

Creation Science Rebuttals
No Dark Matter in the Milky Way?
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In an article from the young earth publication Technical Journal, young earth theorists Michael Oard and Jonathan Sarfati boldly proclaim in the title, "No Dark Matter Found in the Milky Way Galaxy."¹ Is this true?

Background

The young earth authors start out this article by giving some explanations about the big bang, and its problem of missing up to 90 percent of the mass of the universe. In getting to this point, the authors state matter of factly that "Biblical creationists should oppose the 'big bang' theory, because this implies a universe 10 to 15 Ga old, which contradicts biblical chronology and implies death before the fall." However, old earth creationists have shown that it only affects "young earth biblical chronology." It is not contrary to an old earth interpretation of the Bible, and you can accept both billions of years and the Genesis account of creation. The [death before sin](#) issue has also been shown to not impact any of the doctrines of the Bible, and especially the doctrine of salvation.

To make a long story short, dark matter was first considered back in 1933, when Swiss astrophysicist Fritz Zwicky obtained evidence that the universe contained much unseen mass. However, this theory did not really take hold until it was refined in the 1970s. Although dark matter has not been observed directly, its gravitational affects can be measured.

The young earth authors appeal to two studies which shows that there is no dark matter in the disk of the Milky Way galaxy. One study was released in the journal

Astronomy and Astrophysics in 1998, and it reported that based on an analysis of the motion of 100 stars, that there was no effects of gravitational pull from the disk of the Milky Way upon these stars. A further report, from the research thesis of a graduate student, is also mentioned.

Explanation

While I accept these findings, that there is no dark matter in the galactic disk, one must realize that this relies upon knowing the exact mass of the galactic disk. Since scientists have accepted this theory that there is no dark matter in the galactic disk, I can only assume that they know this value well enough to perform scientific measurements upon the gravitational pull upon these stars.

However, that is not the main point of this article. As you noticed from the title chosen by the young earth writers, they claim that there is no dark matter in the Milky Way galaxy. This is not what these two references used by Oard and Sarfati claim. Note carefully that they say there is no dark matter in the galactic disk. The galactic disk is the center of our galaxy, which consists of many tightly packed stars. The spiral arms of our galaxy, where earth is, is not in this galactic disk.

The authors correctly refer to this area as the halo. For more on this issue, see [Dark Matter Halo](#). The authors refer to this halo as a "large, spherical area encircling the galaxy and containing dust, gas, and globular clusters of stars. In dismissing the halo as containing dark matter, the authors refer to a single, solitary report about objects which were once thought to be possible chunks of dark matter, but which are now considered as dim stars. This one report, on these isolated objects, does not disprove dark matter...it only addresses a single group of objects. In reality, the effects of dark matter are still observed in the spiral arms of our galaxy.

In reality, scientists are getting closer and closer to confirming the existence of dark matter. Despite the fact that we have evidence from the gravitational effects of dark matter, young earth creationists would prefer a picture of dark matter. We know beyond any doubt that there is an unseen mass affecting the gravitational forces upon objects in our galaxy. Until we take an actual photo, these reports will have to do.

['Missing' Dark Matter Is Really There](#)

[Team Maps Dark Matter In Startling Detail](#)

[Dark Matter Galaxy Identified](#)

[Astrophysicists Detect Cosmic Shear, Evidence of Dark Matter](#)

[Seeing The Invisible](#)

[Chandra Probes Nature of Dark Matter](#)

[Dark Matter](#) (Wikipedia)

[Cold Dark Matter](#) (Wikipedia)

[Dark Matter Halo](#) (Wikipedia)

Many more links are available, but these should be enough to demonstrate some of the evidence for dark matter.

Conclusion

This article boldly proclaimed that the Milky Way galaxy has no dark matter, and the authors based this claim on the absence of dark matter in the galactic disk (core), a claim which is accepted by scientists. However, the claim that the rest of the galaxy does not have dark matter is only based on a solitary claim about one specific set of objects. In reality, the existence of dark matter in our galaxy, and in other galaxies, is an established fact due to the gravitational effects of the dark matter. We know the matter is there...its effects can be measured. However, we cannot take a picture of it, which is the only proof that most young earth creationists would accept.

¹ Michael Oard, Jonathan Sarfati, No dark matter found in the Milky Way Galaxy, TJ 13(1): April 1999. Available online at www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v13/i1/milky_way.asp