INTRODUCTION

The development of the fetus within the uterine enviroment is known now to have a profound effect on the immunological status of the mother.

There has been a considerable debate as to whether or not, certain pathological conditions of pregnancy, particularly preeclampsia, are associated, either as a cause or effect, with changes in the maternal antibody response. Changes in immunoglobulin concentrations in preeclampsia and eclampsia have been reported. Benster and wood (1970), demonstrated a highly significant reduction in IgG levels, in patients with preeclampsia and eclampsia and postulated the effect of a possible immune reaction between mother and fetus.

The human fetus acquires passive immunity by selective placental transfer of IgG (Gitlin et al., 1964). Other immunoglobulins do not cross the placenta and their detection in fetal serum can be taken as evidence of active synthesis by the fetus. Studd et al., (1972), reported that fetal IgG was lower in preeclampsia than