# MATERNAL DEPRESSION : THE RISK FOR CHILDREN'S PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

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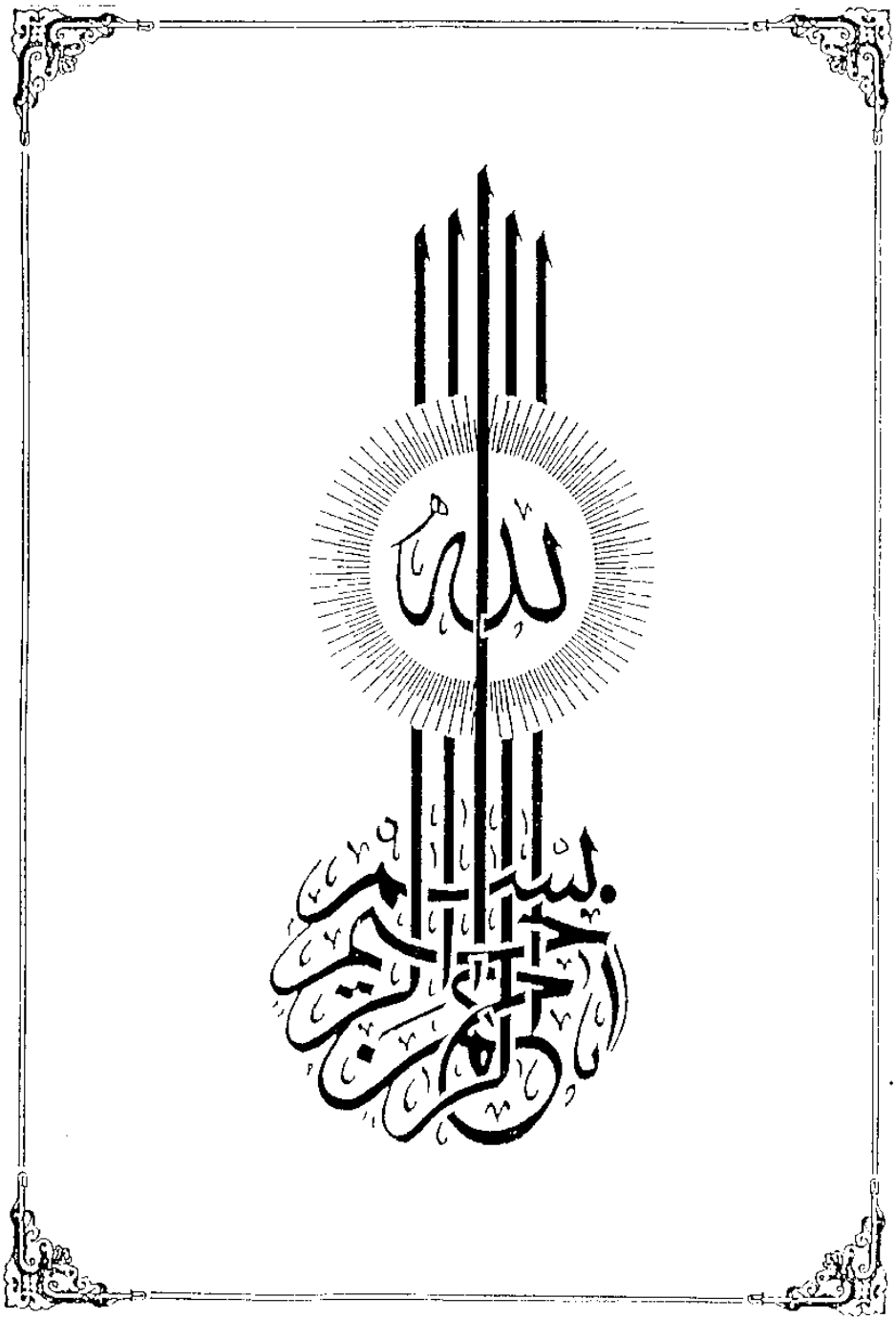


