Dispersive estimates for magnetic Schrödinger operators

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Magnetic fields and semi-classical analysis

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General setting

Let $B : \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$ be a magnetic field and consider the Schrödinger operator H(B)in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^2)$ formally given by

 $H(B) = (i\nabla + A)^2$

where $A : \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}^2$ is such that $|A| \in L^2_{loc}(\mathbb{R}^2)$ and $\operatorname{curl} A = B$ holds in the distributional sense.

• We will work under the condition $|A| \in L^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^2)$; hence we define H(B) as the unique self-adjoint operator associated with the closed quadratic form

$$Q[u] = \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} |(i\nabla + A) u|^2 dx, \qquad d(Q) = W^{1,2}(\mathbb{R}^2).$$

General setting

Obviously, $H(B) \ge 0$. We assume that B is such that

 $\sigma(H(B)) = [0,\infty).$

Let $V : \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$ be a bounded electric potential with a suitable decay at infinity such that $\sigma_{es}(H(B) + V) = [0, \infty)$.

The problem: we want to study the influence of the magnetic on the asymptotic behavior of the solutions to the Schrödinger equation

 $i\,\partial_t u = \left(H(B) + V\right)u$

General setting

Hence the object our interest is the unitary group $e^{-it(H(B)+V)}$

In particular, we want to compare the time decay of

$$e^{-it(H(B)+V)}P_c^B$$
 as $t \to +\infty$

where P_c^B is the projection onto the continuous subspace of $L^2(\mathbb{R}^2)$ with respect to H(B) + V, with the decay of its non-magnetic counterpart:

$$e^{-it(-\Delta+V)}P_c$$
 as $t \to +\infty$

Here P_c is the projection onto the continuous subspace of $L^2(\mathbb{R}^2)$ with respect to $-\Delta + V$

Time decay: non-magnetic Schrödinger operators

 $\square L^1 \to L^\infty$ estimates: one considers the propagator $e^{-it(-\Delta+V)}P_c$ as operator from $L^1(\mathbb{R}^n)$ to $L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^n)$ and studies the time decay of the corresponding norm

$$\|e^{-it(-\Delta+V)} P_c\|_{L^1 \to L^\infty}$$

If V = 0, then

$$e^{it\Delta}(x,y) = (4\,i\,\pi\,t)^{-n/2} \,e^{\frac{i\,|x-y|^2}{4t}}, \qquad x,y \in \mathbb{R}^n$$

Hence

$$||e^{it\Delta}||_{L^1 \to L^\infty} \leq (4\pi t)^{-\frac{n}{2}} \quad t > 0.$$

Time decay: non-magnetic Schrödinger operators

An alternative, thought less precise, way to measure the time decay is to consider $e^{-it(-\Delta+V)}$ as an operator between weighted L^2 -spaces;

$$e^{-it(-\Delta+V)} P_c : L^2(\mathbb{R}^n, \rho^2 \, dx) \to L^2(\mathbb{R}^n, \rho^{-2} \, dx),$$

or equivalently

$$\rho^{-1} e^{-it(-\Delta+V)} P_c \rho^{-1} : L^2(\mathbb{R}^n) \to L^2(\mathbb{R}^n),$$

where $\rho > 0$ is a suitable weight function.

For V = 0 the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality gives

$$\|\rho^{-1} e^{it\Delta} \rho^{-1} u\|_{L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)} \lesssim t^{-\frac{n}{2}} \|\rho^{-1}\|_{L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)}^2 \|u\|_{L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)}$$

provided

$$\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\frac{n}{2} + \varepsilon}, \quad \varepsilon > 0.$$

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Time decay: non-magnetic Schrödinger operators

If $V \neq 0$, then the decay rate depends on the validity of the estimate

$$\limsup_{z \to 0} \| \rho^{-1} (-\Delta + V - z)^{-1} \rho^{-1} \|_{2 \to 2} < \infty$$
⁽¹⁾

If (1) holds true for some ρ , then we say that zero is a regular point of $-\Delta + V$; (generic situation).

