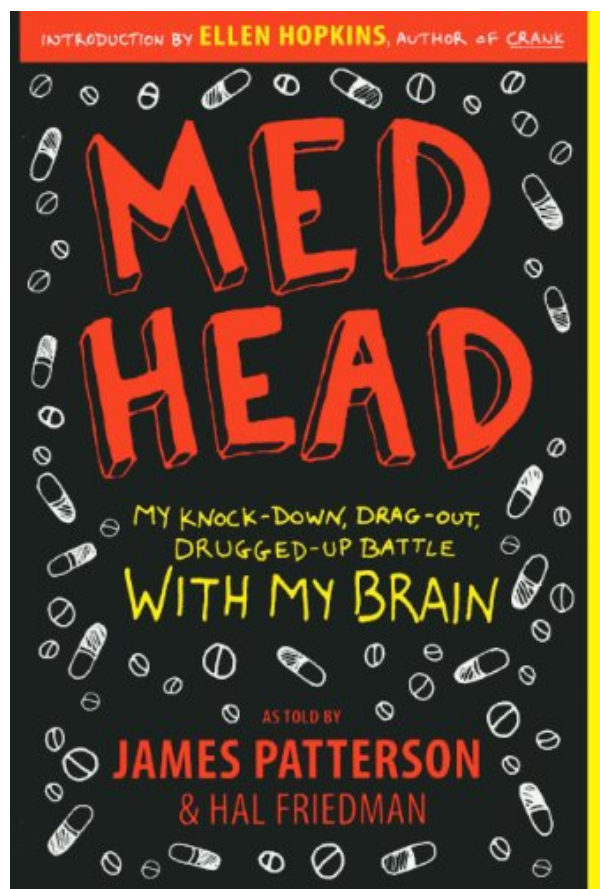
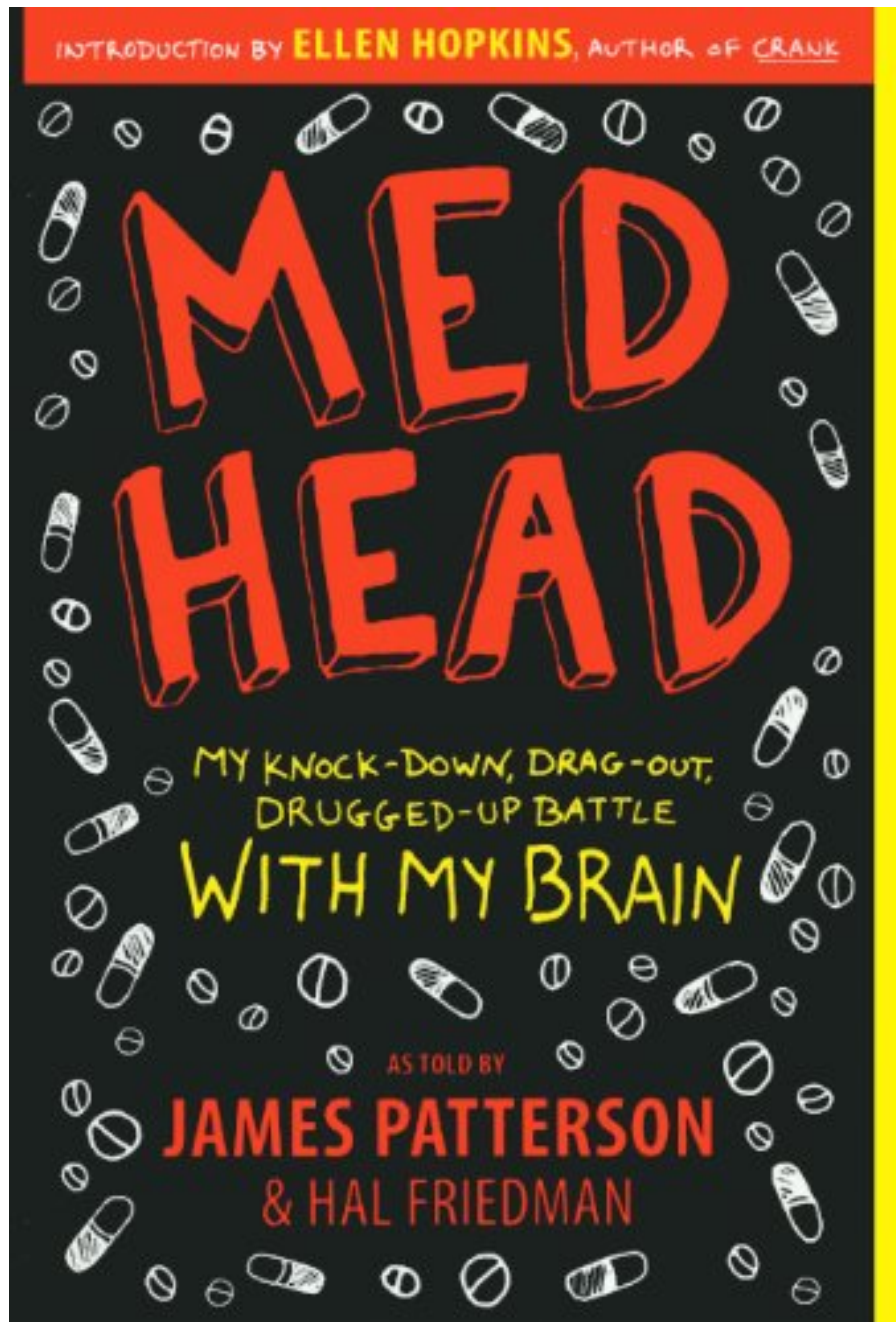


