

in the United States and beyond, and its devastating effects, which include infanticide and maternal suicide. She goes on to illustrate the advantages of breastfeeding; despite its demands, suckling suppresses physical stress and negative mood, induces sleep and a sense of calm in depressed mothers.

In the second part of the book, Kendall-Tackett evaluates the psychoneuroimmunology of postpartum depression, which differs from other forms of depression that can accompany psychosis, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The author describes the physiology of depression as it affects the nervous and immune systems, causing such classic symptoms as fatigue, lethargy, and social withdrawal as the body's physical checks and balances fail. She states "that our bodies 'translate' physical and psychological stress into inflammation, and it underlies all the other risk factors for depression. Inflammation is not simply *a* risk factor for depression; it is *the* risk factor for depression, the one that ties the others together" (53). Kendall-Tackett also considers the influence on a new mother of negative birth experiences and previous trauma, a woman's vulnerability to psychological and social factors affecting depression, and the temperament of her newborn child.

Finally, the author explores various treatments for depression. She suggests Omega-3 oils, SAM-e, and herbs, such as St. John's wort, may be used as dietary supplements, together with exercise and bright light therapy; she also discusses anti-depressant drugs and their merits and risks. She evaluates community support, including different forms of psychotherapy. Kendall-Tackett concludes her study with a twenty-year account of a mother who overcame depression after her first traumatic birth and believes passionately in gentle home birth and alternatives to allopathic drugs and hospitalizations in the treatment of depression. This book is an insightful, scholarly, and readable study of postpartum depression which makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the subject.