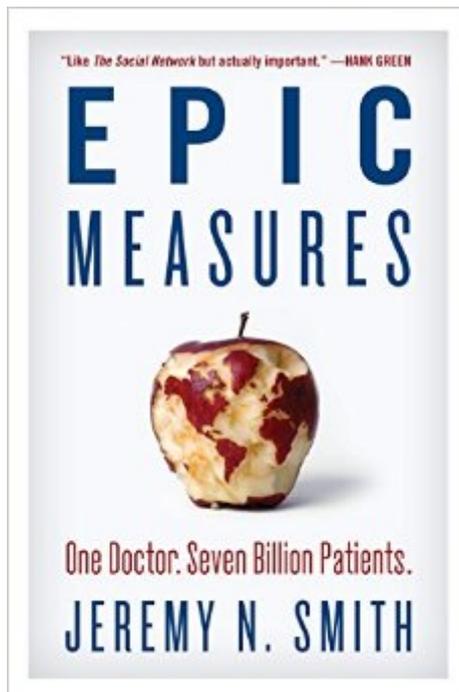


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# Epic Measures: One Doctor. Seven Billion Patients.



## Synopsis

Moneyball meets medicine in this remarkable chronicle of one of the greatest scientific quests of our time—the groundbreaking program to answer the most essential question for humanity: how do we live and die?—and the visionary mastermind behind it. Medical doctor and economist Christopher Murray began the Global Burden of Disease studies to gain a truer understanding of how we live and how we die. While it is one of the largest scientific projects ever attempted—as breathtaking as the first moon landing or the Human Genome Project—the questions it answers are meaningful for every one of us: What are the world’s health problems? Who do they hurt? How much? Where? Why? Murray argues that the ideal existence isn’t simply the longest but the one lived well and with the least illness. Until we can accurately measure how people live and die, we cannot understand what makes us sick or do much to improve it. Challenging the accepted wisdom of the WHO and the UN, the charismatic and controversial health maverick has made enemies—and some influential friends, including Bill Gates who gave Murray a \$100 million grant. In *Epic Measures*, journalist Jeremy N. Smith offers an intimate look at Murray and his groundbreaking work. From ranking countries’ healthcare systems (the U.S. is 37th) to unearthing the shocking reality that world governments are funding developing countries at only 30% of the potential maximum efficiency when it comes to health, *Epic Measures* introduces a visionary leader whose unwavering determination to improve global health standards has already changed the way the world addresses issues of health and wellness, sets policy, and distributes funding.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a high school social studies teacher who teaches about contemporary global issues, I am always searching for books, films, and articles that will engage my students and offer them insight into international topics. Over the years, I have been fortunate to encounter plenty of texts that captivate a significant portion of my students. Rare, however, is a book like Tracy Kidder's *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, Katherine Boo's *Beyond the Beautiful Forevers*, or Nina Munk's *The Idealist* that provokes lively discussions among students of all backgrounds. Two weeks ago, I read an op-ed piece by Jeremy Smith in the *New York Times* that did a superb job of laying out perhaps the greatest challenge within global health: How do we know what our priorities ought to be? Smith raised a series of provocative questions: How do we compare the impact of one disease or ailment to another? Should we trust the figures of governments and NGOs who presumably have reasons to skew these figures? Is it possible to do a thorough accounting of everything that leads to injury and/or death throughout the world? Impressed by Smith's essay, I read it with my students the following day. In short, the discussion was superb as it not only provoked the students to reconsider their preconceived ideas about global health but it also inspired them to want to know more about Smith's argument that it was indeed possible to gather comprehensive data on what ill us as a species. Given the dynamic discussion, I did something that I have not done before in my fourteen years of teaching: I ordered a class set of a book that I had not read. When our class started reading Smith's book, *Epic Measures: One Doctor, Seven Billion Patients* the following week, it was immediately clear that this gamble had paid off.

*Epic Measures: One Doctor, Seven Billion Patients* by Jeremy N. Smith (HarperWave, 2015, 352 pages, \$26.99/13.59) explores and explains the importance of "big data" in analyzing the state of world health, discovering the actual causes and relative importance of death, disease, and examining the burden of disease as it affects people's quality of life. This important and illuminating book explores the causes of what it describes as the Global Burden of Disease, the accumulated knowledge of when, where, and how people are born and die, how disease affects not only lifespan, but quality of life. To accurately discover this information, it's necessary to collect, collate, compare data down to the level of small towns and villages. The development of the data base required for this program is perhaps the most complex and important compilation of information about the state of humankind ever attempted, let alone accomplished. Its implications for health care delivery and policy are world shaking. The opportunities are truly breathtaking. This exploration and accomplishment is told through the life and career of Chris Murray, a physician, PHD

epidemiologist, world traveler, high risk skier, and first rate athlete who possesses the passion, energy, intelligence, and vision to conceive and complete the largest catalog of human health ever contemplated and achieved. This book is both inspiring as Murray the person is revealed and important as it explores the potential for solving many problems in world health. Christopher Murray is the youngest child of Minnesota physicians who gloried in world adventure travel and rural medical practice.

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