

Towards the innermost boundaries of the Galactic disc

Wednesday, 17 January 2024 17:25 (20 minutes)

Open clusters have been known for decades as excellent tracers of Galactic disc chemistry (and kinematics). Gaia has made possible the discovery of thousands of new clusters, particularly in the Solar neighbourhood, which was thought to be already complete for cluster searches. The innermost regions of the Galactic disc, at the edge of the Galactic bulge, remain less explored. The VVV infrared survey is contributing to the detection of new clusters in the inner disc, but an instrument like Gaia-NIR will revolutionise the field, contributing to our understanding of, for example, the rate of cluster formation and destruction in crowded fields, the shape of the metallicity gradient in the inner part of the Galaxy and the bimodality of disc and bulge clusters.

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