Zero is not a regular point of $-\Delta$ in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$ for n = 1, 2.

Zero is a regular point of $-\Delta$ in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n)$ for $n \geq 3$:

$$\limsup_{z \to 0} \| \rho^{-1} (-\Delta - z)^{-1} \rho^{-1} \|_{2 \to 2} < \infty$$

if $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\beta}$, with $\beta \ge 1$.

Time decay: non-magnetic Schrödinger operators

Dimension n = 3. If zero is a regular point of $-\Delta + V$, then as $t \to \infty$

$$\| \rho^{-1} e^{-it(-\Delta+V)} P_c \rho^{-1} \|_{2\to 2} = \mathcal{O}(t^{-\frac{3}{2}})$$
(2)

[Rauch 1978]: $\rho(x) = e^{\varepsilon |x|}$ and $V(x) \lesssim e^{-\varepsilon |x|}$, $\varepsilon > 0$.

[Jensen-Kato 1979]: $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\beta}, \beta > 5/2$, and $V(x) \lesssim (1 + |x|)^{-3}$.

[Journeé-Soffer-Sogge 1991, Goldberg-Schlag 2004, Goldberg 2006]

If zero is not a regular point of $-\Delta + V$, then (2) fails and one observes a slower decay: [Rauch 1978, Jensen-Kato 1979, Murata 1982]

Time decay: non-magnetic Schrödinger operators

Dimension n = 2. [Schlag 2005] : if zero is a regular point of $-\Delta + V$, then

$$\| \rho^{-1} e^{-it(-\Delta+V)} P_c \rho^{-1} \|_{2\to 2} = \mathcal{O}(t^{-1}) \qquad t \to \infty.$$
(3)

holds for $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\beta}$, $\beta > 1$ and $V(x) \leq (1 + |x|)^{-3}$. This is again the decay rate of the free evolution. However, (3) can be improved, still under the condition that zero is a regular point, provided ρ grows fast enough:

$$\| \rho^{-1} e^{-it(-\Delta+V)} P_c \rho^{-1} \|_{2\to 2} = \mathcal{O}(t^{-1} (\log t)^{-2}) \qquad t \to \infty$$
 (4)

where $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\beta}$, $\beta > 3$, and $V(x) \leq (1 + |x|^2)^{-3}$, [Murata 82], see also [Goldberg-Green 2013].

Hence adding a potential V might improve the decay rate, contrary to the case $n \geq 3$.

Time decay: magnetic Schrödinger operators

Dimension n = 3. [Murata: 1982] showed, under suitable regularity and decay assumptions on B and V, that if zero is a regular point of H(B) + V, and $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\beta}$ with β large enough, then

$$\|\rho^{-1} e^{-it(H(B)+V)} P_c \rho^{-1} \|_{2\to 2} = \mathcal{O}(t^{-3/2}) \qquad t \to \infty$$
(5)

Moreover it follows from [Murata: 1982] hat the decay rate in (5) is sharp. Hence a magnetic field, decaying at infinity, does not improve the decay rate of $e^{-it(H(B)+V)}$ in dimension three.

Dimension n = 2. Our motivation is to show that a compactly supported magnetic field in dimension two **does improve** the decay of $e^{-it(H(B)+V)}$ as $t \to \infty$ and that the decay rate is given by its **total flux**.

Main results: weighted
$$L^2$$
-estimates

Assumption 1: Let $B \in C^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^2; \mathbb{R})$ be such that for some $\sigma > 4$ we have

$$\sup_{\theta \in (0,2\pi)} \left(|B(r,\theta)| + |\partial_{\theta}B(r,\theta)| \right) \lesssim (1+r)^{-\sigma}.$$

Under this assumption we can define the following quantities:

$$\alpha = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} B(x) \, dx < \infty, \qquad \mu(\alpha) := \min_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} |k - \alpha| \in [0, 1/2].$$

Assumption 2: Let $V : \mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}$ be bounded and such that the operator H(B) + V has no positive eigenvalues.

