FREE QUARK SEARCHES

The basis for much of the theory of particle scattering and hadron spectroscopy is the construction of the hadrons from a set of fractionally charged constituents (quarks). A central but unproven hypothesis of this theory, Quantum Chromodynamics, is that quarks cannot be observed as free particles but are confined to mesons and baryons.

Experiments show that it is at best difficult to "unglue" quarks. Accelerator searches at increasing energies have produced no evidence for free quarks, while only a few cosmic-ray and matter searches have produced uncorroborated events.

This compilation is only a guide to the literature, since the quoted experimental limits are often only indicative. Reviews can be found in Refs. 1–3.

References

1. P.F. Smith, Ann. Rev. Nucl. and Part. Sci. **39**, 73 (1989).
2. L. Lyons, Phys. Reports **129**, 225 (1985).
3. M. Marinelli and G. Morpurgo, Phys. Reports **85**, 161 (1982).