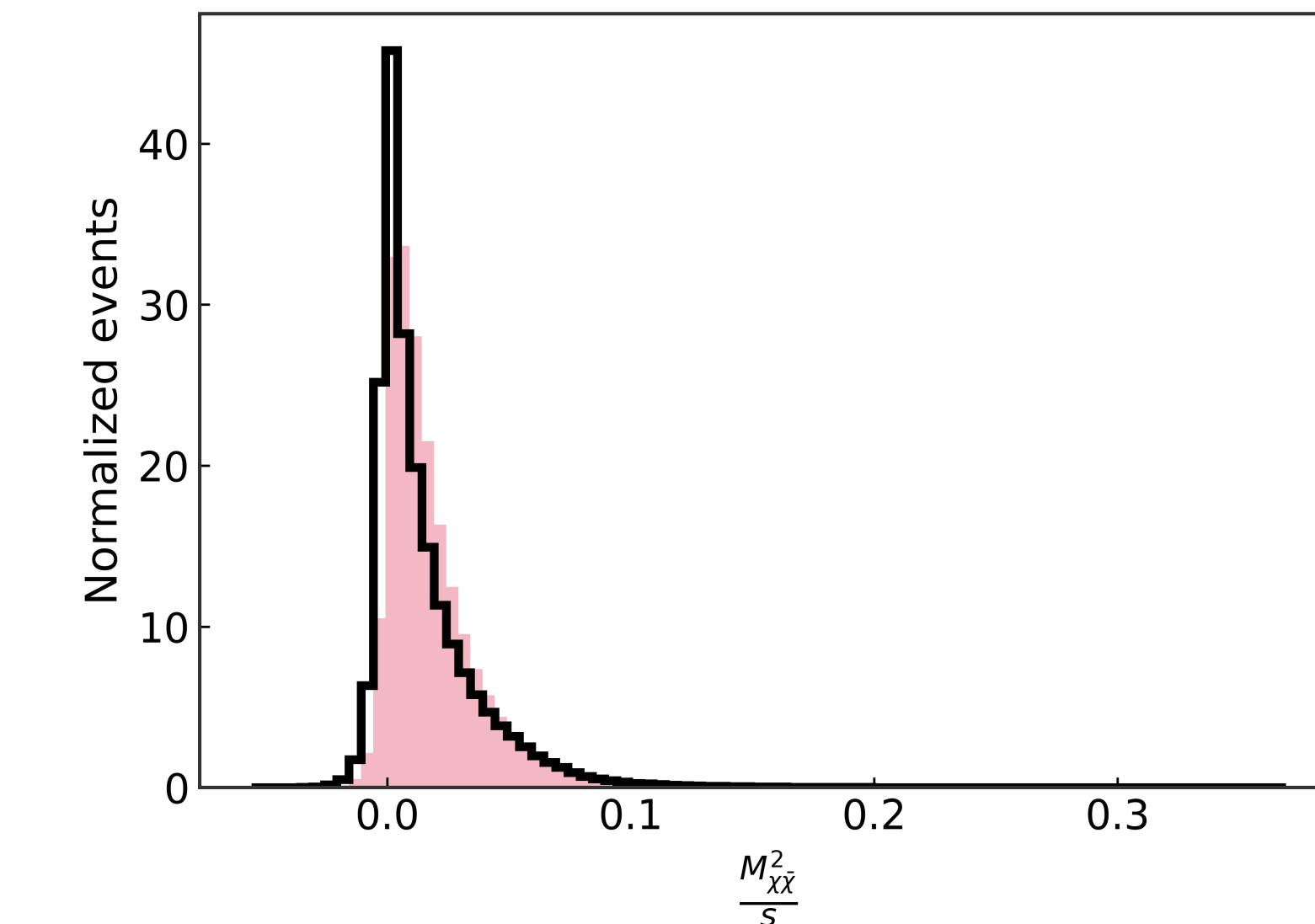
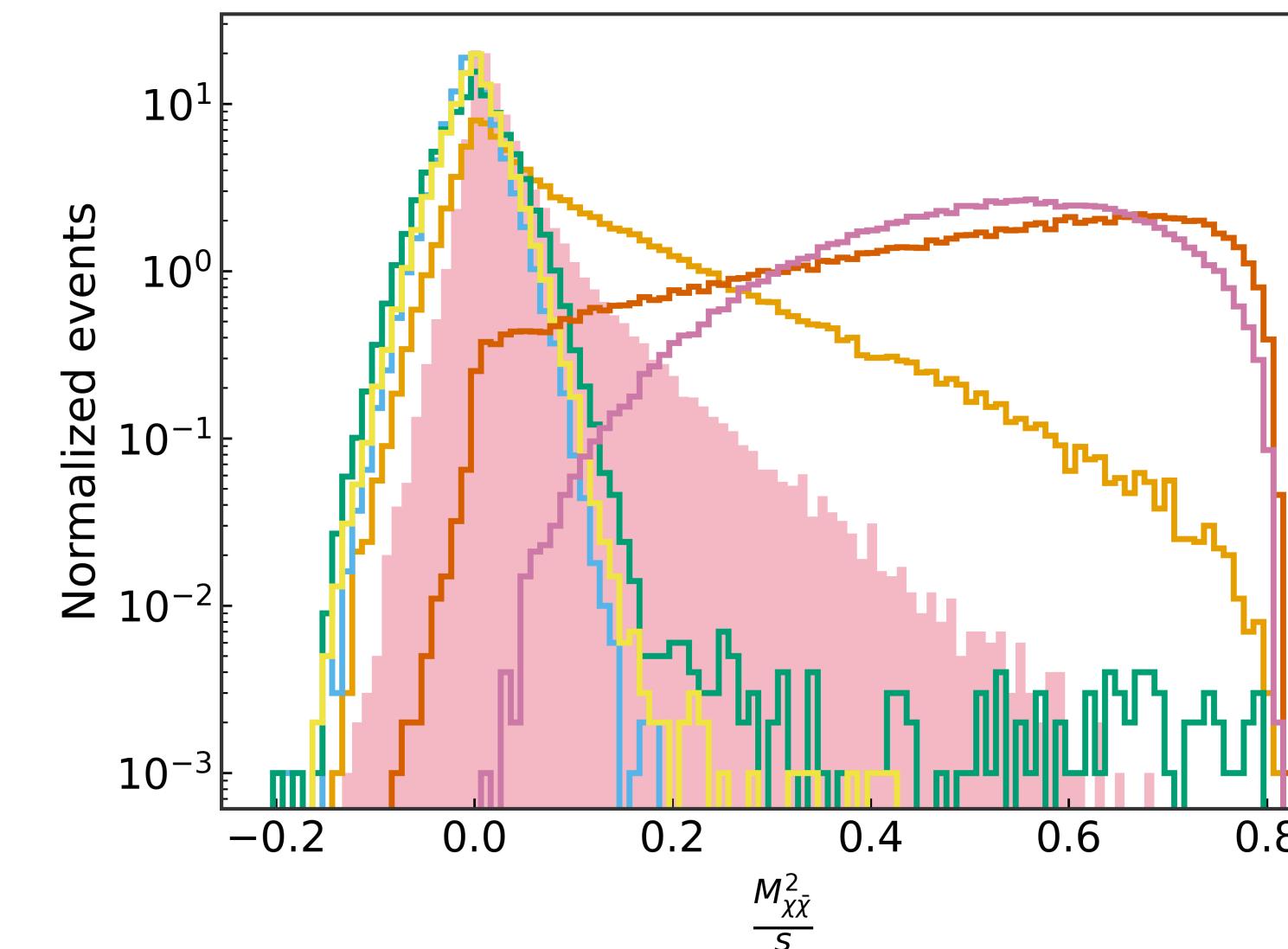
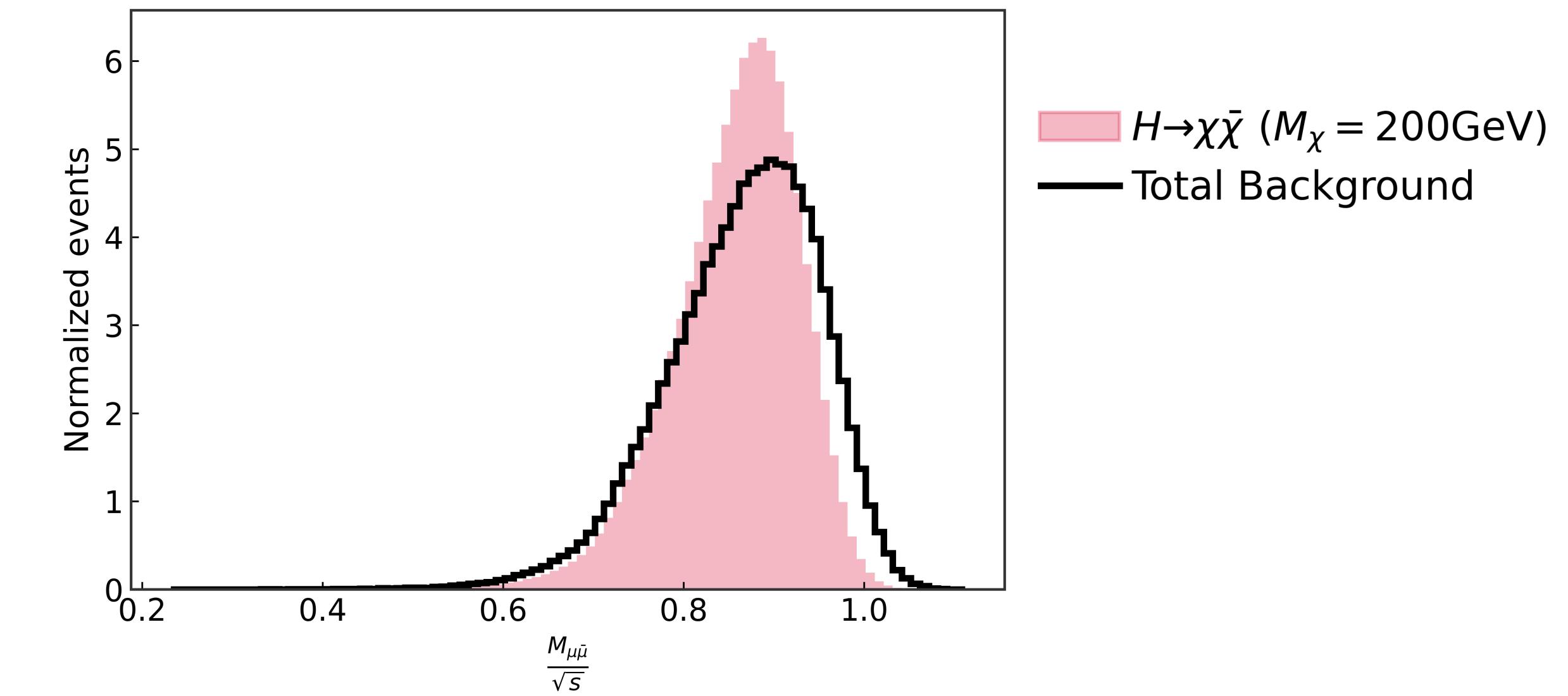
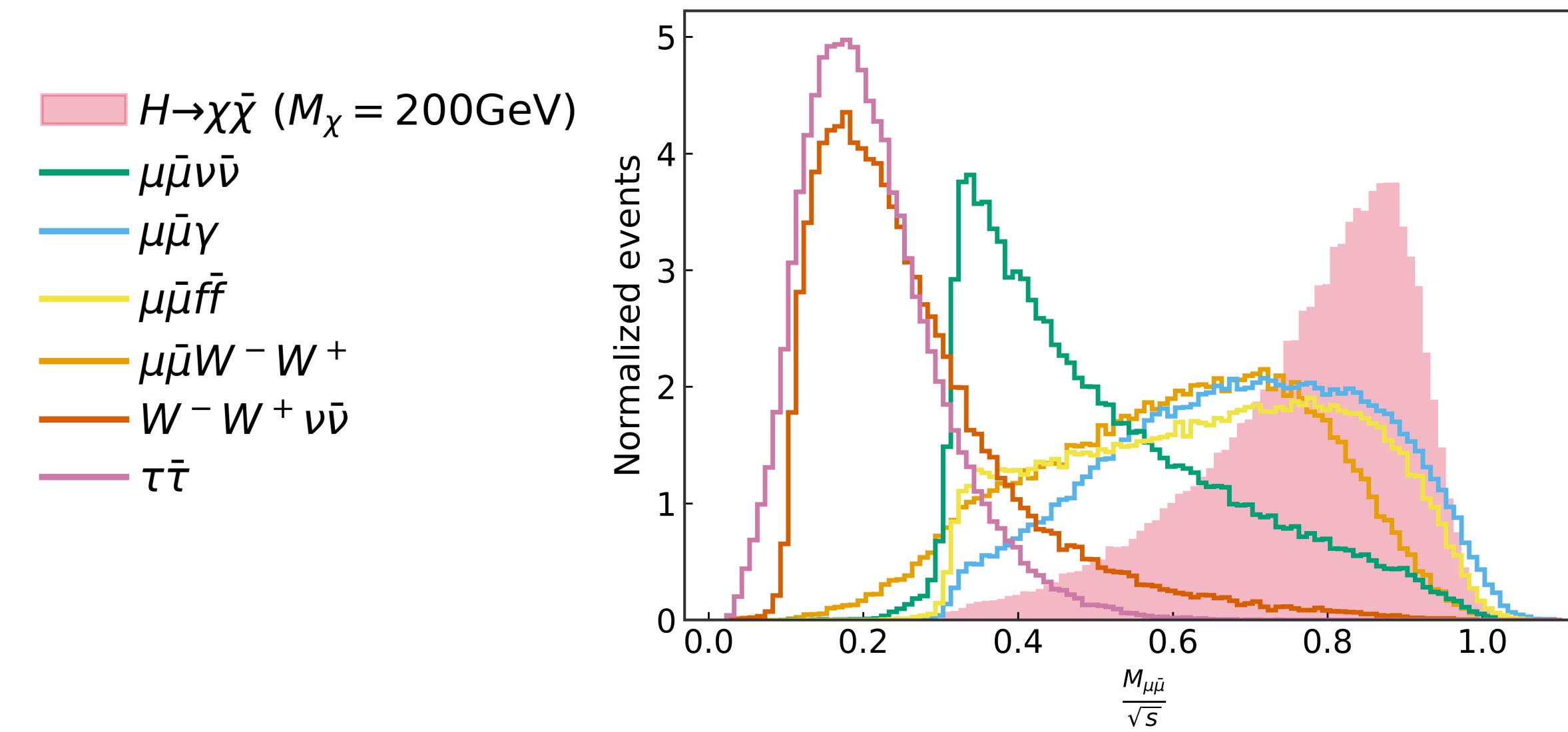
$W^-W^+\nu\bar{\nu}$

