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\begin{abstract}
The excitation function of prompt Lyman- $\alpha$  radiation, produced by
electron impact excitation of atomic hydrogen in the energy range from
threshold to 1.8keV, has been measured in a crossed-beam experiment \footnote
{This work was performed in collaboration with J.A.Slevin, D.E.Shemansky,
J.W.McConkey, D.Dziczek, I.Kanik and J.M.Ajello} Measurements were carried out
using both magnetically confined and electrostatically focused electron beams
in collision with atomic hydrogen produced by an intense discharge source. A
vacuum ultraviolet monochromator was used to measure the emitted Lyman- $\alpha$ 
radiation. The absolute H (1s - 2p) cross section was obtained from the
experimental excitation function by normalization to the known oscillator
strength, with appropriate corrections for polarization and cascade. The
present data are significantly different from earlier experimental results
\footnote {R.Longn, D.M.Cox and S.J.Smith, J.Res.Nat.Bur .Stand.Sect .A:Phys.
Chem. {\bf72A}, 521 (1968)} \footnote {J. F. Williams, J. Phys.B.:At.Mol.Opt.Phys.
{\bf14}, 1197 (1981)} and are in good agreement with recent theoretical
convergent close coupling calculations \footnote {I.Bray, private communication
(1996)} over a two order of magnitude range in impact energy. Multistate
coupling affecting the excitation function to 1keV is apparent. In both the
present experimental and recent theoretical results.
\end{abstract}
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