INTRODUCTION

The Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), is a virus of the herpes family (which includes Herpes simplex virus and Cytomegalovirus), and is one of the most common viruses in humans. Most people become infected with EBV, which is often asymptomatic but commonly causes infectious mononucleosis. EBV is named after Michael Epstein and Yvonne Barr, who together with Bert Achong, discovered the virus in 1964 **(Epstein A et al., 1964).**

EBV infection is worldwide Infection occurs early in life in most developing countries and usually without clinical symptoms. The highest rate of infectious disease occurs in older children and young adults **(Niederman and Evans, 1997)**.

The primary infections with EBV in childhood either remain silent or are accompanied merely by mild signs and symptoms in the throat and respiratory tract **(Henle and Henle, 1970)**.

Infectious mononucleosis is an acute fibrile illness involving children and young adults characterized clinically by sore throat and lymphadenopathy, hematologically by lymphocytosis of 50% or more, of which 10% or more are atypical, and serologically by an elevated absorbed heterophil antibody titer and the development of EBV immunoglobulin M (IgM) and other EBV antibodies. The fact that the virus stays in the host's throat is beneficial to its transmission. In addition, the virus will be shed into the saliva for months or years after infectious mononucleosis has been cleared **(Niederman and Evans, 1997).**

Epstein-Barr virus appears to play an important role in: Burkett's lymphoma (A monoclonal tumor of B cells hyperendemic in highly malarious zones of the world **(Evans and Mueller., 1997);** nasopharyngeal carcinoma, (particularly among groups from China and Taiwan) ; and hairy cell leukemia. It has been postulated to be a trigger for a subset of chronic fatigue syndrome patients **(Lerner et al., 2004)** , as well as multiple sclerosis and other autoimmune diseases **(Lunemann and Munz, 2007).**

Epidemiology of EBV in children is therefore an important area for investigation.

AIM OF WORK

The aim of the present study is to delineate the clinical manifestations , risk factors and complications of acute Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) infection during childhood in a sample of Egyptian children.