$\tau\bar{\tau}$



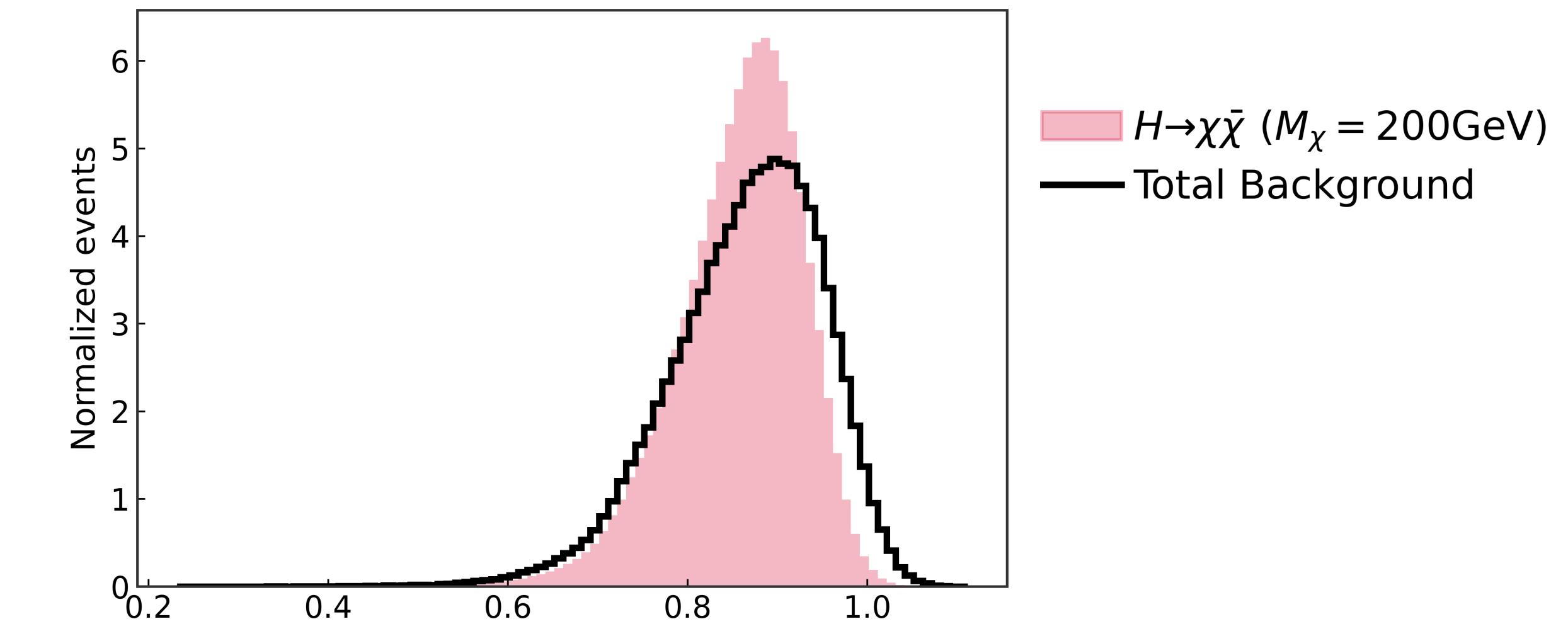
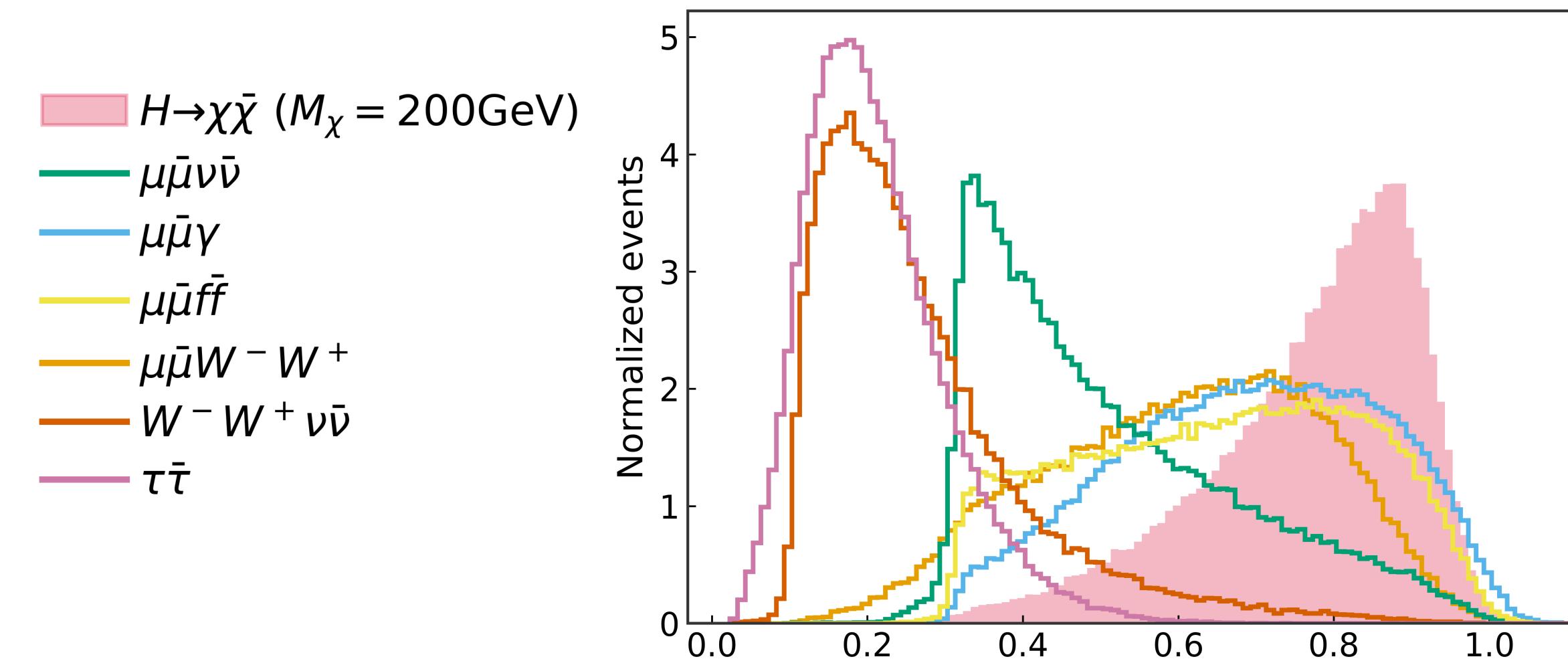
$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

