



**Center for Minority Health and Health
Disparities Research and Education**
XAVIER UNIVERSITY *of* LOUISIANA

The Health Equity Corner

Women's History Month Edition

Q&A with Dr. KiTani Lemieux



KiTani Lemieux, PhD
Associate Professor,
Division of Basic Pharmaceutical Sciences

Q: How does it feel as an African American woman to be recognized by the Community Advisory Board for the All of Us Research Southern Network and listed as One of 1000 Inspiring Black Scientists in America?

A: I am honored by both opportunities but no time to stop now! As a Scientist who happens to be African American serving on this Board requires thoughtful, evidence-based input to provoke meaningful change that is inclusive and diverse. Health Equity has not been realized by the most vulnerable of populations and my work is not done until it is.”

Q: How do you think this recognition can have an impact on women in science? Why do you think recognizing the achievements of women, especially women of color, is important to women's history?

A: Women are smart and African American women have always been innovative. When resources are limited, African American women demonstrate their savviness by doing much with little, which typically enhances the overall impact. It is imperative that Scientists who are



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African American women remain visible to the world so that Black and Brown girls recognize the possibilities that life has to offer. There are no limits!

Q: Who are some women that inspire you, and why?

A: Dr. Princilla Smart Evans and Dr. Deena Kegler-Ebo are scientists who look like me and were leaders in their respective fields. They were also wives, mothers, and servant leaders in their communities. They demonstrated that I did not have to choose, but I could experience all that life had to offer.

Q: The Center works to mitigate health disparities within minority communities. How does your research evaluating genes differentially expressed in breast and prostate cancers in patients from minority populations work to improve health equity?

A: Better understanding the underlying biological changes in disease progression will help reduce the burden of disease in minority communities. It is also important to note that systemic racism at the National Institutes of Health have aided in maintaining these health inequities because there has been a lack of funding for projects that address health inequities.”

Q: Can you share some of the work you are doing to engage communities of color and other vulnerable populations around COVID-19 and prevention, particularly COVID-19 vaccinations?

A: Communicating research findings with the community at large is a responsibility that scientists have to our citizens. Through my community service outside of the University, I share my research findings with general audiences and provide education on COVID-19 vaccinations. Precision medicine is the cutting-edge area in medicine that seeks to include underrepresented minorities in this initiative. I was recently funded to introduce the *All of Us* Research Program, which involves building a biomedical database to better understand prevention, treatment, and cures for generations to come, which also allows me to mentor the next generation of scientists.”

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