•
$$\sigma_{es}(H(B) + V) = \sigma_c(H(B) + V) = [0, \infty).$$

Main results: weighted L^2 -estimates

Theorem (K.): Let $\alpha \notin \mathbb{Z}$. Put $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^s$ with s > 5/2 and suppose that $|V(x)| \leq (1 + |x|)^{-3}$. If zero is a regular point of H(B) + V, then there exists an operator

$$K(B,V) \in \mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$$

such that

$$\rho^{-1} \ e^{-it(H(B)+V)} P_c^B \ \rho^{-1} \ = \ t^{-1-\mu(\alpha)} K(B,V) + o(t^{-1-\mu(\alpha)})$$

in $\mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$ as $t \to \infty$.

Main results: weighted L^2 -estimates

The maximal decay rate $t^{-3/2}$, for $\mu(\alpha) = 1/2$, is the same as in dimension three.

The operator K(B,V) can be expressed explicitly in terms of B and V. Its L^2 -norm is gauge-invariant.

If $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^{\beta}$ then we must have $\beta \ge 1$.

If V = 0, then zero is a regular point of H(B):

$$\frac{1}{1+|x|^2} \lesssim H(B)$$

in the sense of quadratic forms on $W^{1,2}(\mathbb{R}^2)$; [Laptev-Weidl 1999].

Main results: weighted L^2 -estimates

Theorem (K.): Let $\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}$. Put $\rho(x) = (1 + |x|)^s$ with s > 5/2 and suppose that $|V(x)| \leq (1 + |x|)^{-3}$. If zero is a regular point of H(B) + V, then there exists an operator

$$\widetilde{K}(B,V) \in \mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$$

such that

$$\rho^{-1} e^{-it(H(B)+V)} P_c^B \rho^{-1} = t^{-1}(\log t)^{-2} \widetilde{K}(B,V) + o(t^{-1}(\log t)^{-2})$$

in $\mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$ as $t \to \infty$.

Main ingredients of the proof

Assume that $\alpha \notin \mathbb{Z}$ and that V = 0.

By the spectral theorem and Stone formula we have

$$\rho^{-1} e^{-itH(B)} \rho^{-1} = \int_0^\infty e^{-it\lambda} E(\alpha, \lambda) d\lambda, \tag{6}$$

where $E(\alpha, \lambda)$ is the (weighted) spectral density associated to H(B):

$$E(\alpha,\lambda) = \frac{1}{2\pi i} \lim_{\varepsilon \to 0+} \rho^{-1} \left[(H(B) - \lambda - i\varepsilon)^{-1} - (H(B) - \lambda + i\varepsilon)^{-1} \right] \rho^{-1}$$

We will use the notation

$$R_{+}(\alpha,\lambda) = \lim_{\varepsilon \to 0+} (H(B) - \lambda - i\varepsilon)^{-1}$$

Main ingredients of the proof

Let $\phi \in C^{\infty}(0,\infty)$, $0 \le \phi \le 1$, be such that $\phi(x) = 0$ for x large enough and $\phi(x) = 1$ in a neighborhood of 0.

$$\int_0^\infty e^{-it\lambda} E(\alpha,\lambda) \, d\lambda = \int_0^\infty e^{-it\lambda} \left(1-\phi\right) E(\alpha,\lambda) \, d\lambda + \int_0^\infty e^{-it\lambda} \, \phi \, E(\alpha,\lambda) \, d\lambda$$

Our aim is to show that

$$\int_0^\infty e^{-it\lambda} \left(1 - \phi(\lambda)\right) E(\alpha, \lambda) \, d\lambda = o(t^{-2})$$

and

$$\int_0^\infty e^{-it\lambda} \phi(\lambda) E(\alpha, \lambda) d\lambda = t^{-1-\mu(\alpha)} K(B, V) + o(t^{-1-\mu(\alpha)})$$

in $\mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$ as $t \to \infty$.