NN

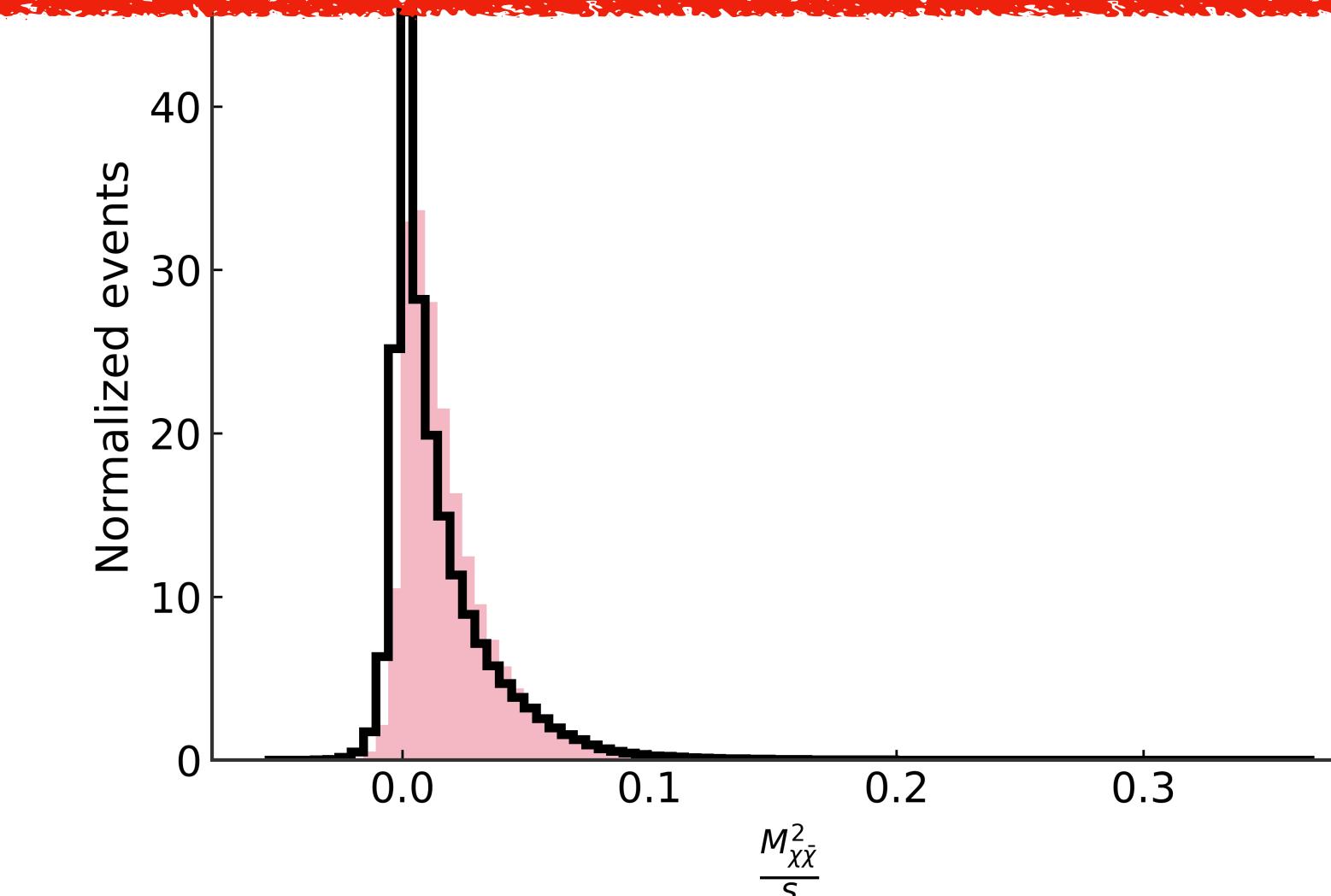
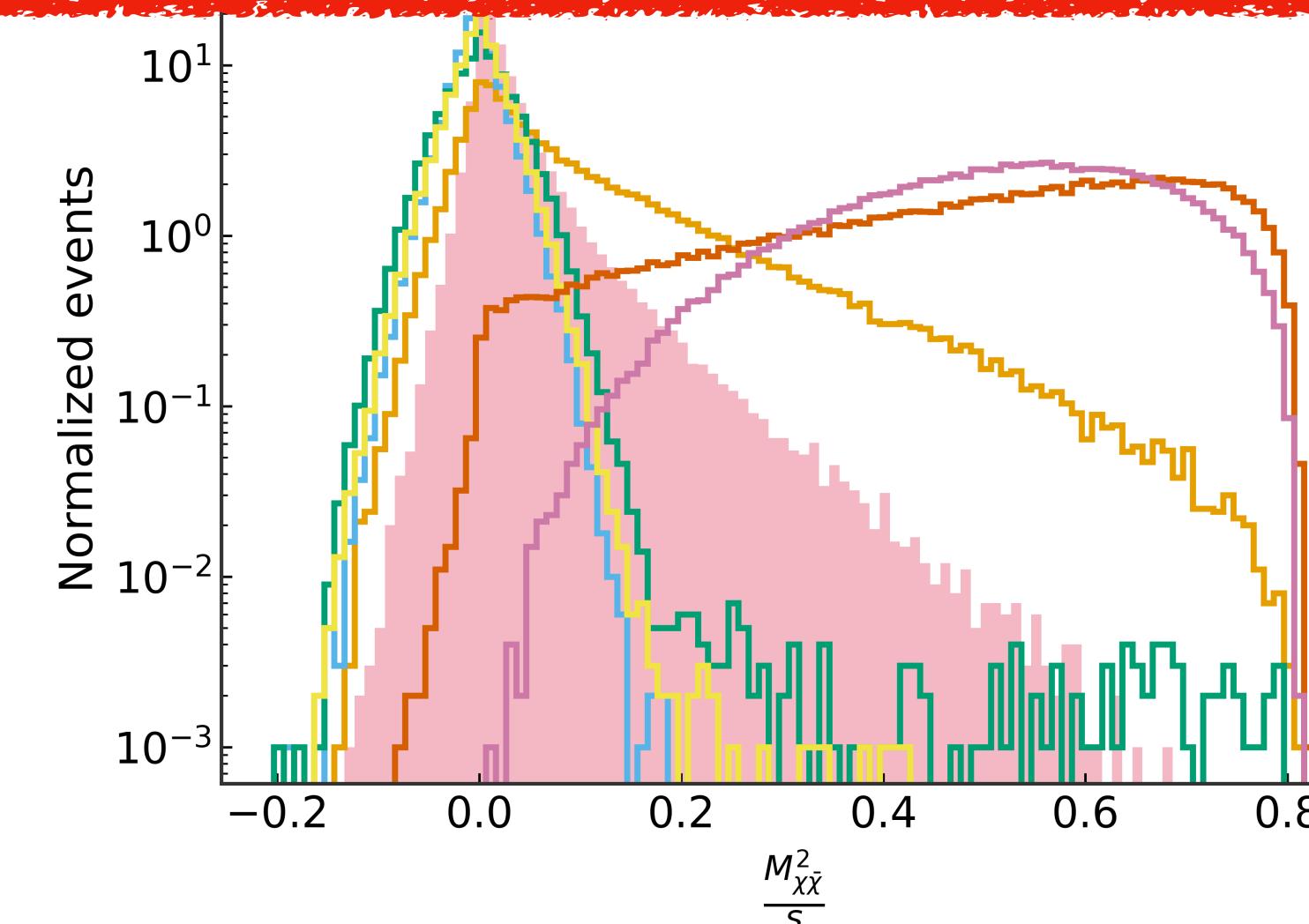


