Handwriting example 18
This document comes from the Death records for Karlstad in August 1772. It was chosen to be presented in SAG because of its unusual honesty in describing the causes of death.

On this page at least four persons are described as having died from hunger, which is very unusual. It is much more common to write that the cause of death was “unknown children’s disease” or “old age frailty.”

In 1749 the Swedish agency for population statistics (Tabellverket) was founded. Among the many things they were curious about were the causes of death, and from then on the clergymen were required to note what the people in the parish had died from. Then the clergymen had to fill out a huge form, with classified causes of death and send them in to Tabellverket, where statistics for the whole country were compiled. It was a good idea, but unfortunately only in Swedish, is the Svenska sjukdomsnamn i gångna tider, by Gunnar Lagerkranz, latest printing in 2003. It explains about 900 different illnesses. It can be bought from the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies (Sveriges Släktforskarförbund) for about $35 + shipping.

Some names of illnesses are also found in “Swedish Genalogical Dictionary” by the late Phyllis J. Pladsen, Joseph C. Huber, and Eric B. Pladsen (2000). It seems to be still available from Glenn W. Pladsen for $25 + shipping. (see page 30 for web links.)

The names of illnesses have changed during the centuries, and one often wonders what was meant by tvinsot or älta? A good help, un-

The transcription is on page 24.