

Black History Month
February

The NIH Clinical Center treats a diverse group of patients from all over the world. It also draws researchers from different cultures and backgrounds. Learn more about some of the many African-American researchers who conduct their work at the Clinical Center.



Courtney Fitzhugh, MD, who conducts research for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at the NIH Clinical Center, is an assistant clinical investigator in the Laboratory of Sickle Mortality Prevention.

Dr. Fitzhugh received her BS magna cum laude from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1996, and her MD from the University of California, San Francisco in 2001. During medical school, Dr. Fitzhugh participated in the NIH Clinical Research Training Program, where she studied with Dr. John Tisdale at the NHLBI. After receiving her MD, Dr. Fitzhugh completed a joint residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center, and in 2005, she did a combined adult hematology and pediatric hematology-oncology fellowship at the NIH and Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Fitzhugh returned to the NHLBI in 2007 and was appointed as assistant clinical investigator in 2012. She is a member of the American Society of Hematology.

Dr. Fitzhugh is exploring new avenues of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation for sickle cell disease, while also studying the currently underexplored cardiovascular complications arising due to this genetic blood disorder.

Visit Dr. Fitzhugh's [page](#) at NHLBI for more information on her research interests and watch this [interview](#) with Dr. Fitzhugh on LabTV.



Vence L. Bonham, Jr., JD, is an associate investigator in the Social Behavioral Research Branch at the National Human Genome Research Institute.

Mr. Bonham received his BA from James Madison College at Michigan State University and his juris doctor degree from the Moritz College of Law at the Ohio State University. Mr. Bonham was a fellow in the American Association of Medical Colleges Health Services Research Fellowship Program. Mr. Bonham was a faculty member at Michigan State University in the Colleges of Medicine and Law. Since 2003, Mr. Bonham has served as an associate investigator in the National Human Genome Research Institute within the Division of Intramural Research's Social and Behavioral Research Branch. He leads the Health Disparities Genomics Unit, which conducts research that evaluates approaches to integrating new genomic knowledge and precision medicine into clinical settings without exacerbating inequities in healthcare delivery.

His research focuses primarily on the social influences of new genomic knowledge, particularly in communities of color. He studies how genomics influences the use of the constructs of race and ethnicity in biomedical research and clinical care and the role of genomics in health inequities. The Bonham group has expanded to study sickle cell disease, a condition with a significant health disparity impact both in the United States and globally.

Mr. Bonham also serves as the senior advisor to the NHGRI director on genomics and health disparities. This role complements Mr. Bonham's research work as it enables him to ask conceptually based research questions grounded in the science of health disparities and genomics. From 2011 until 2015, Mr. Bonham was the project leader and co-curator for the NHGRI/Smithsonian exhibition "Genome: Unlocking Life's Code."

Visit Mr. Bonham's [page](#) at NHGRI to learn more about his research and watch him speak about [Native Peoples and Genetic Research](#).



Tiffany M. Powell-Wiley, MD, MPH, who conducts research for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at the NIH Clinical Center, is an assistant clinical investigator conducting research on the Social Determinants of Obesity and Cardiovascular Risk.

Dr. Powell-Wiley graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a MPH in epidemiology in 2003. She earned her MD from Duke University School of Medicine in 2004, after spending a year in medical school as a research fellow in the NIH's Clinical Research Training Program. She did her residency in internal medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston from 2004 to 2007, followed by a fellowship in cardiology at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center from 2007 to 2011, where she served as chief cardiology fellow from 2010 to 2011. Since August 2011, she has held a joint appointment with the NHLBI and the Applied Research Program in the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the National Cancer Institute.

In 2009, she received the Women in Cardiology Trainee Award for Excellence from the American Heart Association. Dr. Powell-Wiley is a reviewer for numerous journals including *Circulation*, *Obesity*, the *American Heart Journal* and *Annals of Internal Medicine*, who named her one of the "Best Reviewers" for 2011. She is currently on the Board of Tutors for the NIH's Medical Research Scholars Program.

Visit Dr. Powell-Wiley's [page](#) at NHLBI for more information on her research.



Charles E. Egwuagu, PhD, MPH, conducts research for the National Eye Institute at the NIH Clinical Center.

Dr. Charles E. Egwuagu is an epidemiologist/immunologist and chief of the Molecular Immunology Section, National Eye Institute. He received his PhD and M.Phil. from Yale University and an MPH from the Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut. Dr. Egwuagu then served as a commissioned officer of the USA Public Health Service for 10 years, attaining the rank of captain. The major research focus in the Egwuagu laboratory is on autoreactive lymphocytes that mediate CNS auto-inflammatory diseases like uveitis and multiple sclerosis.

Particular interest is on cytokine signaling and epigenetic mechanisms that regulate lymphocyte development and cell-fate decisions. The ultimate goal is to develop cytokine-based therapy for autoimmune and neurodegenerative diseases.

The main thrust of research in the Molecular Immunology Section is to understand molecular and cellular mechanisms that regulate host immunity, with particular emphasis on: (i) mechanisms that regulate

lymphocyte development and cell-fate decisions; (ii) identifying and characterizing autoreactive memory T cell subsets that mediate remitting and recurrent central nervous system autoimmune diseases; (iii) Developing Biologics for treating CNS inflammatory diseases, such as uveitis, multiple sclerosis and Age-related Macular Degeneration.

For more information on Dr. Egwuagu's research, visit NEI's [Molecular Immunology Section page](#) or visit Dr. Egwuagu's bio [page](#).