Main ingredients of the proof

We need to prove that

$$E(\alpha, \lambda) = E_1 \lambda^{\mu(\alpha)} + o(\lambda^{\mu(\alpha)}) \qquad \lambda \to 0$$

for some $E_1 \in \mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$. We have to show that

$$\rho^{-1} R_+(\alpha, \lambda) \rho^{-1} = F_0 + F_1 \lambda^{\mu(\alpha)} + o(\lambda^{\mu(\alpha)}) \qquad \lambda \to 0.$$

Recall that in the absence of magnetic field we have

$$\rho^{-1} R_+(\lambda) \rho^{-1} = \widetilde{F}_0 \log \lambda + \mathcal{O}(1) \qquad \lambda \to 0.$$

Resolvent expansion at threshold

Consider a radial magnetic field B_0 generated by the vector potential

$$A_0(x) = \alpha \left(-x_2, x_1\right) \begin{cases} |x|^{-1} & |x| \le 1\\ |x|^{-2} & |x| > 1 \end{cases} \quad \nabla \cdot A_0 = 0.$$

$$B_0(x) = \operatorname{curl} A_0(x) = \begin{cases} \alpha |x|^{-1} & |x| \le 1\\ 0 & |x| > 1 \end{cases}, \quad \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} B_0(x) \, dx = \alpha.$$

Using the partial wave decomposition, after some calculations we find that

$$\rho^{-1} R^0_+(\alpha, \lambda) \rho^{-1} = G_0 + G_1 \lambda^{\mu(\alpha)} + o(\lambda^{\mu(\alpha)}) \quad \lambda \to 0$$

for some G_0, G_1 in $\mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$, where $R^0_+(\alpha, \lambda)$ is the resolvent of $H(B_0)$.

Resolvent expansion at threshold

Lemma: Let $\alpha > 0$ be the flux of B through \mathbb{R}^2 . Then there exists a bounded vector field $A = (a_1, a_2)$ s. t. curl $A = \partial_1 a_2 - \partial_2 a_1 = B$ in the distributional sense, and

$$|\nabla \cdot A(x)| = o(|x|^{-3}), \quad |A(x) - A_0(x)| = o(|x|^{-3})$$

The above Lemma implies that

$$T(B) := H(B) - H(B_0) = 2i \underbrace{(A - A_0)}_{o\left(|x|^{-3}\right)} \cdot \nabla + \underbrace{i \nabla \cdot A}_{o\left(|x|^{-3}\right)} + \underbrace{|A|^2 - |A_0|^2}_{o\left(|x|^{-3}\right)}$$

since $\nabla \cdot A_0 = 0$. This allows us to show that the operator

$$G_0 \ \rho T(B) \ \rho = \rho^{-1} H(B_0)^{-1} T(B) \ \rho$$

is compact in $\mathscr{B}(L^2(\mathbb{R}^2))$.

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Resolvent expansion at threshold

With this we prove that $1 + G_0 \rho T(B) \rho$ is invertible in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^2)$. Then

$$1 + \rho^{-1} R^0_+(\alpha, \lambda) T(B) \rho = 1 + G_0 \rho T(B) \rho + G_1 \rho T(B) \rho \lambda^{\mu(\alpha)} + o(\lambda^{\mu(\alpha)})$$

is invertible for λ small enough. From the resolvent equation we thus obtain

$$\rho^{-1} R_{+}(\alpha, \lambda) \rho^{-1} = \left(1 + \rho^{-1} R_{+}^{0}(\alpha, \lambda) T(B) \rho\right)^{-1} \rho^{-1} R_{+}^{0}(\alpha, \lambda) \rho^{-1}$$

