



the puzzle, and the more predictions we can make from the same basic science into presumably independent effects, the closer we will be to detecting whether strings really were there."

Tanmay Vachaspati from Arizona State University in Tempe, a leading expert on cosmic strings, said he thought that the observation of lined-up quasars was puzzling, but he was skeptical it was caused by cosmic strings. He said that had the strings formed nanoseconds after the <u>Big Bang</u>, they probably would have decayed so quickly that their magnetic effect wouldn't last until today.

"I don't see them staying around until today to provide observational signals," Vachaspati said.

Their paper was published in Physical Review Letters on Oct. 11.

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