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From Booklist

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About the Author

James Patterson is the CEO of J. Walter Thompson, an advertising agency in New York. He has written several successful fiction and nonfiction books, including The New York Times best seller *The Day America Told the Truth*.

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FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. James Patterson's *Against Medical Advice* riveted adults with the story of one teenager's courage, sacrifice, and triumph. Now this first-person account of Cory Friedman's intense struggles with Tourette's Syndrome and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder--as well as depression and anxiety--is available for teen readers.

- Sales Rank: #3148272 in Books
- Published on: 2010-04-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.17" h x 1.15" w x 5.64" l, .89 pounds
- Binding: Library Binding
- 352 pages

From Booklist

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Masterful author of *A Hunting We Will Go*, Hal Friedman delivers a dizzying, on-and-over-the-edge thriller about the heights of anger, the depths of violence, and the perilous trail of justice.

Most helpful customer reviews

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

MED HEAD is an inspirational story, and I agree with Patterson when he calls Cory a hero
By Teen Reads

MED HEAD, James Patterson and Hal Friedman's young adult version of the #1 New York Times bestseller AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE, is about a boy's experiences growing up with the rare neurological disorder of Tourette's Syndrome with OCD. It's a private view of Cory Friedman's home and school life as told by Cory himself, from age five through his post-high school years.

Cory is five years old when his troubles begin. While playing a video game, he feels his first compulsion to jerk his neck. It is involuntary, caused by "miswiring of his brain," and is one of the many tics and physical and verbal compulsions his mind would present through the years. He calls these years "the battle against my mind," and his symptoms are embarrassing and physically debilitating at a young age. With his first trip to the doctor, Cory and his family start down a long road of suffering and worry that doesn't end until after his teenage years are over.

Through many years of treatment, Cory is put on handfuls of medications. The Friedmans meet numerous doctors, some of whom are helpful and others of whom are just insulting and harmful. His parents and sister, Jessie, try their best to support him through the physical and emotional stress, knowing there's only more of it to come. Love and family support are often not enough for Cory to feel happy, and he has to do without close friendships or outside understanding for years. All he wants is for the people around him to "get him," and one of the most difficult aspects of the situation is the Friedmans' realization of Cory's daily embarrassment and social isolation from having a disease that no one understands or empathizes with.

Because Cory's disorder is exacerbated by stress and anxiety, reactions he gets make things worse. Kids at school and teachers often treat him as if his disorder is contrived or controllable. He's frequently made fun of, and this makes his tics and compulsions more exaggerated. None of his treatments help much, and at some point, he begins thinking of himself as a "med head." He is on high-dose meds and often can't deal with the side effects, which range from intense agitation to more pronounced tics, to keeping him up at night and leaving him physically and emotionally exhausted. He gains weight and becomes clinically depressed on certain drugs. Yet somehow, with the support of his family, Cory gets through this. After years of hoping and wishing and wondering about a cure (or at least relief from symptoms), he discovers he's ready to call it quits with all drugs and experimental treatments.