Since

$$\left(1+\rho^{-1}R^{0}_{+}(\alpha,\lambda)\ T(B)\ \rho\right)^{-1} = (1+G_{0}\ \rho\ T(B)\ \rho)^{-1} + S(B)\ \lambda^{\mu(\alpha)} + o(\lambda^{\mu(\alpha)}),$$

we arrive at

$$\rho^{-1} R_{+}(\alpha, \lambda) \rho^{-1} = F_{0} + F_{1} \lambda^{\mu(\alpha)} + o(\lambda^{\mu(\alpha)}) \qquad \lambda \to 0.$$

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Remark

In order that the coefficients of $H(B_1, V) - H(B_2, V)$ decay faster than $o(|x|^{-1})$ at infinity, the fluxes of B_1 and B_2 must be equal.

Indeed, if $\operatorname{curl} A_1 = B_1$ and $\operatorname{curl} A_2 = B_2$, then by the Stokes Theorem we have

$$|A_1(x) - A_2(x)| = o(|x|^{-1}) \quad |x| \to \infty \quad \Rightarrow \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} B_1(x) \, dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}^2} B_2(x) \, dx.$$

 $L^1 \to L^\infty$ estimates: scaling critical Schrödinger operators We consider Schrödinger operators in $L^2(\mathbb{R}^n), n \ge 2$ of the form

$$H(A,a) = \left(-i\nabla + |x|^{-1} A\left(\frac{x}{|x|}\right)\right)^2 + |x|^{-2} a\left(\frac{x}{|x|}\right),$$

where $A \in W^{1,\infty}(\mathbb{S}^{n-1},\mathbb{R}^n)$, $a \in W^{1,\infty}(\mathbb{S}^{n-1},\mathbb{R})$ and \mathbb{S}^{n-1} denotes the n-dimensional unit sphere.

Under the scaling $x\mapsto \lambda\,x$ we have

$$H(A,a) \mapsto \lambda^{-2} H(A,a).$$

We are interested in the unitary group $e^{-itH(A,a)}$ generated by H(A,a).

$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: scaling critical Schrödinger operators

The behaviour of $e^{-itH(A,a)}$ is closely related to the spectral properties of the operator

$$L(A, a) = (-i\nabla_{\mathbb{S}^{n-1}} + A)^2 + a$$
 in $L^2(\mathbb{S}^{n-1})$,

where $\nabla_{\mathbb{S}^{n-1}}$ denotes the spherical gradient on \mathbb{S}^{n-1} . If $A \equiv a \equiv 0$, then L(A, a) coincides with the Laplace-Beltrami operator on $L^2(\mathbb{S}^{n-1})$. The spectrum of L(A, a) is purely discrete.

We denote by $\{\lambda_k(A, a)\}$ and $\{\psi_k\}$ the sequences of its eigenvalues and normalized eigenfunctions:

$$L(A, a) \psi_k = \lambda_k(A, a) \psi_k, \qquad \|\psi_k\|_{L^2(\mathbb{S}^{n-1})} = 1.$$

$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: scaling critical Schrödinger operators

Theorem (Fanelli, Grillo, K.): Let $n \ge 2$ and assume that $\lambda_1(A, a) \ge 0$. Denote by

$$g(n) = \sqrt{\left(\frac{n-2}{2}\right)^2 + \lambda_1(A,a)} - \frac{n-2}{2} \ge 0.$$

If, for all t > 0 and some C_0 , the following estimate holds

$$\| e^{-itH(A,a)} \|_{L^1(\mathbb{R}^n) \to L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^n)} \leq C_0 t^{-\frac{n}{2}},$$

then there exists a constant C such that

$$\left\| |x|^{-g(n)} e^{-itH(A,a)} |x|^{-g(n)} \right\|_{L^{1}(\mathbb{R}^{n}) \to L^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^{n})} \leq C t^{-\frac{n}{2}-g(n)}$$

holds for all t > 0.