$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

NN

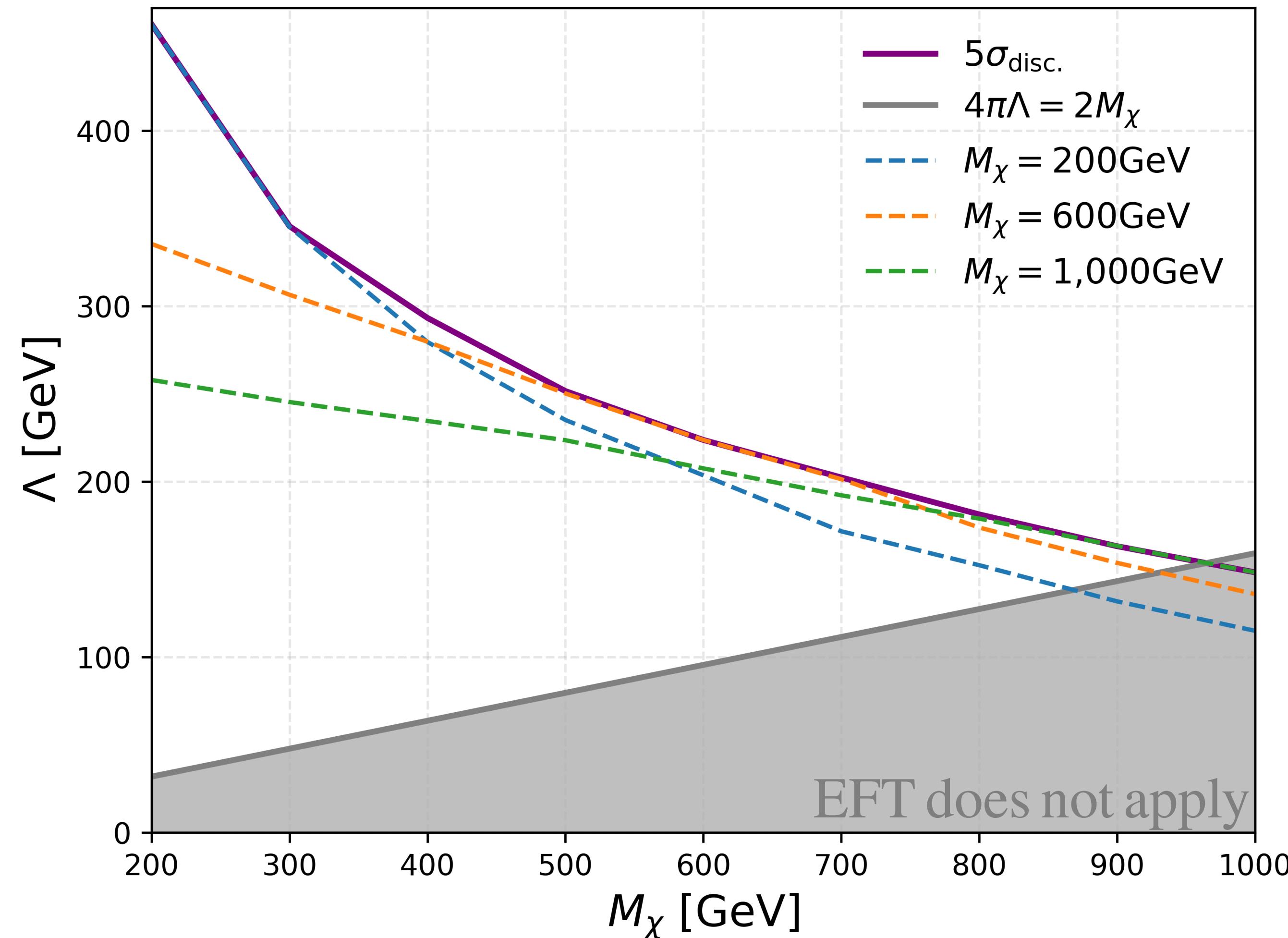


NN shapes the background to resemble the signal



Discovery potential

Results



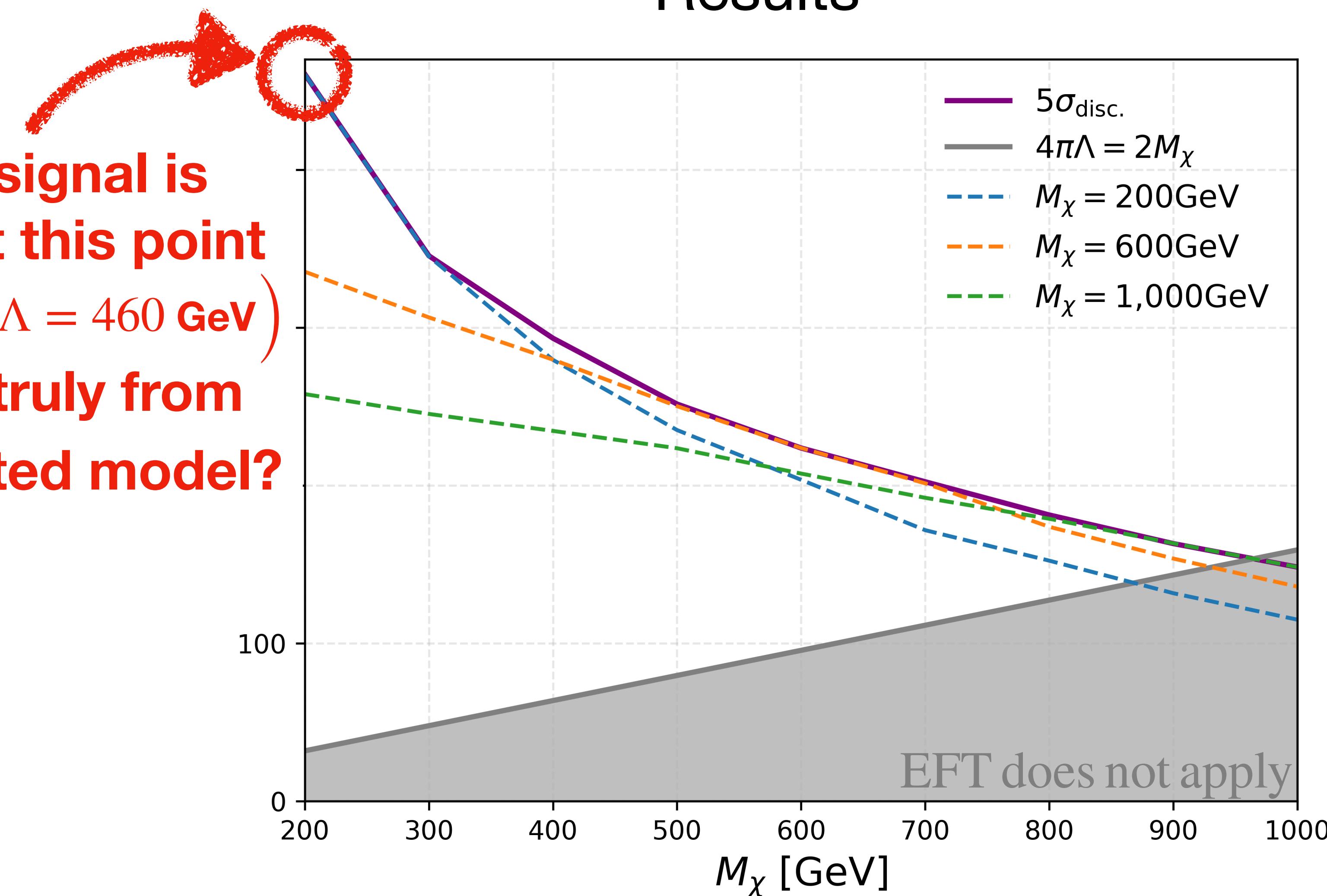
5σ discovery

Discovery potential

Results

Assuming a signal is confirmed at this point ($M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}, \Lambda = 460 \text{ GeV}$)

Is the signal truly from the H -mediated model?



