Kizzmekia S. Corbett, Ph.D.

National Institutes of Health

Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett is a research fellow and the scientific lead for the Coronavirus Vaccines & Immunopathogenesis Team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Vaccine Research Center (VRC). She received a B.S. in Biological Sciences, with a secondary major in Sociology, in 2008 from the University of Maryland – Baltimore County, where she was a Meyerhoff Scholar and an NIH undergraduate scholar. She then enrolled at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she obtained her Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology in 2014. A viral immunologist by training, Dr. Corbett uses her expertise to propel novel vaccine development for pandemic preparedness. Appointed to the VRC in 2014, her work focuses on developing novel coronavirus vaccines, including mRNA-1273, a leading candidate vaccine against the virus that causes COVID-19. In response to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the vaccine concept incorporated in mRNA-1273 was designed by Dr. Corbett's team from viral sequence data and rapidly deployed to industry partner, Moderna, Inc., for U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved Phase 1 clinical trial, which unprecedently began only 66 days from the viral sequence

release. Following promising results in animal models and humans, mRNA-1273 is currently in Phase 3 clinical trial. Alongside mRNA-1273, Dr. Corbett's team boasts a portfolio that also includes universal coronavirus vaccine concepts and novel therapeutic antibodies. Additionally, Dr. Corbett spent several years working on a universal influenza vaccine, which is slated for Phase 1 clinical trial. In all, she has 15 years of expertise studying dengue virus, respiratory syncytial virus, influenza virus and coronaviruses. Along with her research activities, Dr. Corbett is an active member of the NIH Fellows Committee and avid advocator of STEM education and vaccine awareness in the community. Combining her research goals with her knack for mentoring, Dr. Corbett aims to become an independent principal investigator.