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$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: scaling critical Schrödinger operators

One of the main ingredients of the proof is the representation formula for the integral kernel of $e^{-itH(A,a)}$ which was found by **[Fanelli-Felli-Fontelos-Primo, 14]**, for any $u_0 \in C_0^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^n)$ we have

$$\left(e^{-itH(A,a)}\,u_0\right)(x) = -\frac{i\,e^{\frac{i|x|^2}{4t}}}{(2t)^{n/2}}\,\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} K\left(\frac{x}{\sqrt{2t}},\frac{y}{\sqrt{2t}}\right)e^{\frac{i|y|^2}{4t}}\,u_0(y)\,dy,$$

where

$$K(x,y) = (|x||y|)^{\frac{2-n}{2}} \sum_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} i^{-\beta_k} J_{\beta_k}(|x||y|) \ \psi_k\left(\frac{x}{|x|}\right) \overline{\psi_k\left(\frac{y}{|y|}\right)} \ ,$$

and

$$\alpha_k = \frac{n-1}{2} - \sqrt{\left(\frac{n-2}{2}\right)^2 + \lambda_k(A,a)}, \qquad \beta_k = \sqrt{\left(\frac{n-2}{2}\right)^2 + \lambda_k(A,a)}$$

$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: Aharonov-Bohm operator

If we put n = 2, a = 0 and

$$A(x) = A_{ab}(x) = \frac{\alpha}{|x|^2} \left(-x_2 \,, \, x_1 \right), \qquad n = 2$$

then the operator $H(A_{ab}, 0)$ describes the energy of a particle interacting with the so-called Aharonov-Bohm magnetic field of flux α in \mathbb{R}^2 .

Since

$$\|e^{-itH(A_{ab},0)}\|_{L^{1}(\mathbb{R}^{2})\to L^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^{2})} \lesssim \frac{1}{t} \qquad \forall t > 0, \quad n = 2.$$

holds true by [Fanelli-Felli-Fontelos-Primo, 14], the above Theorem implies

$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: Aharonov-Bohm operator

Corollary (Fanelli, Grillo, K.): Let n = 2. Then

$$\|x\|^{-\mu(\alpha)} e^{-itH(A_{ab},0)} \|x\|^{-\mu(\alpha)} \|_{L^{1}(\mathbb{R}^{2}) \to L^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^{2})} \leq C t^{-1-\mu(\alpha)}$$

holds for all t > 0.

For $\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}$ we have $\mu(\alpha) = 0$ and the above equation turns into

$$\left\| e^{-itH(A_{ab},0)} \right\|_{L^{1}(\mathbb{R}^{2}) \to L^{\infty}(\mathbb{R}^{2})} \leq C t^{-1}$$

which is the decay rate of the free evolution; $H(A_{ab}, 0) \simeq -\Delta$ if $\alpha \in \mathbb{Z}$.

$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: Schrödinger operators with inverse square potentials

Consider the case n = 3, A = 0 and

$$a(x) = \frac{\beta}{|x|^2}, \qquad \beta > 0.$$

so that

$$H(0,a) = -\Delta + \frac{\beta}{|x|^2}, \qquad \beta > 0.$$

Then, again by [Fanelli-Felli-Fontelos-Primo,14] we have

$$\|e^{-itH(0,a)}\|_{L^1(\mathbb{R}^3)\to L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^3)} \lesssim t^{-\frac{3}{2}} \quad \forall t > 0, \quad n = 3.$$

Hence the Theorem above gives

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$L^1 \rightarrow L^\infty$ estimates: Schrödinger operators with inverse square potentials

Corollary (Fanelli, Grillo, K.): Let n = 3 and let

$$H(0,a) = -\Delta + \frac{\beta}{|x|^2} , \qquad \beta > 0.$$

Then

$$\left\| \, |x|^{-\gamma} \, e^{-itH(0,a)} \, |x|^{-\gamma} \, \right\|_{L^1(\mathbb{R}^3) \to L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^3)} \, \le \, C \, t^{-\frac{3}{2} - \gamma}$$

where

$$\gamma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{4} + \beta} - \frac{1}{2}.$$

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