

Generations of STEM: Kizzmekia Corbett

Viral Immunologist

Dr. Kizzmekia “Kizzy” Shanta Corbett grew up in rural North Carolina. Her fourth grade teacher saw that Kizzmekia was a bright student, and encouraged her parents to place her in advanced courses. Dr. Corbett realized that she wanted to pursue a scientific career when she attended a summer program in high school, which allowed her to work in various research laboratories.



After she graduated high school in 2004, she attended the University of Maryland to obtain her B.S. in biological sciences and sociology. She knew early in her college career that she wanted to study viruses and the rapid development of vaccines. In 2014, Kizzmekia received her PhD in microbiology and immunology from the University of North Carolina after studying dengue fever and related antibodies.

Today, she is the scientific lead of the Coronavirus Team at the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Baltimore, Maryland. Her team partnered with biotechnology company Moderna to test an early vaccine, and brought their vaccine to Phase 1 Testing just 66 days after the genetic sequence of Covid-19 was made available. Her team continues to research vaccines for other coronaviruses, which are a large, varied family of viruses.

Image Source: [Wikipedia, Kizzmekia Corbett](#) Information Sources: [American Society for Microbiology](#), [Wikipedia](#), [Harvard School of Public Health](#)