5σ discovery

Mediator discrimination

Alternative models

$$m_S = m_A = m_H$$

- We introduce new BSM scalar S and pseudoscalar A , which give a similar signature. These fields are not involved in the EWSB.

$$\begin{cases} \mathcal{L}_S = \frac{1}{\Lambda_S} S Z^{\mu\nu} Z_{\mu\nu} + g_S S \bar{\chi} \chi \\ \mathcal{L}_A = \frac{1}{\Lambda_A} A \tilde{Z}^{\mu\nu} Z_{\mu\nu} + g_A A \bar{\chi} (i\gamma^5) \chi \end{cases}$$

- Different coupling structures induce distinct Z boson polarization contributions:
 $Z_{\pm} Z_{\pm} \rightarrow S/A \rightarrow \chi \bar{\chi}$ is dominant at high energy
- Helicity formalism reveals this difference as a characteristic angular correlation, $\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}$.

Mediator discrimination

Helicity formalism

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}} = C_0 + C_1 \cos(\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}) + C_2 \cos(2\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}) + S_1 \sin(\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}) + S_2 \sin(2\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}})$$

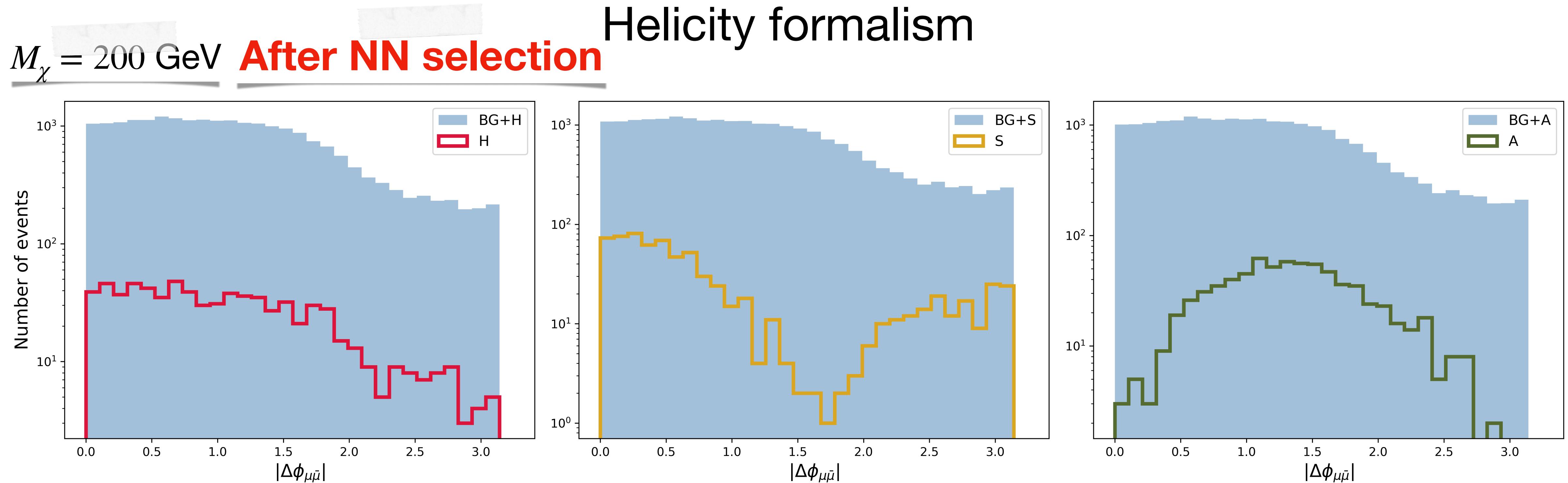
- $\frac{d\sigma_H}{d\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}} \approx C_0^H$

Surviving only with both
CP-conserving and
CP-violating terms

- $\frac{d\sigma_S}{d\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}} \approx C_0^S + C_2^S \cos(2\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}})$

- $\frac{d\sigma_A}{d\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}} \approx C_0^A - C_2^A \cos(2\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}})$

Mediator discrimination



The background covers the signal

→ Distribution alone is insufficient for discrimination

→ A hypothesis test is necessary

Mediator discrimination

Hypothesis test

- Neyman-Pearson lemma:
Likelihood ratio test is universally most powerful

- Test statistic Λ as log-likelihood ratio:

$$\Lambda = \log \frac{\mathcal{L}(\mathbb{H}_1)}{\mathcal{L}(\mathbb{H}_0)} \stackrel{\text{IID}}{=} \log \frac{\prod_i P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_1)}{\prod_i P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_0)} = \sum_i \log \frac{P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_1)}{P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_0)}$$

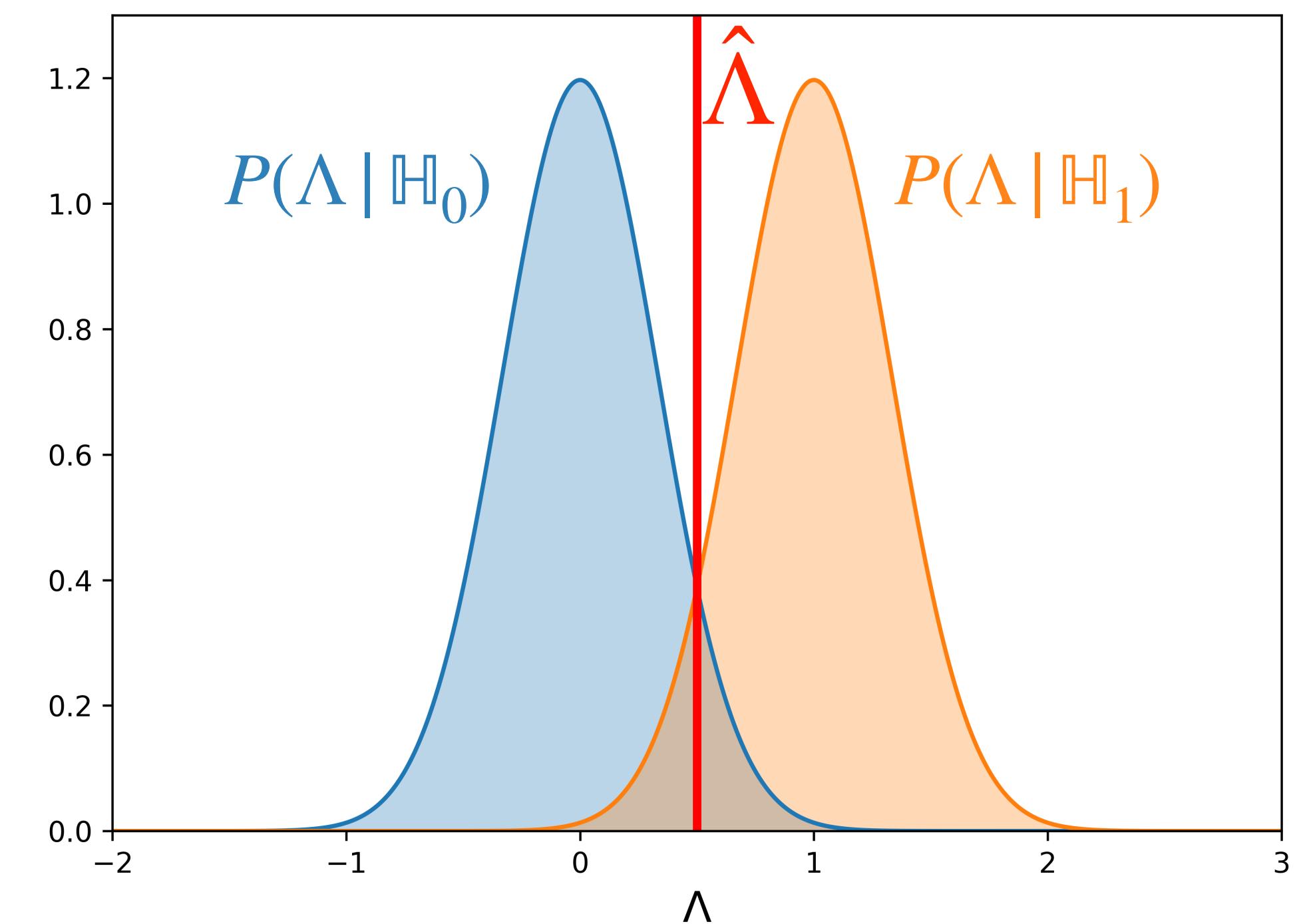
- Performing pseudoexperiments to obtain Λ distribution.