Unfortunately, somewhere along the way, Cory finds that there's one thing he does feel better on: alcohol. He uses it to escape his unhappiness. At age 17, he has absolutely no idea what he's doing and no plans for the future, but his alcohol use is no joke. It goes way past common teenage partying to where he is passing out drunk at home --- a lot. Once his parents recognize the need to intervene, their next step is a risky one: they send him to a teenage wilderness camp in bitter-cold Wyoming, essentially forcing him to discover meaning in his life while surviving camping in ice and snow.

With great, personal storytelling by bestselling author James Patterson as well as writer Hal Friedman (the boy's father), readers are presented with an honest view of what it's like to grow up with a rare neurological disorder. The story is based on Cory's memories and put together through interviews. And Cory is a kid who will win you over from the minute the story begins. In the moment he calls his mom "his angel" with the claim that she saved him, he had my vote! The Friedmans are amazing, never faltering in their love and support even while it had to be killing them to watch him go through all this. Yet it is Cory himself who finds the will to get past the anger of living with a debilitating illness and then surpass everyone's expectations of him. It's through his hard work that opportunities arise, and his accomplishments end up going beyond those of many who have had smaller hurdles to overcome.

MED HEAD is an inspirational story, and I agree with Patterson when he calls Cory a hero.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

One young man's struggle: I'm glad it turned out well for him

By Maggie Knapp

The true story of Cory Friedman's efforts to control his Tourette's and OCD, along with his violent temper and addiction issues (drinking and smoking). The book contains many brutal, pull-no-punches descriptions of his tics, his meltdowns, his anger and his frustration. His family stands valiantly by him; his sister is seldom mentioned. After a wrenching 13-year battle (approx. ages 5-18) Cory's symptoms, which he previously was unable to control, start to fade almost naturally, through an "Outward Bound" type wilderness experience and time spent at a neurological clinic where the treatment encourages him to focus on his tics and anxieties, rather than try to suppress them. It also helps when he weans himself off most of the doctor-prescribed drugs he was taking. Though I wish this young man all the best, and the story is interesting as a peek into a world of pain and suffering, I don't feel there are any greater lessons to be drawn, or that Cory's experiences can be generalized in any way for the greater good of readers. Maybe they don't need to be and the point is that Cory told his story and I can now read it. Note: This book was released a year or so ago, titled *Against Medical Advice*. *Med Head*, with its eye-catching cover and an introduction by Ellen Hopkins, is the same book, aimed at young adults. If you are an older teen reader and you liked *Med Head*, you might have a look at both *Beautiful Boy* (by father David Sheff) and *Tweak* (by son Nic Sheff.)

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Enchanting Review: *Med Head*

By Enchanting Reviews

MED HEAD

JAMES PATTERSON & HAL FRIEDMAN

Rating: 5 Enchantments

Corey Friedman is an ordinary teenager with issues that take all his strength and courage to overcome. This is an account of his thirteen year journey dealing with OCD, anxiety, and Tourette's symptom.

Wow. Reading Corey's story amazes me. What he went through as a child with the daily ridicule of his peers and then the pure hell of a life time of different drugs, totally is awe inspiring. My own son deals with sensory issues and I've dealt with a school system that wasn't supportive. I can't even imagine what Corey's parents went through. What is really inspiring is Corey's voice. His descriptions of the meds that caused serious issues are so real. I felt for him when this one so-called expert in the field of Tourette's, ends up just viewing Corey as a test subject even when the one drug she prescribes to him causes him to want to end his life.

Corey also shows the reader what it's like to basically be a guinea pig to a wide assortment of meds. His OCD and Tourette's were very extreme. One way Corey dealt with the pain was self-medicating with alcohol. But this book doesn't just dwell on the negative. It shows Corey's successes and triumphs. My favorite part is when Corey shows this one school founder that he will make it out in the real world. And he does with determination and persistence.

The story is haunting and Corey's personal journey through years of medical turmoil will stay with you. At the conclusion are notes from Corey's parents, personal photos, and also info on OCD and Tourette's.

James Patterson is the author of *Maximum Ride* novels, *Witch & Wizard*, and a number of other books. He lives in Florida.

Hal Friedman has published five works of fiction. He lives with his wife, Sophia, at the edge of a forest in northern New Jersey.

Kim Baccellia

ENCHANTING REVIEWS

November 2010

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