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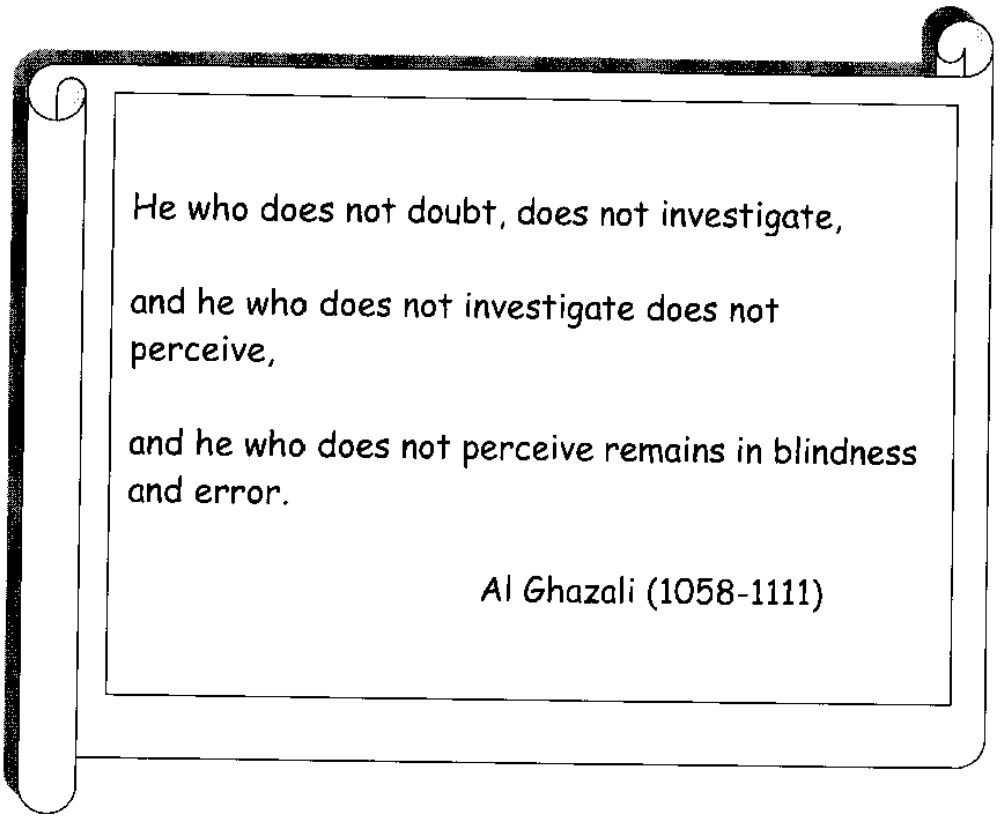


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# ABSTRACT

Children of depressed mothers are considered at high risk for development of psychopathology. The impact of maternal depression is studied within a large framework. Characteristic schemata of depressed mothers-including behavioral, emotional and cognitive patterns-can affect mother-child interactions. The resulting harsh child management practices and consequent insecure mother-child attachment are reflected on those children. Not only maternal psychiatric illness which has deleterious effect on the children, but also, maternal physical illness is suggested to do so.

Current study is designed to assess the effect of chronic depressed mothers versus diabetic mothers on the mother-child system as well as the emotional state and cognitive functions of children. This is carried out in comparison to normal control group of mothers.

Sample comprises three groups of mothers:

1- Study group consists of 30 depressed mothers suffering of chronic or recurrent depressive disorder of more than 2 years duration.

2- Medical control group consists of 25 mothers having diabetes mellitus of at least 2 years duration.

3- Normal control group consists of 32 normal volunteer mothers.

The three groups of mothers have the following inclusion criteria:

1- Maternal age is ranging between 25-45 years.

2- Every mother has at least one child aging 8-14 years.

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Diagnosis of depressed mothers was based on ICD-10 Diagnostic Criteria for Research using ICD-10 symptom checklist.

Both diabetic and normal control groups are subjected to General Health Questionnaire for exclusion of psychiatric morbidity and those who score 7 or more are excluded.

All mothers of three groups were subjected to Parenting Stress Index for assessment of mother-child system. It is a newly applied instrument in Egypt, that has been translated by author and one of the supervisors. Reliability of translation is statistically highly significant.

Children of the three groups are subjected to Child Depression Inventory, Children Anxiety Scale, Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire "Neurotic Subscale", Luria-Nebraska Neuropsychological battery "Intellectual Processing Scale" & Computerized test "Train the Brain" for Reaction Time and Discrimination.

Results of the study have shown statistically non-significant difference between depressed and diabetic groups, while, both are statistically significantly different from normal control group. Other results were further discussed.

Key words: maternal depression – children at risk – parental stress index – child depression

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