- Tail probability \mathcal{P} in a symmetric way:

$$\mathcal{P} = P(\Lambda > \hat{\Lambda} | \mathbb{H}_0) = P(\Lambda < \hat{\Lambda} | \mathbb{H}_1)$$

- Separation power Z :

$$\mathcal{P} = \int_{\tilde{Z}}^{\infty} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp(-x^2/2) dx \rightarrow Z = 2\tilde{Z} [\sigma]$$



Mediator discrimination

Hypothesis test

- To extract $[P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_1)/P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_0)]$, we construct an NN to classify events under two hypotheses, \mathbb{H}_0 and \mathbb{H}_1 .
- Optimally trained NN with Cross-entropy loss function satisfies

$$\frac{f(\vec{x}_i)}{1 - f(\vec{x}_i)} = \frac{P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_1)}{P(\vec{x}_i | \mathbb{H}_0)}$$

- Test statistic becomes

$$\Lambda = \sum_i \log \left(\frac{f(\vec{x}_i)}{1 - f(\vec{x}_i)} \right)$$

Mediator discrimination

Hypothesis test

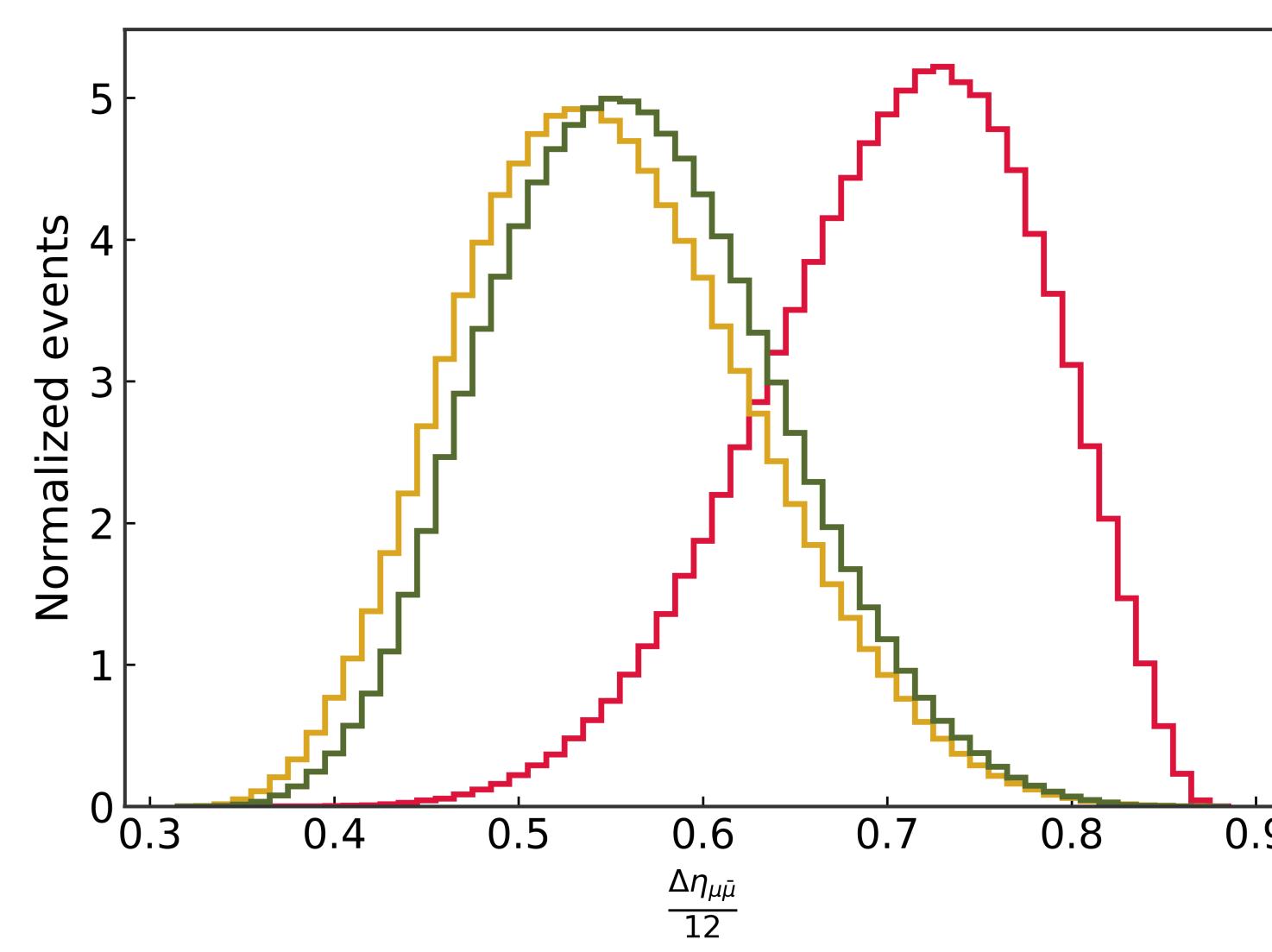
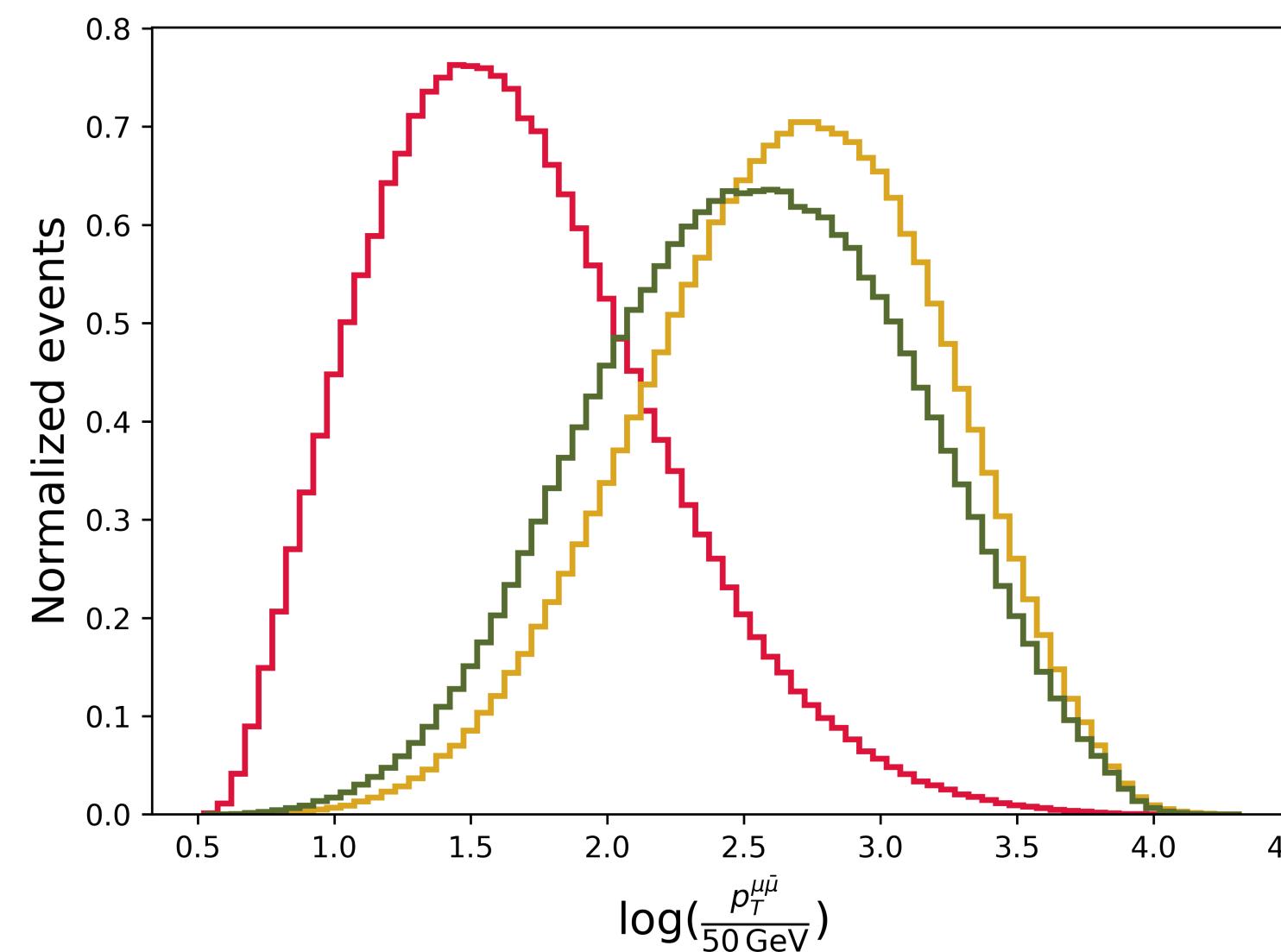
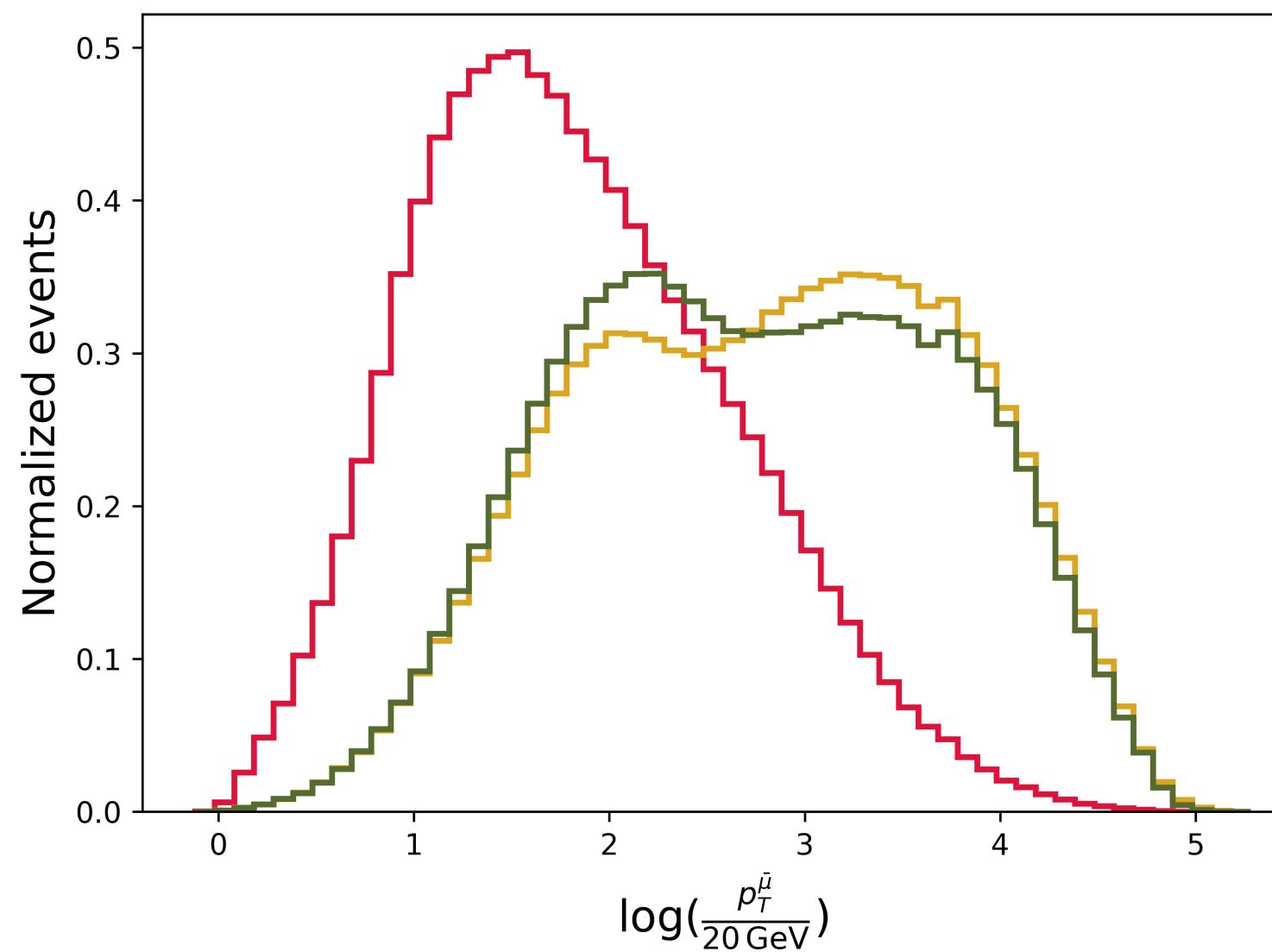
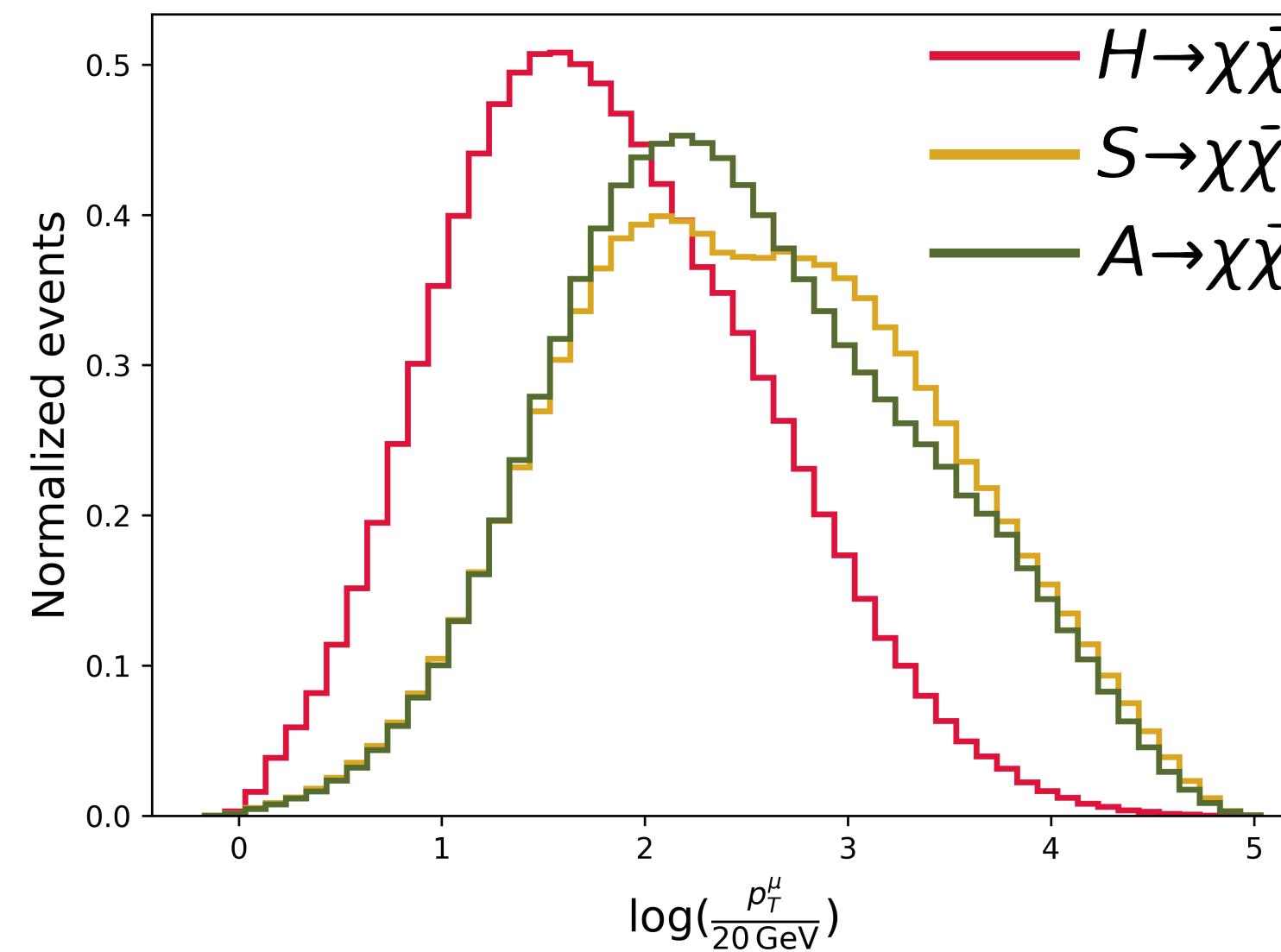
- The absence of interference between signal models and backgrounds allows NN training without background events.
- Five input features encoding properties of the ZZX coupling:

