

Epic Measures is the true story of a 20-year, 500-scientist, \$100-million moonshot attempt to track and quantify every illness, injury, and death for everyone on Earth: the biggest of Big Data ever.

Called the Global Burden of Disease study, the monumental effort to understand how we live and how we die has at its center the brilliant, controversial economist and physician Christopher Murray, who has developed an entirely new way of discovering and comparing the worldwide toll of both the things that kill us and those that diminish the quality of our lives. His goal: to enable all of us to live longer and better lives. You may not have yet heard of Murray and his associates, but you probably already know their work. If you have ever read that the U.S. health care system is ranked 37th in the world, that famous (to some, infamous) figure comes from their studies. Whether identifying the leading killers of adults at a time when most global health programs focused only on diseases of children, or revealing in which U.S. counties men and women live longer than their counterparts in Japan (and in which they die earlier than in Syria), their work makes headlines and resets the priorities of national and international health organizations. They have shown Bill Gates a way to invest his fortune for global good. And they may help people everywhere—all seven billion of us—know what really hurts us and what will best improve our health.

Told with novelistic verve by acclaimed journalist Jeremy N. Smith, the story of Murray's lifelong determination to understand how we live and die encompasses wars and famines, presidents and activists, billionaires and billions of people worldwide living in poverty. It shows the human side of scientific revolutions—and of revolutionary scientists—their breakthroughs and setbacks, their genius and their flaws, their champions and their critics—as they strive to bring the news of their findings to the world. This transformational effort is far from over, but the story of its genesis and impact is already an epic tale.

JEREMY N. SMITH has written for *Discover*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Chicago Tribune*, among many other publications. His first book, *Growing a Garden City*, was one of Booklist's top ten books on the environment for 2011. Born and raised in Evanston, Illinois, he is a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Montana. He lives in Missoula, Montana, with his wife and young daughter.

READ BY PATRICK LAWLOR

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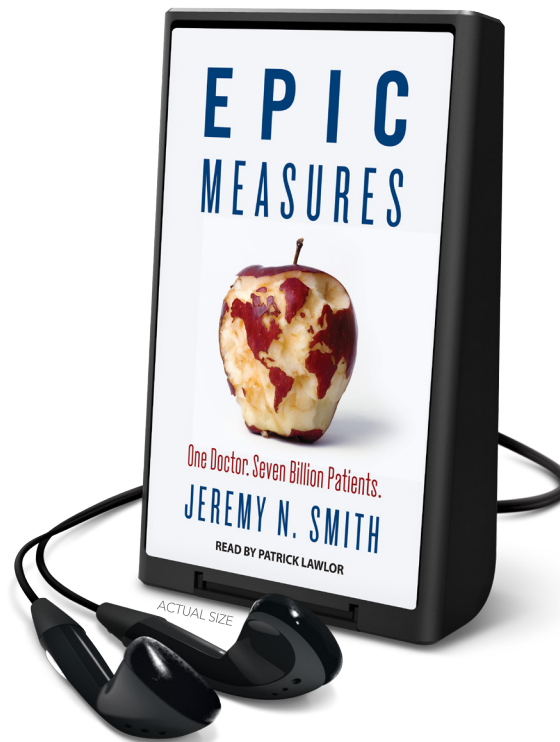
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