$$\log \left(\frac{p_T^{\mu(\bar{\mu})}}{20 \text{ GeV}} \right), \quad \log \left(\frac{p_T^{\mu\bar{\mu}}}{50 \text{ GeV}} \right), \quad \frac{\Delta\eta_{\mu\bar{\mu}}}{12}, \quad \frac{|\Delta\phi_{\mu\bar{\mu}}|}{\pi}$$

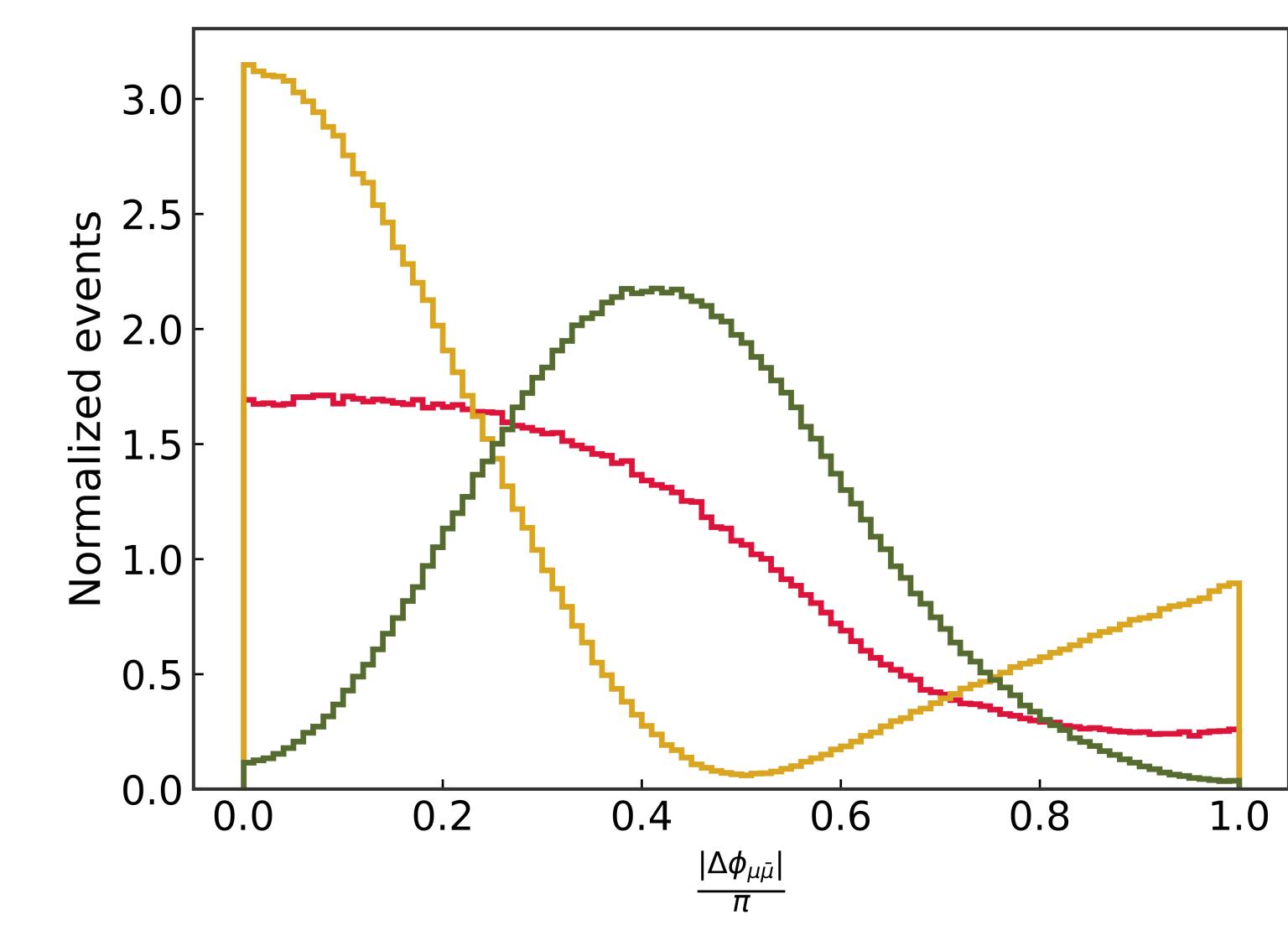
Mediator discrimination

$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$

Hypothesis test



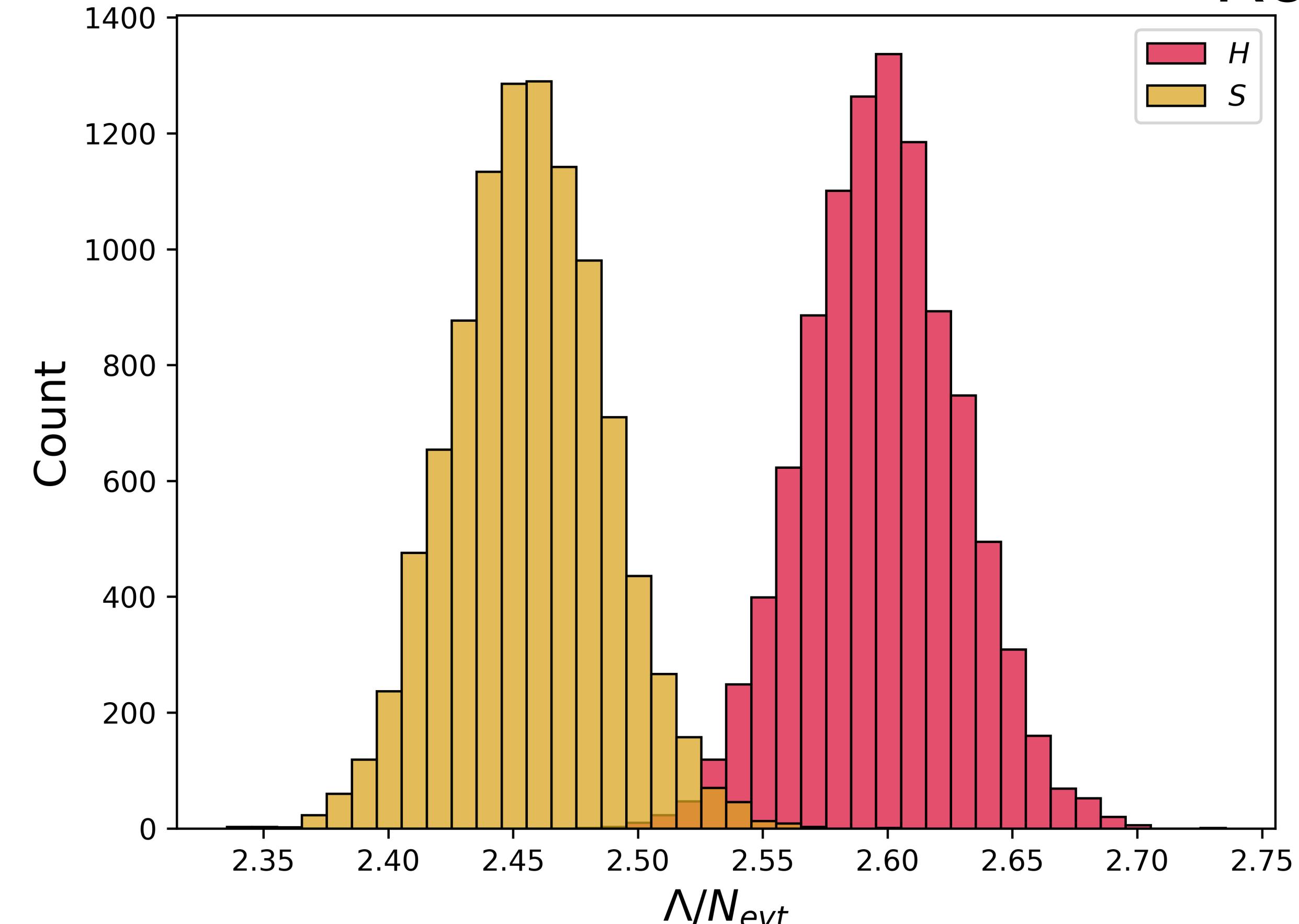
After NN selection, alternative models (S, A) show distributions distinct from the H -mediated signal, unlike the background



Mediator discrimination

Results

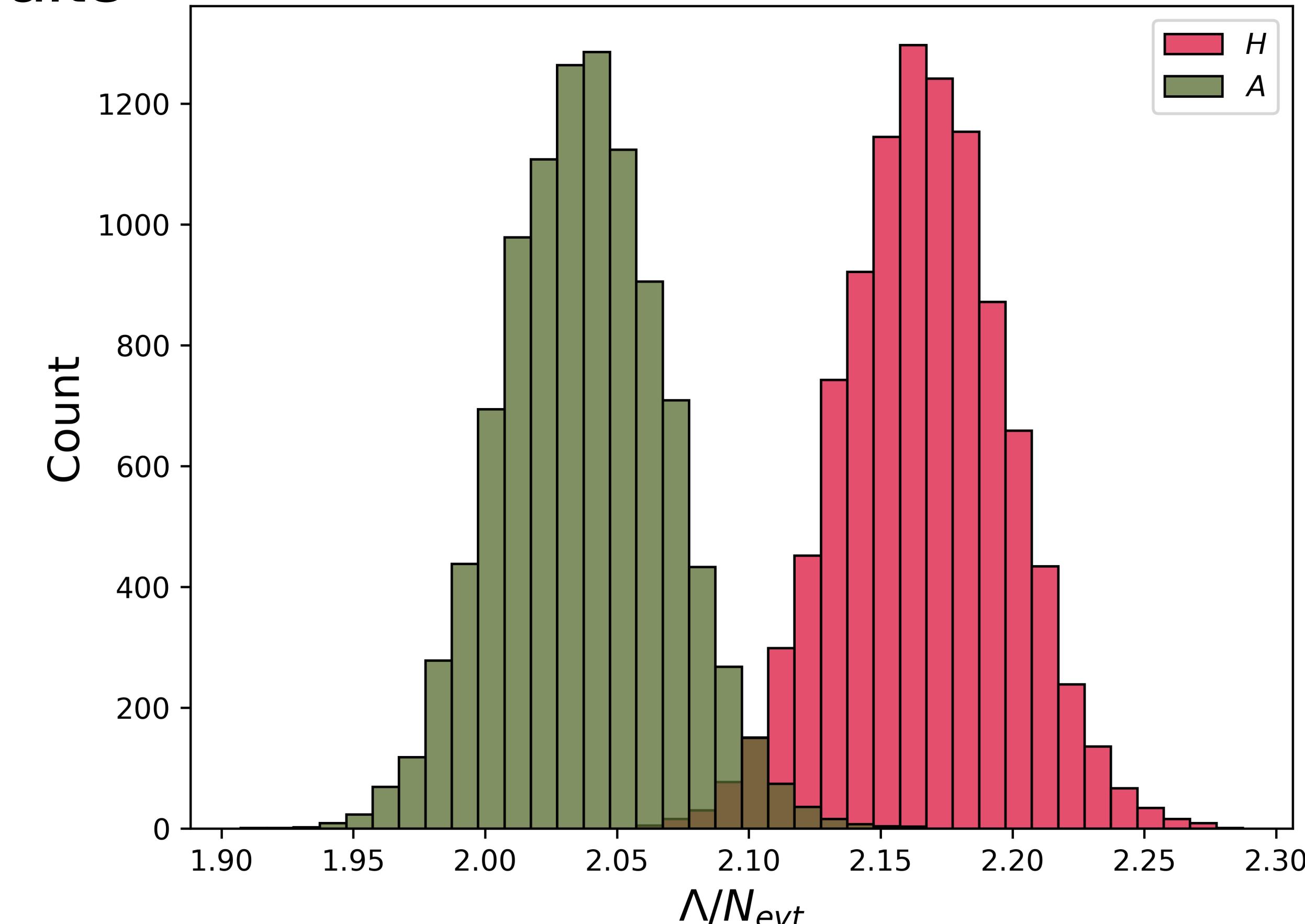
$M_\chi = 200 \text{ GeV}$



$\hat{\Lambda}: 2.53$

$\mathcal{P}: 0.012$

$Z: 4.51\sigma$



$\hat{\Lambda}: 2.13$

$\mathcal{P}: 0.017$

$Z: 4.26\sigma$

Conclusion

- High-energy MuC with a forward muon detector is an ideal place to search for new Higgs couplings.
- Clean environment of a muon collider allows high sensitivity with a relatively simple neural network.
- ML-based hypothesis test is an effective procedure for verifying whether an observed signal truly originates from the Higgs mediation.

Thank you